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Frequently Asked Questions

The Weald

COMMUNITY SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM

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Welcome Pack

How do I start my DofE award?

Now you have been issued with your log in, you need to download the app and enter your details.

Bronze:

You then need to think about which section you will complete over 6 months and which sections you will complete over 3 months. You will need to think about possible activities you would like to complete and find a suitable assessor.

Silver:

You then need to think about which section you will complete over 6 months and which section you will complete over 3 months. You MUST do volunteering for 6 months, but can choose from your physical or skill, which other you do for 6 months. You will need to think about possible activities you would like to complete and find a suitable assessor.

[Ideas for Activities - The Duke of Edinburgh's Award](#)

How do I get a welcome pack?

When you first log in, you will be asked to fill in your details including your home address, this will then trigger a notification to the DofE HQ to send out your welcome pack. If you have not received your pack after 21 days of entering your details you will need to contact DofE directly at ASL@DofE.org.

[Digital copies of the Welcome Packs - The Duke of Edinburgh's Award](#)

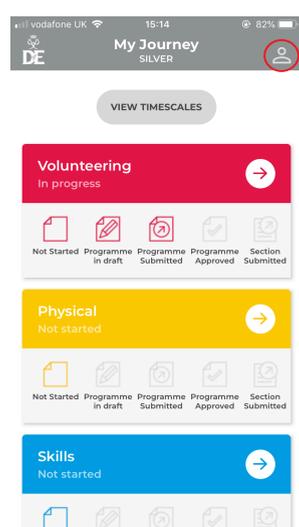
How to access the App?

All DofE participants can use the DofE app to plan activities, get approval from Leaders, record evidence, submit programmes for completion and more. Plus, you can use it to sync important dates to your phone calendar and add your personalised DofE Card to your digital wallet, so you can make the most of your exclusive discounts.

Go to the App store or Google play and search 'DofE'

[DofE App FAQs](#)

How to submit sections and upload evidence?



When you first log in you will be asked to enter your details. Once you have entered your details, you will get the following screen. Here you can submit your programme plan (what you are going to do for each section), you will need to ensure you have got your programme approved before starting the section.

As you complete your section, you can upload evidence to show how you have completed your section.

How to choose an assessor?

An Assessor checks on your progress and agrees the completion of a section of your programme. They must be independent and over the age of 18. Therefore, they cannot be a member of your family.

An Assessor can be anyone who is interested in helping you to achieve, has some knowledge of the activity you are doing and can be available over the time you're doing it. They will produce or sign off the relevant Assessor's report for that section, which is uploaded into eDofE.

The Assessor should have knowledge of the activity being undertaken and be aware of your objectives. Give them the relevant sectional Assessor's card from your Welcome Pack. The Assessor should also be available at key stages throughout your experience in order to assess your contribution and development. If you are struggling to find Assessors, talk to your DofE Leader.

[How to complete an assessors report?](#)

Once a section is complete the Assessor will meet with you to discuss your performance, experiences and achievements.

The Assessor will also decide whether you have met the DofE requirements – that you've demonstrated effort, perseverance, improvement and made progress towards your section goals. This information, along with comments from the Assessor, should be recorded on the Assessor's report which can be submitted online. - [Assessor's Report - The Duke of Edinburgh's Award](#)

Equipment

What kit do I need?

We will cover this a number of times prior to the training weekend, and their expedition weekends.

A kit list guide can be found at:

https://www.dofe.org/shop/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/DofE_Expedition_KitList_April2024.pdf.

What happens if I forget something?

If you realise you've forgotten something once you've started, then please tell a member of staff at the earliest convenience. Where possible we may be able to support you or obtain the item you are missing.

Why can't I wear trainers or inappropriate shoes for the expeditions?

When walking over rough ground with a heavy pack, your ankle can be affected, and a trainer/low cutting shoe would not offer the type of support you'll need. It is recommended you wear shoes such as walking boots which have a good grip, heels and ankle support.

