



LYMM HIGH SCHOOL

Frequently Asked Questions



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What is the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme?

The Duke of Edinburgh award was founded in 1956 by Prince Phillip, Duke of Edinburgh, and recognises the achievements of young people completing a specified series of activities that not only benefit the young person but also their community. It was predominantly designed by John Hunt, a British army officer who had led the first successful climb of Everest in 1953.

Why would my child benefit from completing the award?

There are a number of benefits to taking part: pushing personal boundaries; experiencing new activities and challenges; acquiring new skills; and enhancing a CV. DofE also makes participants highly attractive applicants to

universities and potential employers. The awards are endorsed by a number of corporate supporters including Starbucks, FedEx, British Gas, ITV, Halfords, Google, Marks & Spencer, Unilever, Barclays and Royal Mail.

DofE helps participants develop leadership, teamwork, self-motivation, communication, confidence, consideration and the ability to learn.

Which year groups can participate in the DofE award scheme?

There are 3 progressive levels: Bronze, Silver and Gold. At Lymm HS, we run DofE programmes in the following year groups:

Year 9 – Bronze

Year 10 – Silver

Year 12 – Gold

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Participants embarking on the Silver Award do not need to have completed the Bronze award beforehand; similarly, participants about to start the Gold Award do not need to have completed the Bronze or Silver Awards, although they will find completing the award more straightforward and shorter if they have done.

How long does a DofE award take?

The DofE award scheme aims to encourage independence, responsibility, organisation and communication by participants. When students first sign up, they will be registered on eDofE (the online DofE system) with staff support, where they'll complete their personal details, create log

in information and set the timescales for their Volunteering, Physical and Skill sections. After that, it is the student's responsibility to choose an activity for their 3 sections, set their aims (including choosing an Assessor) and then complete the chosen activity for the timescale set.

Whilst students will be supported whenever they need and encouraged, they will not continually be prompted to complete their eDofE logging as the award dictates that participants should show independence and be responsible for these aspects themselves. We encourage parents to use their child's login information regularly to check on their progress.

Timescales for each award

Volunteering, Physical & Skill

Expeditions

Bronze

Sections to last: 6 months, 3 months & 3 months

(Participants can choose any of the 3 sections to complete for 6 months)

Expeditions x 2 – 2 days, 1 night

(Practice & Qualifying)

Silver *

Sections to last: 12 months, 6 months & 3 months

(Participants must do their Volunteering for either 12 or 6 months)

Expeditions x 2 – 3 days, 2 nights

(Practice & Qualifying)

Gold *

Sections to last: 18 months, 12 months & 6 months

(Participants must do their Volunteering for either 18 or 12 months)

Expeditions x 2 – 4 days, 3 nights

(Practice & Qualifying)

Residential x 5 days

* The timescales shown for these awards assume participants have not completed the previous award. Timescales will be reduced in one of the sections where students have completed the previous award – please see Assembly PPT or DofE website for full details.

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Why are Year 11 and Year 13 not able to participate in DofE?

DofE is an integral and long-standing element of our extra-curricular programme in school, however our biggest priority is to ensure our students leave school with the best possible set of qualifications they can. As such, we want to reduce the inevitable pressure in students' final year of GCSEs and A-levels, but nevertheless provide opportunities to complete DofE at other times. If your child still wants to complete a DofE award during Year 11 or Year 13, there are many other Licensed Organisations who run DofE programmes, for example Scout and Guide groups, Cadets and Church groups.

How can I access any paperwork that has been sent home if my child loses it?

All letters and expedition information are placed on the school's website under Enrichment/Duke of Edinburgh's Award. For any additional questions, your child should either pop along to the next drop-in DofE session with James Hellmers (from Get Outside The Classroom who is supporting DofE in school) or email James at james@getoutsidetheclassroom.co.uk Participants can also get in touch with James through the messaging service within eDofE, though please be aware that the support is part-time, so queries may take a few days to receive a response.

