



4 September 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

The Duke of Edinburgh's Gold Award 2026/27

We are delighted to launch the Gold DofE award again this year to our Year 12 students.

An information evening on the award will be held on Tuesday 15 September at 6.30pm online for you to log on and speak to me and the School of Outdoors team with any queries you may have. [Click here to join the meeting.](#)

Last year, over 200 students took part in the Duke of Edinburgh Awards at Borlase. The DofE Gold Award is open to anyone over the age of 16 and students do not need to have completed previous levels to take part. Although we register the students towards the beginning of Year 12, we can backdate their start day to their 16th birthday, allowing any activities started after their 16th birthday to be included. The Award involves completing five sections: the physical; volunteering; skill, expedition sections and a 5 day/4 night residential placement.

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 and personal interests.

Activities do not need to be completed at school. Where students take part in activities outside school and when the activity is appropriate, it can be counted towards the Award. All activities must be done on a voluntary basis and students are encouraged to organise their own activities. Before undertaking any external activity, please confirm with Ms Mitchell that it will qualify for the Award.

If there is any doubt, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us and a list of programme ideas for each section can be found [here](#). All students taking part in the Award will need to attend meetings throughout the year where they will receive support in completing their Award.

Residential

Must be a minimum of five days/four nights in duration (can be split into two blocks) and have an appointed assessor, led by an organised group. There must be at least 5 people including you in the group, the majority of whom are unknown to you, all of which are undertaking a shared activity where the group share the same aim and experience. You must stay in shared accommodation away from home in an unfamiliar environment, living and eating communally during the evenings.

Further information on the residential section of the award can be found [here](#) along with the opportunity finder to help participants identify suitable activities. Students are responsible for finding and funding their own residential experience.

Expeditions

All expeditions are facilitated by an external company called School of Outdoors. To complete the expedition section students need to take part in: **two training days**, a **practice expedition** and a **qualifying expedition**. The students are required to undertake 7 hours of 'planned activity' during each of the 4 days of the expedition. All expeditions are not a guarantee pass as students can be deferred if deemed to be under performing.

As part of the cost for the DofE Award, the following kit is included by SoO (our expedition provider): tents, stoves and navigation equipment. As part of the Award, students will need to plan and provide their own food, clothing, footwear and personal equipment.

Supervision

The Duke of Edinburgh award requires participants to be unaccompanied and self-reliant on expeditions. Hence, provided students have demonstrated the required level of competence and have shown suitable behaviour during training, they will not be directly supervised during the expedition. Appropriately qualified expedition staff will be at a ratio of one per two teams and each DofE group will be met at checkpoints along their planned route and will have been briefed on what to do in case of emergency. Expedition staff will be on site at the campsite overnight.

Whilst on expedition any communication between parents/guardians and students will need to go through expedition staff as it is a requirement of the Duke of Edinburgh award that direct communication is not permitted.

Students undertaking Gold walking expeditions will be provided with ongoing training to bring everyone to the correct standard.

1. Training day - 6 February 2027 *Location: SWBGS*

During this training we look at navigation, route planning, first aid, emergency procedures, camp craft, expedition cooking and nutrition, health and safety and kit requirements

2. Practical Training Day - 17 April 2027 *Aston Rowant*

Going through basic navigation, kit packing and team work.

2. Practice Expedition – 4-6 June 2027 *Brecon Beacons, Wales*

Four day, three night practice expedition.

This will include a mixture of directly supervised and remotely supervised planned activity where the participants will develop their skills learned in the training weekend and apply them to expedition life.

3. Assessment Expedition – 10 - 14 July 2027 *Elan Valley, Wales*

Four day, three night assessed expedition.

The assessed expedition is the final part of the expedition section where the participants can prove to the assessor what they have learnt and how they have developed as young people.

These dates are fixed and cannot be changed and students are required to attend all training days and expeditions in their entirety. In the event that illness or injury prevents a student attending, we will do our best to arrange an alternative but we cannot guarantee this. Any changes may be subject to an administration fee of £25.

If other school events clash with the training and expedition dates, we ask students and their families to make a decision on which to pursue. We of course want students to make the most of the opportunities offered to them but we are unable to accommodate changes of date for this reason.

Specific information such as the timings and location of the expeditions will be sent out nearer the time.

What is included in the cost?

- 2 days training
- 4 day practice
- 4 day assessment
- Core kits hire i.e. tents, stoves and navigation equipment.
- Duke of Edinburgh registration costs and insurance

What is **not** included in the cost?

- Personal clothing, footwear and equipment
- Food
- Transport
- Personal spending money

Transport is NOT provided by SWBGS

As part of the Duke Of Edinburgh Expedition section we feel it is beneficial to students to organise their own transport, this buys into the organisation skills and the being self reliant. Now they can do the obvious and get lifts, in the past though students have organised buses, coaches or trains within their teams or as a big group. We are happy to advise along the way.

Cost of the Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award

The cost of the walking expedition will be between £740 - £760; a price range for the expedition has been given as costs will vary depending on the number of students taking part. We are asking for a **non-refundable deposit of £200**, to be paid by 9am Monday 12 October 2026. This will be followed by the first instalment due by Friday 8 January 2027, the second by Friday 5 March 2027 and the remaining balance to be paid by Monday 26 April 2027.

Please note cancellations made 10 weeks prior to the start date will forfeit deposits only. Cancellations within 6-10 weeks will forfeit 75% of the total fee and if a cancellation is made within 6 weeks of the start date, all fees will be forfeited. DoE at Borlase does not come under the normal trips financial support.

There are other possibilities of accessing funding and I can supply more details, although this is not guaranteed.

If you wish to take part in the Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme please log onto [ParentPay](#) using your username and password to pay the **non refundable deposit of £200 by Monday 12 October 2026**. If you need a copy of your activation details please email parentpay@swbgs.com.

Yours faithfully

Ms S Mitchell
DofE Coordinator

DUKE OF EDINBURGH GOLD Award – Year 12

It is important that you are aware of the following when paying your deposit:

- 1) It is essential that your son/daughter attends all of the published dates for the training, practice and assessed expeditions according to the published information. We are unable to offer alternatives if your son/daughter is unable to attend.
- 2) Your son/daughter must complete the previous section of the expedition Award to proceed to the next section i.e. in order to complete the practice expedition you must complete the training and in order to complete the assessment you must complete the training and practice expeditions.
- 3) Once paid the initial deposit is non-refundable, along with any subsequent payments. A payment schedule will be published for each programme. Between paying the deposit and the deadline for the final payment you will be required to pay any cost incurred on your child's behalf if you cancel e.g. registration fees. If you cancel within 4 weeks of the start you will be required to pay the full amount. If you decide to cancel you should send an email to dofe@swbgs.com for the attention of Ms Mitchell.
- 4) Your son/daughter signs up as an individual to the Award scheme. Groups for the expedition will be arranged by the DofE coordinator and the AAP in order to meet the DofE requirements.