



Great Marlow School

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Silver Duke of Edinburgh's Award 2023/24

Dear Parent/Carer

Great Marlow School are offering the year 10 students the opportunity to participate in the Silver Duke of Edinburgh Award (DofE). Earlier this week, the students attended an optional information session about the award, which detailed the benefits and requirements of the silver level programme.

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, can lead to a Bronze, Silver, and Gold Award levels.

Through DofE, students will develop core life skills such as confidence, resilience, resourcefulness, readiness, and responsibility. All of which, will contribute to your son/daughter's development toward adulthood. Moreover, the students will gain significant employability skills, like problem-solving, team-working, and self-motivation – and they'll achieve an award which is recognised internationally by employers and educational institutions.

To achieve their Silver Award, participants must complete four sections: Skills, Volunteering, Physical and an Expedition. (If you have not completed the Bronze Award you can still participate in the Silver, however, there is an increase in specified duration for 2 of the 3 sections from volunteering, skill and physical)

Every young person's DofE programme is personal to them – they can choose what they'd like to do for their sections, and there is a huge number of potential activities to choose from. As a centre, we will provide guidance and support on this, as well as facilitate many onsite opportunities which can contribute to the respective sections.

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 look at the school website, or visit the DofE website: www.dofe.org

About the expedition

The Expedition section is made up of the **training and practice**, followed by the **qualifying expedition**. To complete this, the students work as part of a small team who are responsible for the navigation of a planned route, cooking for themselves, as well as campcraft skills for a two-night stay (qualifying expedition), 3 nights for training and practice. During training and practice, the students receive a significant amount of guidance from highly qualified staff. For the qualifying, the students are supported and monitored, however, they must demonstrate independence and self-sufficiency to pass this section, this means that there are times when they are unsupervised. It is important to note, mobile phones are not permitted during these sessions.

This year, to facilitate our expedition, GMS PE staff will be accompanied by WithDave, who are an experienced expedition company, which the school has used in previous years. Currently, the proposed plan for the expedition is walking or canoeing (student choice) and the dates which have been organised are as follows.

Training and Practice weekend: 9th 10th 11th 12th May 2024 (3 x overnight camping)
Qualifying expedition: 6th 7th 8th July 2024 (2 x overnight camping)

The cost for the WithDave expedition package is £495 (walking) and £586 (canoeing), this includes the hire and use of specialist camping and navigation equipment that will be needed for the experience as well as boating equipment if students are canoeing. Due to this being a residential trip which is directly associated with GMS, behavioural expectations, and sanctions in line with school policies still apply. Details regarding all necessary kit/equipment and the payment will follow in the new year.

If GMS students did not want to use the options for the expedition, offered by school they can use the 'Opportunity Finder' on the DofE website to find an Approved Activity Provider (AAP) offering an expedition package which suits them.

Students are required by the Duke of Edinburgh's conditions to attend all the expedition training and to have demonstrated the required level of competence and behaviour in order to be able to participate in the final assessed expedition.

***The 20 expedition conditions can be found on the DofE website.**

eDofE and the DofE app

Participants can create their DofE programme and record their progress for the 4 sections using eDofE, the DofE's digital system, available online at eDofE.org and through the DofE app – downloadable for free.

If your son/daughter decides to enrol **for the first time**, we will set up their eDofE account and they will receive details of how to sign in and get started.

Signing up

The cost of registering for the Silver level of the DofE Award at GMS is £30 per participant, payable via WisePay. You must also complete an MS Consent Form, which can be found on WisePay. Payment and form completion is needed before 13th December 2023. This covers your son/daughter's participation place, Welcome Pack, and Licensed Organisation fee. The Welcome Pack will be sent to their home address and includes their personalised DofE Discount Card.

If you would like any further information, please contact me.

Many thanks for your support and I look forward to helping your son/daughter to achieve through their DofE.

Yours faithfully

Steve Goodright
Head of Physical Education
DofE Award Manager