



25th September 2026

Dear Students & Parents/Carers,

The Duke of Edinburgh's Bronze Award

The Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award has been successfully delivered to Sharples students for many years now. Year 9 students have the opportunity to complete the Bronze Award, and will be able to complete the Silver Award in Year 10 if they wish.

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is the world's largest youth achievement award and gives participants the opportunity to develop skills such as independence, teamwork, community spirit and resilience, as well as trying out new activities. These are qualities that future employers and universities look for in a young adult and can be the key to unlock success.

Students must complete a Volunteering, a Physical and a Skill Activity over an hour a week for a three-month period (one activity must be for six months). These are organised by the student in their own time. Students must also complete a two-day, one night walking and camping expedition in the countryside, organised by the school. More details, including FAQs and our DofE calendar for 2026-27, can be found on the DofE section of the school's website at www.sharplesschool.co.uk/duke-of-edinburgh/.

In order to fund registration, campsites and equipment the school will be asking for a total payment of £75, payable in two instalments. Again, more details of what is included are on the school's website.

Bronze Taster Programme

We will run a short **taster programme** in October to help both students and ourselves to decide if the Bronze Award programme is suitable for them. The taster programme is free of charge. No payment is required unless you go on to register for the Bronze Award. Students will need to attend both parts of the taster programme in order to be able to register for a place on the Bronze Award. We want students and families to be sure it is right for them before committing their time and money. These are the two parts of the taster programme:-

1. Students must attend a 60 minute classroom session focused on planning their three activities (Volunteering, Physical & Skill). This will be straight after school in a classroom. The dates are as follows:-
 - Thursday 8th October – students in 9SHAR forms
 - Wednesday 14th October – 9PLES forms
2. Students must attend a two-hour training walk from 9am to 11am (9SHAR) or from 11am to 1pm (9PLES) on Saturday 10th October. This will involve walking in the Eagley Valley area directly from school, in small groups each supervised by one of the school's DofE staff members. Further details are on the **taster training walk** section below. Outdoor skills and physical fitness are not being tested at this stage, but commitment and team spirit are.

Headteacher Ms C. Molyneux: headteacher@sharplesschool.co.uk

Admin Office: office@sharplesschool.co.uk

Sharples School, A Multi Academy Trust, A Private Limited Company by guarantee.

Registered Company No. 09677469 Registered office address: Sharples School, Hill Cot Road, Bolton, BL1 8SN



The SHAR/PLES separation is only to manage numbers for the Taster Programme and will not apply to the Bronze Award Programme itself.

Again, attendance is compulsory if students are to register for a place on the Bronze Award programme, so if there is a genuine problem with attending either the training walk or the after-school session then please email me in advance to explain.

Taster Training Walk – Saturday 10th October 2026

We are running a two-hour taster training walk in two sessions:- 9am to 11am (**for 9SHAR students**) and 11am to 1pm (**for 9PLES students**). Students applying for the Bronze Award Programme 2026-27 must attend one of these sessions, unless alternative arrangements have been made in advance.

This is an important first opportunity to train for our summer expedition with a short walk in the countryside near school. By running two separate walks we can keep group sizes small and students have more involvement. Each group will be accompanied by one of the school staff DofE team. We will be developing our skills in map work and route-planning as well as understanding the Countryside Code and learning about clothing and equipment for walking outdoors in the countryside. The overall emphasis will be on teamwork. It will give students a good idea of what to expect from the DofE programme before they commit themselves.

We will meet at the Health Hub leisure centre carpark at the back of school at 9am or at 11am and walk directly from school. We will be walking in the Eagley Brook area and we will be back again at school two hours later.

The weather in October is quite likely to be cold and wet. We need to be wearing suitable clothing and footwear if we are to stay comfortable and enjoy the morning. Students will need the following clothing and equipment:-

- Waterproof jacket with hood (and waterproof trousers, if you have them – but don't buy specially.)
- Small backpack. Many students will be able to use their school bag/backpack.
- Spare warm jumper or fleece. Hat and gloves.
- Track suit trousers or leggings. Not jeans.
- Walking boots if possible. Trainers will be acceptable for this half day walk if necessary. Expect them to get wet and muddy.
- Water bottle with water and some snacks, e.g. cereal bar, chocolate, sandwich, fruit, etc.

For this training walk, students will be accompanied by school staff at all times. School will provide maps. Students do not need to bring money and the walk itself is free.

How do we sign up for the Bronze Taster Programme?

If you would like your son or daughter to take part in our DofE Bronze Award Taster Programme in October then please reply to the short survey on this link:-

<https://forms.gle/kPYkcr16zCChvNCg6>

This covers both the classroom session and the Taster Training Walk. It will be easier to click on the link on the emailed version of this letter. However, if you cannot access the survey or if you have any questions, then please email me on i.davies@sharplesschool.co.uk or call the school's phone number.

Yours faithfully,

Ivor Davies

Headteacher Ms C. Molyneux: headteacher@sharplesschool.co.uk

Admin Office: office@sharplesschool.co.uk

Sharples School, A Multi Academy Trust, A Private Limited Company by guarantee.

Registered Company No. 09677469 Registered office address: Sharples School, Hill Cot Road, Bolton, BL1 8SN

Specialist Schools and Academics Trust
Cultural Diversity
Quality Standard

