September 2023

Dear Parent/Guardian

I am pleased to offer the current Year 12 students with the opportunity to complete their Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award. The DofE is a great chance for your child to broaden their horizons, discover new interests and talents, have fun with friends, develop essential skills for their future and achieve an internationally renowned Award. The Gold Award is an esteemed accomplishment and is highly recognised by universities and employers. This letter is to inform you about what a DofE programme involves, the benefits for your child and how they can sign up.

**About the Gold DofE Award**

To achieve their Gold Award, participants must complete **five** sections:

1. Volunteering
2. Skills
3. Physical
4. Expeditions (a trial and qualifying expedition)
5. Residential section (a shared activity in a residential setting, away from home. This must last for five consecutive days with a minimum of four nights spent away.)

Every young person’s DofE programme is personal to them – they can choose what they’d like to do for their Skills, Volunteering and Physical sections. We will provide guidance and support, and students can either choose to continue an activity they already do or discover something completely new. Activities for each section take a minimum of one hour a week over a set period, so they can fit around studying, hobbies and social lives. For more details about programmes and timescales visit DofE.org/do.

Your child will be required to complete the Volunteering section for 12 months, one of the Physical or Skills sections for 12 months, and the other for 6 months. If your child is a direct candidate (has not completed the Silver award), they will be required to complete a further 6 months in either the Volunteering or the longer of the Skills or Physical sections. To participate in this Award, they will be expected to organise their own Skills, Volunteering and Physical Activity areas**.** They are also responsible for arranging their Residential section. I will be their point of contact in school for any help or advice they need and to ensure that they are completing these sections.

**eDofE and the DofE app**

Participants can create their DofE programme and record their progress using eDofE, the DofE’s digital system, available online at eDofE.org and through the DofE app – downloadable for free from Google Play and the App Store.

If your child decides to enrol, we will set up their eDofE account and they will receive details of how to sign in and get started.

**About the Expedition**

The expedition section will be run through both the school and an external provider, Get Outside the Classroom. The expedition section involves your child working as part of a small team to plan their expedition’s aim, and they will take part in lunch time and afterschool sessions, covering basic expedition principles, plan their route and familiarise themselves with expedition equipment. Participants will only be able to do their expedition if they attend the organised training. They will then complete 1 trial expedition and 1 assessment expedition (the trial expedition will be 3 days and 2 nights long and the assessment expedition will be 4 days and 3 nights long.)

The following dates have been booked for the expeditions, and details about pre-expedition training will follow:

**Gold Training Expedition:** Friday29th March 2024 – Sunday 31st March 2024, Llangollen

**Gold Qualifying Expedition:** Wednesday29th May 2024 – Saturday 1st June 2024, Snowdonia

Please note, parents are required to drop their child off at the locations (typically a 09.30 start) as well as picking them up (typically a 15.00 finish). Further information and exact timings will be detailed prior to the expedition dates. Please note that dates are dependent on numbers of participants, these are subject to change is participant numbers are too low.

The cost of running the Gold expedition is set by Get Outside the Classroom and will cost a total of **£475.00**, which also includes a £32.50 registration fee. This covers your child’s participation place and Welcome Pack, which will be sent to their home address and includes their personalised DofE Discount Card. The money will come into school online via ParentPay and we will then pay the service.

If you would like your child to participate in the Award, then could you please return the attached slip and pay the **non-refundable** deposit of £115.00 by Friday 20th October 2023.

There will then be three more instalments due:

**Instalment 1:** £120.00 due by Friday 15th December 2023

**Instalment 2:** £120.00 due by Friday 16th February 2024

**Instalment 3:** £120.00 due by Friday 12th April 2024

*If your child receives Free School Meals, they will be eligible for a subsidised cost which can be viewed on ParentPay.*

Please also note that as we must pay Get Outside the Classroom for their services if your child wishes to withdraw from the award they must do so, at least 6 weeks before (in writing) the final instalment is due. If not the full cost of the award will be payable.

**Please note that payment for the trip will be taken as consent for your child to attend and that you have read the guidance for school trips document attached.**

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me regarding the Duke of Edinburgh Award ([l.forsey@st-nicholas.cheshire.sch.uk](mailto:l.forsey@st-nicholas.cheshire.sch.uk)) or please contact Mrs F O’Hanlon on 01606 706011 if you require any assistance with ParentPay.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs L Forsey

Duke of Edinburgh Coordinator