Do I need to bring a spare pair of shoes/flip flops?

Bringing a spare pair of shoes is optional, if you have enough room and don't mind carrying a little bit more weight, they can be nice to wear once you have arrived on the campsite.

Can I wear shorts?

There is no reason why you can't wear shorts, however wearing trousers can provide protection from the sun (especially the back of your knees), from cuts and scratches from long grass and from biting insects, such as ticks. If you would like to wear shorts please ensure they are baggy and reach the end of your finger tips, no short running/cycling shorts.

Can I wear a vest top?

We strongly recommend a t-shirt whilst completing your expedition as the straps on your bag can rub causing your skin to become sore and irritated. Covering your shoulders also reduces the risk of sunburn. We recommended a sports top as they are quick drying and breathable.

Which items of clothing should be avoided whilst on your expedition?

Cotton and denim both absorb lots of water and dry very slowly – so if they get wet, they will potentially make you feel very cold and uncomfortable. Fleece and quick drying synthetic materials are better.

Why should I carry a woolly hat and gloves, even though it will be summer time?

During the day the weather could be really warm, but once the sun goes down it can turn quite cold in the evening.

How many spare clothes should I carry?

This depends on the length of your expedition. As a minimum, you should have the clothes you are wearing (including a warm jumper), as well as a complete spare set of clothes. Also bring a pair of socks for each day plus a spare, in case they get damp/wet.

What are the non-negotiables on the kit list?

These are key items of the kit such as waterproof jacket and trousers and walking boots which are key for the safety and wellbeing of the participant. We reserve the right to turn away a participant if they turn up for an expedition without the correct equipment.

Can I bring my Phone and/or music device?

As in line with school policy phones are not permitted on any DofE expedition, except for 1 which will be a designated emergency phone. During the entirety of your Expedition, you will need to turn it off and put in a sealable waterproof packaging and then left securely in your bag. Your phone is with you for emergency purposes only.

If there is any reason why you would need access to your phone during the course of the expedition, such as medical reasons, please inform a member of staff.

Can I bring a Camera and/or Video Recorder?

Yes – this is a great idea and will help to record some of those great DofE memories. Any pictures/videos which are taken can be uploaded as evidence for your DofE aim/presentation. If you did bring a camera/video, make sure you can protect it from the elements. Please remember that you are responsible for your own equipment and any valuables are bought at your own risk.

Do I need Walking Poles?

Some participants find poles really useful – particularly when the participant has issues with their ankles/knees/hips. When poles are used correctly, they help to take some of the weight off your legs and help with balance over rough terrain.

What are Gaiters? Do I need them?

Gaiters are a waterproof material which range in size and cover the top of your boot/bottom of your trouser and can come up as high as the top of your calf. Gaiters are used to keep the top of your boot/bottom of your trouser mud free, grit free and keeping water out.

Do I need a first aid kit? If so, what should be in it?

Your own personal, small first aid kit is really useful. Buy a basic kit or create one yourself. We suggest you include the following: blister plasters, ordinary plasters, cleansing wipes, bandage, sterile dressing, small scissors and plastic gloves.

I have personal medication, do I have to hand it in?

Please ensure you bring your personal medication. All personal medication including prescription and over the counter medications need to be placed into a clear AND clearly labelled plastic bag and handed into a member of staff at the start. No student is allowed to carry their own medication unless it meets the following criteria:

- The child is diabetic and requires access to their insulin
- The child is asthmatic and requires access to their preventer inhaler
- The child has an allergy and requires access to their Epi Pen
- If a child requires an antihistamine or medication whilst out on a hike, students will be given the correct dosage to carry with them. The student will need to communicate with a staff member if/when taken.

Do I need to bring any money?

Yes – this is initially for if there is an emergency situation and you don't have any cell reception but there is a pay phone. This money could be used before your expedition, on something you have forgetting, or afterwards – whilst you are waiting for your transportation

Can I bring any fun items?

