

Bronze Award - 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 did that change?

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.

Q How many places are available?

A 90 places in total are definitely available, which was the number that did the Bronze Award programme at Sharples last year. If more students apply then we will try to provide more places, thinking particularly about staffing numbers for the expeditions.

Q How much will it cost?

A We ask for a £60 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 £30

and the initial payment is £15. **Once paid, these payments are not refundable, so students need to be committed to completing the award.**

Q What is not included in the £60 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. The three activities (Volunteering, Physical and Skill) are organised by the student themselves, either outside school or perhaps inside school. Any costs (for example sports club subscriptions) are the student's own responsibility.

Q Will I need to provide all my own expedition 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 quite a big store 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 helping

staff to run sports practice sessions for younger students or helping provide 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. The Running Club was popular for students doing their Physical Activity and is 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 Are there any changes in the Activities requirements?

A We are making our Volunteering and Physical activities more rigorous, to improve student experience. For Volunteering we require students to do something outside their own wider family, for example in a charity or primary school or other organisation. We want our students to benefit from getting involved in their wider community. For Physical, students doing a solo activity such as walking, running or cycling will need to join an organised group, such as the school Running Club, or an athletics club, or Bolton Park Run, where an adult can coach them and be their assessor.

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 I love football. Can I play it for my Physical Activity, coach a junior team for my Volunteering and develop a specific skill in football for my Skills Activity?

A You can do any one of those things, but not more than one. We want you to broaden out your DofE experiences and not focus on one area alone. Similarly, students can use mosque-based activities for either their Volunteering or Skills sections, but not for both.

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 or June will be in the Turton area. This will be a day walk on a Saturday, not a two day, overnight expedition. The Qualifying Expedition will be in the Rivington area near Horwich and Chorley. 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. If you have any other questions then please email us at:-

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