Does it matter if my son/daughter cannot commit to one of the expedition dates or the training day?

Unfortunately, yes, participants do need to commit to the training day in full, the practice

expedition and the qualifying expedition in order to successfully complete their DofE award. The training day forms part of the award itself and teaches participants the skills they will need to successfully complete their expeditions. These will include basic navigation, cooking a meal, using a stove, pitching a tent, packing a rucksack and first aid.

What sections will my son/daughter need to complete to gain the Duke of Edinburgh award?

There are 4 sections to complete for Bronze and Silver (each for differing periods of time) and 5 sections for Gold:

Volunteering

Undertaking service to individuals or the community.

Physical

Improving in an area of sport, dance or fitness activities.

Skill

Developing practical and social skills, as well as personal interests.

Expedition

Planning, training for and completion of an adventurous journey in the UK

Residential

(Gold award only) – a 5-day residential involving staying and working away from home whilst completing a shared activity. The Residential should be completed with people the participant does not know. Please check with school about your intended residential before committing to it in case it cannot be approved.

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Participants should complete their Volunteering, Physical and Skill sections for approximately 1 hour each week for the duration of the time period.

For these 3 sections, participants must be monitored and assessed by someone with knowledge of their chosen activities; this person is termed the 'Assessor'. Students must also ensure the activity they have chosen is on the Approved List (see DofE Documents on our website) – this will guarantee the section can be approved successfully when complete.

What activities can my son/daughter choose for the Volunteering, Physical and Skill sections?

There are a vast array of activities to choose from – participants need to check the official Approved List of possible activities on either: the DofE noticeboard on the Hall/Art corridor; the official DofE website (www.dofe.org/sections) or under DofE Documents on the school website.

If for some reason, my Year 9 child starts the Bronze award but does not complete it this year, can they finish it the following year?

The intention is that all students will successfully complete their DofE award during the academic year in which they started. We have over 150 students participating in DofE programmes at any one time; it is therefore essential that students are disciplined about setting their aims and logging their evidence so their 4 sections and ultimately their award can be successfully approved. However, we understand that

sometimes in exceptional circumstances a student may have difficulty completing part of their award.

Due to the numbers of new students wishing to start DofE each year in the above year groups, we unfortunately cannot guarantee a student being able to defer to another academic year to complete missed expeditions. That said, where exceptional circumstances have occurred, we will try to help your child complete their award.

Students can always continue to complete their DofE award at any point until their 25th birthday. Once a student leaves Lymm HS, we will archive their eDofE account and therefore cease to monitor further progress if incomplete, but hopefully they will choose to finish the award with another organisation; many universities offer DofE for example.

Participating in the award seems to cost more than I thought – why is this?

We are currently a Direct Licenced Centre (DLC) for DofE, meaning we can offer, directly monitor and verify our students in accessing DofE. One of the four sections the students need to complete is the Expedition and to meet our licence agreement as well as national standards of good practice we would need to have a large group of qualified staff so they would be competent to support our students with this part of their award. Some schools are able to offer the expedition using their own staff team but at the moment we are not in a position to do this ourselves. To offer the expedition to the numbers involved we need to engage with an external provider and under our Licence this needs to be an Approved Activity Provider (AAP) as detailed on the main DofE website.

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We have worked with Mark Harnden and his team at Get Outside the Classroom (GOTC) since 2015; they currently run all of our DofE expeditions and training days, and this year they will also be supporting us with the awards in school. It is important to note that the cost of GOTC running the awards in school is not in any way subsidised by the cost to the participants. These extra costs are funded solely by the school. The Bronze award usually costs around £230; the Silver around £360, and the Gold around £420, reflecting the length of the expeditions at each level. If students are eligible for Pupil Premium, we encourage them to use their trip voucher towards the cost of the award.

Why is the DofE training on just 1 day?