Once you arrive at camp, and have put your tent up and had your evening meal, you may want a

form of entertainment – this could include a deck of cards, a book, a Frisbee etc. No electronic devices (including pads, laptops etc).

What size rucksack will I need?

On expedition, you will be carrying your own kit, all your food plus part of a tent or a cooking stove. Therefore, you have to make sure your rucksack is big enough to do this. We suggest a 60 litre rucksack for Bronze. Try on your rucksack before you buy or borrow one to make sure it is comfortable, many shops have rucksacks for women and smaller young men so please ask. Do check that the rucksack has a waterproof cover to protect your kit from the rain.

What sleeping mat do I need?

You can buy or borrow a mat that self inflates - these are comfy and pack down small but they can be heavy. Or go for a foam mat that rolls up and can be stored outside your rucksack - these are cheaper but more bulky. There are no air pumps so avoid the 'mattress' style sleeping mats. Avoid yoga mats as they are very thin and won't offer good insulation. No camp beds as these add unnecessary weight that you will have to carry.

Can you give any advice on a sleeping bag?

A good night's sleep is essential on expeditions so make sure your sleeping bag is warm and comfortable. It also needs to be packed down small and put in your rucksack. Think about the location of your expedition and the time of year - the label will tell you the right season for that sleeping bag. You may want to buy a three season sleeping bag if you plan to do all three levels of the award. You don't need a pillow - you can use your fleece!

Can I save any money on equipment?

Every young person doing their DofE Expedition can save money on expedition stuff at most outdoor shops both in store and online. Show them your card and tell them you are doing DofE and they will usually give you a discount.

Rucksack packing tips

The way you pack your rucksack is important. You will get training on this at school or on the practice but it is good to know in advance. Pack clothing and food in separate dry bags or thick plastic bags. This will keep your stuff dry and help you find things. Pack essential items such as lunch, water, snacks, personal meds, first aid kit and waterproofs somewhere accessible such as side pockets or the top of your rucksack. Items such as dinner, sleeping bag and spare clothes can be packed lower down. Remember to leave room for part of the tent or stove on expedition. You WILL be carrying one of these items - unless you have an exemption for medical reasons.

Food and Water

How much water should I carry?

As a minimum, you should carry 2 litres of water when you are walking. It is worth having water prior to leaving the campsite in the morning and upon your arrival into the new campsite.

Will I be able to top up my drinking water throughout the day?

Please make sure you have filled up your bottles prior to leaving camp. Additionally, throughout the day, each checkpoint manned by staff will have spare water with them so you'll be able to top up any water bottles.

Can I use a Camelbak, Platypus or other Hydration system?

These are good, as you can take on water without messing around to get a water bottle from your bag. The downside is it is difficult to keep an eye on how low your supply of water is getting. These types of water storage devices have been known to leak, so it is worth carrying a 1 litre bottle too.

What food do I need?

Prior to the Training Weekend, and Expedition, we will suggest some ideas to the students. The type of food you should think about bringing should be able to cook in one pan and can be quickly prepared. For menu ideas, please see google classroom.

Who buys the food?

Students must cook as part of their team and must create an equitable way of deciding who provides the food for the shared meals. The cost of this food shop should be fairly split between the team.

How will I cook my food?

The students will be cooking on Trangia stoves that will be lent to them. Trangia's are a fuel based stove – each Trangia will contain 2 pans, a hob, gas can, a lid and a handle. All students will be given training on how to use the Trangia safely and when they are in Camp they will be supervised whilst they use them. Gas will be issued on the morning of the expedition and will be collected at the end of the expedition. Students will need to provide their own plate/bowl, cutlery and mug.

Students are provided training at the training weekend on how to safely use and cook on a camping stove. When students want to cook their foods they will need to inform a member of staff/assessor so they are supervised whilst they use them.

If you wish to use your own stove then you must demonstrate to a staff member that you can use the stove safely. We do not allow the use of the lightweight 'pocket rocket' stoves as these tend to be inherently unstable.

