12th October, 2021

Dear Parent / Carer,

I’m pleased to let you know that Guilsborough Academy offers the Gold Duke of Edinburgh’s Award (DofE) to students in Year 12 and 13.

The DofE is a great chance for young people 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. It is well regarded by Higher Education institutions and major employers throughout the UK.

As Guilsborough’s DofE Manager, I wanted to send you some information about what a DofE programme involves, the benefits for your child and how they can sign up.

**About the DofE**

The DofE is non-competitive and open to all young people – it's about setting personal challenges and pushing personal boundaries. There are three levels of DofE programme which, when successfully completed, lead to a Bronze, Silver or Gold Award.

Through their DofE, students will make friends and memories and build traits like confidence, resilience and self-esteem, which can benefit mental health. They’ll gain skills and attributes for work and life, like problem-solving, team-working and self-motivation – and they’ll achieve an Award that’s recognised by top employers and can help them stand out when applying for university or jobs.

To achieve their Gold Award, participants must complete five sections: Skills, Volunteering, Physical, Residential and their Expedition.

Every young person’s DofE programme is personal to them – they can choose what they’d like to do for their Skills, Volunteering, Residential and Physical sections, and most activities can count. We will provide guidance and support, and students can either choose to continue an activity they already do or discover something completely new.

During and in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, participants who complete their Skills, Volunteering and Physical sections will also receive a DofE Certificate of Achievement – a formal recognition, by the DofE, of their efforts at this extraordinary time.

Activities for each section take a minimum of one hour a week over a set period of time, so they can fit around studying, hobbies and social lives. For more details about programmes and timescales visit [www.dofe.org/do](http://www.dofe.org/do) where it is explained in greater depth.

**About the expedition**

The Expedition section involves your child working as part of a small team to plan their expedition’s aim, choose a route and do some training to make sure they're fully prepared – before normally spending four days and three nights in wild country, such as The Lake District.

Ahead of this, they will take part in a structured in-school training session covering basic expedition principles and introducing them to expedition equipment.

There will also be a number of training sessions after school in which your child and their group will plan their route and prepare. Participants will only be able to do their expedition if they attend the organised training.

The expeditions will take place during the summer term (May to July or September/October) and details about pre-expedition training will follow. The camping overnight element is not possible at present and Expeditions could be on a day by day basis with students going home overnight. If this is the case we would organise local Expeditions.

**The DofE and COVID-19**

The DofE has also introduced a number of flexibilities to allow expeditions to take place safely, in line with social distancing restrictions and Government guidance. While your child’s expedition may look slightly different to those in previous years, they will be able to do theirs safely and with all the benefits and memories they’d get at any other time.

**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 [www.eDofE.org](http://www.eDofE.org) and through the DofE app – downloadable for free from Google Play and the App Store.

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

**Signing up – Deadline: Friday 19th October 2021**

The cost of taking part in the Gold DofE is £30.50 per participant. 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. This must be paid via ParentPay and an option to pay should be on your account already.

If your child would like to take part, please complete and return the enclosed enrolment form electronically to Flanagan@guilsborough.northants.sch.uk If the cost of taking part is prohibitive, please contact me as there may be financial support available to you. Please feel free to contact me if you have any further questions at the email address below.

Many thanks for your support and we look forward to helping your young person to achieve through their DofE.

Yours faithfully,

Mr S Flanagan

**Head of Life Skills & Enterprise**

**DofE Manager**

Flanagan@guilsborough.northants.sch.uk