Some schools choose to run DofE training all year over a large number of sessions, however having run it this way in the past, we know the likelihood of students missing sessions is far greater, meaning they are not fully prepared for their expeditions.

We choose an INSET day so students do not miss lessons as a result and LHS staff are around in case a need arises, however the day is run by a number of the GOTC expedition leaders, some of whom will be running the 2 expeditions with our students.

My child is thinking about starting the DofE when they are in Year 10 next year - what are the likely times for future training days and expeditions?

Bronze and Silver training days will take place around January/February on either an INSET day or a Saturday at school. Bronze expeditions

usually take place in May and June. Silver and Gold expeditions usually take place in June and July.

What equipment/kit will my child need to take part in DofE?

A full kit list can be found under DofE Documents, but in a nutshell your child will need their own walking boots, plate/bowl/mug/cutlery, sleeping bag, torch and batteries, matches and (ideally) a waterproof jacket, though this can be borrowed. Other equipment that can be borrowed from our external provider includes: tent; rucksack (GOTC or from school); stove and fuel; roll mat. If you do wish to purchase any items, you may wish to make use of the 15% discount at Cotsworld Outdoor using the DofE Participant Reward Card that all participants received. Other options are Go Outdoors and Decathlon. There are also some really useful 'self-help' guides on the DofE website (www.dofe.org) which give advice on what type of kit to purchase, and support with necessary skills needed for the expeditions, such as how to pack a rucksack.

What is eDofE?

eDofE is the online system where participants record and upload their aims, goals, assessor reports and other evidence of their award; in other words, a kind of 'DofE Record of Achievement'. Participants can track their progress and submit their evidence to the DofE leader in school (James Hellmers), who in turn will approve participants' aims, activities and ultimately their evidence of completion, including the Assessor Reports.

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It is essential that participants log on regularly to check for alerts on their account, set their aims/goals and start dates for their sections and upload photos/Assessor Report/other evidence – there will not be formal sessions to do this now that registration is complete for all students, so it is expected that participants will complete this independently either at home or in one of the school computer rooms at lunch or after-school.

Participants should pop along to a drop-in session with James with any queries relating to eDofE. Alternatively, they can email Mark Harnden (mark.harnden@getoutsidetheclassroom.co.uk) or Mrs Hill (shill@lymmhigh.org.uk), our DofE Administrator. There are also various 'self-help' guides relating to eDofE on the DofE website (www.dofe.org), including how to upload evidence and help with logging in.

What is an Assessor Report and when does my child upload it?

An Assessor Report is evidence that participants must upload to their eDofE account in order to demonstrate that they have met the goals that they set for themselves and should be completed by the Assessor for that section at the end of the activity period (e.g. 3, 6, 12 or 18 months). An Assessor Report can only be in the form of one of the following:

- **An uploaded scan of a completed Assessor's Report** (blank versions can be found in the logbook) – choose 'Add Evidence', then select 'Other'; or
- **Text copied from an email** (must include start and end dates of the activity)
- **A report inputted directly by the Assessor to the participant's account**

via www.dofe.org/assessor (Assessors will need the participants eDofE ID number to do this)

Please do not take a photo of a written Assessor Report and upload under the 'Photo' section as these cannot be read clearly so will not be approved – instead please use one of the 3 methods above.

None of my child's friends chose to get involved with DofE and they are a bit worried about who they are going to go in a group with – is there any reassurance I can give them?

Participants will be put in walking groups of no less than 4 for the navigational aspects of the expeditions; we will keep them with friends wherever numbers allow. Where students do not form natural groups, we will do this for them and this will in no way limit their participation in the award. On previous expeditions, participants have shared a tent with a small number of others, and formed part of a slightly larger walking group so that every person is included, even if different friendship groups join together.

DofE is about working with new people (even though it can be scary!) and using the different skills people bring to the group to work effectively as a team to complete the challenge.



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