Should I avoid any food?

Yes – you should avoid any raw meat, poultry or fish – as refrigeration is an issue. The participants' menu will be discussed prior to their training, practice and expeditions weekends. **Please don't bring nuts or nut-based food. Nuts can have serious implications for those around you. We are unable to guarantee a nut-free expedition as so many products say 'traces of nuts' but we ask you to avoid bringing the obvious such as peanut butter, Nutella, pesto (it has cashew nuts), nut-based energy bars and nuts! If you have any food allergies, make sure this is evident on your medical form and let us know about your medication.**

How can you reduce waste?

We are committed to reducing waste on our expeditions and so are the campsites we use. As a result, some of them don't have bins because there are no staff to put them out for collection regularly. The campsites expect you to take your rubbish home with you which can take up precious room in your rucksack. To reduce waste:

- Test food at home before the expedition. If you don't like it, you can bring something else. You may have to take home leftover food so plan your food and portions carefully.
- Bring fruit with a skin on - cut up fruit in a plastic box takes up room and you have to bring the box home.
- Bring lunch in a tupperware box (it is reusable - you could use it as your bowl for dinner!) or tinfoil. Avoid shop bought sandwiches to cut down on packaging.
- Agree dinner as a team and share out the ingredients, this avoids everyone bringing a bag of pasta and then having to bring the extra home.
- Choose recyclable pots and packaging that you can bring home and put in your home recycling bin.
- Choose snacks that can pack down such as energy bars.

The Campsite

What type of tent will I be sleeping in?

Tents will be provided from the school. These tents will be 2 or 3 person tents and will be carried by the participant for the whole expedition. If you wish to use your own tent, you must demonstrate to a staff member that your tent is suitable for the expedition i.e. lightweight hike tent not a family tent.

What facilities will be on the campsite?

Facilities on a campsite vary from site to site. As a minimum for your hygiene, It is recommend you carry soap, deodorant and a towel.

For Bronze and Silver Expeditions - The majority of the campsites used will have basic facilities, such as a toilet and wash basins – it is unlikely there will be any showers

- Blackland farm has access to toilets and showers but no washing up facilities are available.
- Washington/Haven/Ecclesden Campsite is a commercial campsite so has toilets/showers and wash up facilities.

Students are reminded to leave the facilities as they find them. Toilet paper will be provided but there will be a limited supply (it is not to be used for drying wet boots for example!). If you do carry some, make sure it is protected from the elements.

Students will require washing up items such as washing up liquid and a teatowel.

Bronze camp at:

- Blackland Farm, East Grinstead (Training Weekend)
- Washington Campsite, Washington (Qualifier Weekend)

Silver Camp at:

- Ecclesden Farm Campsite, Angmering & Washington Campsite, Washington (Practice Weekend)
- Haven Farm, Ashdown & Blackland Farm, East Grinstead (Qualifier Weekend)

Medical and Illness

If I have a medical condition, illness or injury – Can I still take part?

We will try to be accommodating to your needs wherever possible; however, expeditions are strenuous and often operate in remote areas – so we need to be considerate of this. If you are ill or have an injury in the days prior to the practice or qualifier, please talk to your DOfE leader. If you need to take regular medication, please can you advise your leader and ensure all medication is placed in a named clear bag and is handed into the staff member at the beginning of the weekend.

For other conditions, there may be a way to apply for some exceptions from the DofE expedition requirements.

I have personal medication, do I have to hand it in?

Please ensure you bring your personal medication. All personal medication including prescription and over the counter medications need to be placed into a clear + clearly labelled plastic bag and handed into a member of staff at the start. No student is allowed to carry their own medication unless it meets the following criteria:

- The child is diabetic and requires access to their insulin
- The child is asthmatic and requires access to their preventer inhaler
- The child has an allergy and requires access to their Epi Pen
- If a child requires an antihistamine or medication whilst out on a hike, students will be given the correct dosage to carry with them. The student will need to communicate with a staff member if/when taken.

