

Frequently Asked Questions

Q What is The Duke of Edinburgh's Award?

A It is an award recognising the achievements of young people that has been running for more than sixty years and now has more than 300,000 participants each year across the country. The DoE award is non-competitive and provides challenges, teamwork and opportunities for new experiences and gives recognition for achievements.

Q What is Sharples School's involvement?

A In September 2018 Sharples School became a licensed centre for The Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Sharples School students are able to enrol with the DofE organisation and carry out their Activities supervised by Sharples School staff. School staff will lead and supervise the expedition, lend some of the essential kit to students and provide training and preparation for the expedition.

Q For the first two years, the DofE Bronze Award at Sharples was available to Year 10 students. Why is that changing?

A From now on, our Bronze Award will be for Year 9 students, to bring the benefits to a younger year group and to allow students to progress to the Silver Award in Year 10, if they wish. This year, the Bronze Award is still available to Year 10, so that their year group doesn't miss out.

Q Will there be priority given to either Year 9 or Year 10?

A Neither, we want good numbers of both year groups to take part.

Q How many places are available?

A 60 places in total between Year 9 & Year 10 students. If more students apply then we will need to allocate places. This will be done on the basis of who the school believes will benefit most from the scheme, based on a wide range of factors, including who we think will be committed and will complete the award.

Q How much will it cost?

A We ask for an £80 total contribution towards the costs of providing the award, including the school's annual DofE licence fee, individual student registration with DofE, campsite fees, transport for the expeditions, fuel for camp stoves and costs of maintaining the school's expedition equipment and kit store. This can be paid in manageable instalments over the year. We will ask for an initial payment of £30 at the start. For pupil premium/free school meals students the total contribution is £40 and the initial payment is £15. Once paid, these payments are not refundable.

Q What is not included in the £80 payment?

A Food and clothing for the training walks and expeditions is not included and must be provided by students and their families. In terms of specialist walking and camping equipment see the next question as we do lend some equipment.

Q Will I need to provide all my own equipment?

A We will lend "core" equipment for all students from the school store of DofE equipment. This will include tents, camping stoves, stove fuel, maps and compasses. Other essential equipment will include rucksacks, waterproof coats and trousers, walking boots, sleeping bags and roll mats and these are provided by students. We have some of these items available to lend to students who cannot provide their own, subject to availability including sizes. We will have a questionnaire for students asking about such equipment, what students will be able to provide and what they would borrow from us, if available. We will then see what equipment is needed and how much of this we have available to lend to students.

Q If I want to buy some equipment, is any advice or help available?

A Yes, our Expedition Kit List can be seen on the Expedition section of our website, so you know what is needed. There is also a Guidance for Buying Equipment which gives you advice about the sort of quality needed, where you might look and what it should cost. The Guidance tells you what you don't need as well as what you do and when cheaper equipment will be perfectly fine for what we will do. Your DofE registration will give you a discount card offering 10% or more off with retailers including GoOutdoors, Blacks and Millets. Other retailers may offer discounts too. Just ask.

Q Can I do any of my Activities in school?

A Yes, provided it is not in lesson time. To qualify for DofE Activities, anything you do must be giving your own time, which can include breaks, lunches or before and after school. Examples that can qualify for the Volunteering Activity might be running sports practice sessions for younger students or providing Maths booster sessions for younger students. Similarly, you may be able to do your Physical or Skill Activity in school, perhaps with the school stage production, a sports team or a school club. Last year the Running Club was popular for students doing their Physical Activity and was good training for the expeditions too.

Q Will I need to stay after school?

A Doing your DofE Award comes with an expectation and commitment that you will go above and beyond the minimum requirements. So yes, you will quite often need to be in school outside the normal school hours for DofE reasons. Of course you would always have advance notice. Your three Activities are planned by you, so it is up to you whether these are in school or not. The preparation sessions for the expeditions will start in March and continue into the summer (see the Sharples DofE calendar on the school website). These sessions have to be after school, for example learning to pitch and pack away tents and practising cooking our meals on camp stoves (and then eating them!). These will not usually take more than an hour after school and you would have plenty of advance notice.

Q I play netball for the school team. Is this a Skill or a Physical Activity?

A It can be either, but not both. If you choose it for your Skill then you'll need something else for your Physical Activity. Or vice versa. If netball is your Skill then you'll need to identify particular skills (eg shooting or catching and passing) which you are going to try to develop.

Q Will I be on my own in the Expedition?

A No, the Expedition will be in teams of 5 or 6 students or so, planning, navigating and walking together and supporting each other. The team will also camp together at the same campsite as the other teams. Tents will be three person tents shared by two or three students. Staff will be in the nearby area to supervise but we will not be walking with you, so we will not be guiding you or telling you which way to go. We won't let you get lost though and we will have control points to supervise potential risks, like roads. Staff will be camping at the same campsite with you.

Q Where will the Expeditions be?

A The practice expedition in May will be in the Rivington area, near Horwich. The assessed expedition will be in the Waddow Hall area near Clitheroe, north of Blackburn. See the Calendar for dates. We are following the DofE guidelines for Bronze Award and staying within a 30 mile or so radius of school. The West Pennine/Lancashire countryside has plenty of scope for us to spend two days in beautiful places close to nature. At Bronze Award we will be staying at lowland levels, farmland, woods, riversides, etc on waymarked paths. We will not be on mountain or open moorland terrain.

Q Will the Training Walks and Expeditions be in the school holidays?

A No, they will be at weekends, but they will be in term time, not during the school holidays. See the Calendar on this website for dates.