What happens if I am ill or injured whilst on the practice or qualifying weekend?

School staff will be on hand to give you support and first aid. If necessary you will be seen by a medical professional. If you are unable to continue with the expedition due to medical reasons, your parent/Guardian will be asked to collect you, and all parties will be told of the next steps.

What happens if I get bitten by a tick?

Ticks are common in some of the expedition areas. To prevent being bitten by a tick, it is recommended you cover up (such as wearing trousers instead of shorts or a long sleeved top instead of a t-shirt) and use insect repellent. If you are bitten by a tick please inform a member of Staff. If you find a tick once you arrive home, please find advice to safely remove the tick and information on the signs and symptoms of lyme disease.

Electronic Communication

Can I bring my mobile phone?

No - Each team is permitted to bring only one mobile phone. This must remain sealed in your rucksack and for use in an emergency only. Please ensure your emergency phone is fully charged and has sufficient credit.

Will I be able to contact/receive any communication with my family/friends during the expedition?

It is highly recommended that you don't try to contact your Son/Daughter. The team's mobile phone is only to be used in an emergency.

How can my parents get hold of Son/Daughter during the expedition?

If your message is urgent, please contact the School Emergency Mobile contact number and we will relay the message to your Son/Daughter.

My Son/Daughter has called and is lost or upset – what should I do?

Please reassure them, and tell them to phone the emergency number provided to them. During the training, practice and expedition, Weald Staff will be trying to see the groups at a number of their checkpoints throughout the day. If you are concerned please contact us and we will pass on a message to your Son/Daughter. Please try not to worry, as the expeditions are challenging and participants may want to call their parents if they are tired and upset. Quite often the participant forgets to call you back to tell you everything is ok.

The Expedition Programme

What happens at the bronze training weekend?

The training weekend is split into two days:

Saturday: Arrive at 8:45am for a prompt 9am start.

- Activities throughout the day on Saturday include:
- Team building
- Campcraft skills including putting up tents and securing them; cooking on camp stoves (trangias); looking after campsite area; health and safety around tent areas
- First Aid for expeditions
- Equipment and how to pack your rucksack
- Route planning and map reading: how to write up a route plan from your map in preparation for your expedition; plan route for walk Sunday morning
- Set up camp: put up tents, cook evening meal, clear up/wash up and put things away
- Retire to tents 9:30pm. Lights out by 10pm

Sunday:

- 6:30am rise – take down tents, cook breakfast, clear up, pack rucksacks
- Walk with an instructor with rucksacks, navigating and pacing.
- Return by 15:30: debrief by instructor
- Final instructions and debrief from The Weald Staff
- 4pm collect by parents

What happens at the Silver Practice Weekend?

Students will take the minibus from school. Must be ready to leave school at 4:30pm.

All students start at Kithurst Hill Car Park.

Each team must then navigate into the first campsite, this is normally a 2-3 hour hike before setting up camp. Saturday you will then get up nice and early and start your first full day of walking. Each team must spend 7 hours of planned activity per day, this can involve walking between 15-18 km a day. As teams you will navigate the countryside passing through checkpoints to each campsite and the finish across 3 days.

All teams MUST be self sufficient, you carry everything you bring and you leave nothing behind (this includes rubbish!)

Why do we need a second training day?

As teams you need to plan your qualifying expedition routes, you will spend the training day in June to plan and plot your route, alongside creating your route card. You will be using the knowledge and skills gained from the blacklands training weekend to plan your routes.

What happens on the qualifier weekend?

Bronze

All students start in Findon (Gallops Car Park), you will be given a start time which you must arrive 30 minutes before your time. When you arrive your assessor will speak to you about the training you have undertaken, the weather, ask you about first aid or medical conditions in the team etc. This allows them to ensure you are prepared to start the weekend.

Each team must spend 6 hours of planned activity per day, this can involve walking between 12-16 km a day. As teams you will navigate the countryside passing through staffed checkpoints to the campsite before continuing your walk to the finish the next day.

All teams MUST be self sufficient, you carry everything you bring and you leave nothing behind (this includes rubbish!)

Silver

Students will take the minibus from school. Must be at school for 7:30am.

All students start at The Pig and Butcher Pub in Five Ash Down. When you arrive your assessor will speak to you about the training you have undertaken, the weather, ask you about first aid or medical conditions in the team etc. This allows them to ensure you are prepared to start the weekend.

Each team must spend 7 hours of planned activity per day, this can involve walking between 15-18 km a day. As teams you will navigate the countryside passing through checkpoints to each campsite and the finish across 3 days. Within your planned activity you should have planned time to complete your team goal, to prepare for your presentation.

All teams MUST be self sufficient, you carry everything you bring and you leave nothing behind (this includes rubbish!)

What if I miss the training weekend?

You cannot take part in the expedition weekend unless you have completed the appropriate pre-expedition training.

If I drop out, will I get a refund?

You will not receive a refund for your DofE pack. For the payment for the expedition, you may be eligible for a refund but it does depend on what has already been paid.

What happens if I drop out of a qualifying expedition before the end?

You will need to repeat the whole expedition – please speak to school staff should this arise

How hard will it be?

The DofE expeditions are supposed to be challenging, so you will find it hard. You may feel like giving up at some point during your expedition. During the expedition, the support of your other group members will help you to continue. Upon completion, the sense of achievement and good memories will definitely out-weigh the low points.

Kit List

Clothing

<u>Item Needed</u>	<u>Got It!</u>	<u>Packed it!</u>
1 pair of walking boots with ankle support (Broken in)		
2 pairs of walking socks		
Jacket/Coat (Waterproof & Windproof with taped seams)		
Waterproof Trousers (Taped Seams)		
2 fleece tops or similar		
2-3 T-shirts		
2 pairs of walking trousers (not jeans)		
1 pair of shorts (if appropriate) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Cycling shorts, must be baggy 		
Underwear		
Nightwear		
Flip Flop/Sandals (Optional for campsite)		
Warm hat and/or Sunhat (as appropriate)		
1 pair of gloves (if appropriate)		

Personal Kit

<u>Item Needed</u>	<u>Got It!</u>	<u>Packed it!</u>
Waterproof Lined Rucksack 65 litre		
Sleeping Bag		
Sleeping Mat		
Carrier bags (clothes, rubbish etc)		
Whistle		
Torch and spare batteries		
Food (including emergency rations/sweets) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Packed Lunch is needed for both days. 		
Water Bottle		
Cutlery		
Plate/Bowl		
Mug		
Wash kit/Personal Hygiene items		

Suncream		
Towel (preferably microfibre)		

Team Kit

<u>Item Needed</u>	<u>Got It!</u>	<u>Packed it!</u>
Notebook/Pen		
Watch (couple between the team)		
Matches		
Wash up liquid, tea towel + sponge		
Tin Opener (if required)		
Toilet Paper		
Camera (Optional)		
Food (Split the cost between the team and weight of food) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dinner • Breakfast 		
First Aid Kit (need to be in a waterproof airtight container) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sterile Dressings • Plasters • Blister Plasters • Roller Bandages • Micropore tape • Triangular Bandage • Antiseptic Wipes • Surgical gloves • Sandwich bags for soiled dressings • Vent Aid 		
Team kit provided by the school		
Tents		
Camping Stoves		
Camping Stove Fuel (Gas)		
Cooking Pans		
Maps		
Compass		
Map Case		
High Vis (must be visible at all times)		
Foil Blankets		

Prohibited Items

<u>Item</u>	<u>Got It!</u>	<u>Packed it!</u>
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Phones (except for 1 emergency phone)		
Denim Jeans		
Tight fitted cycling shorts		
Cross/walking trainers		
Pocket Knife		
GPS Navigational Aids		