

6th October 2023

Dear Parent / Guardian

**Silver and Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Awards
Years 10-13, 2023-2024**

Learning outside the classroom serves as a foundation for the development of character. It provides an educational environment for students that allows them to have the opportunity to express individual talent and explore new approaches to challenges. Education in its broadest sense is not just about delivering a curriculum. It is about giving students at RGS the chance to learn about themselves and more importantly enjoy their own adventures.

I apologise in advance for the length and detail of this letter. I want to ensure we are as clear and informative as possible to aid in what we hope will be many of your sons' participation in the programme.

The following should give you a great insight to why it is such a memorable and fun programme:

- Silver - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FqHrGnY_Ktg
- Gold - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q86Sa6DVwwA>

DofE Information Sessions - 4th and 17th October; 2nd, 15th and 28th November; 14th December

A virtual session run directly by DofE for parents, designed to help you understand how best to support a young person through their DofE Award. For further information, please see [here](#).

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award

DofE is the world's leading achievement award for young people, and is highly regarded by universities, colleges and employers. It encourages young people to develop independence, commitment, leadership and teamwork through being involved in a personalised programme of activities.

It will inspire your son to make a difference to the local community, learn new skills, become fitter through sport and expeditions and increase his confidence. The School fully supports the Award, recognizing its unique value for developing skills and attributes in RGS.

Completing the Award

The Award is achieved by completing a personal programme of activities in four sections. These sections are:

- **Volunteering** - helping someone, your community or the environment
- **Physical** - becoming fitter through sport, dance or fitness activities
- **Skills** - developing existing talents or trying something new
- **Expedition** – planning/training/completing an adventurous journey (this section is organised by the School)
- **Residential** – for those undertaking their GOLD award this is an additional section outside Volunteering, Skills, Physical and Expedition. We advise that you check with the School before booking your Residential section to ensure it meets the DofE criteria. A 'residential' for Gold DofE means a programme that spends 5 days and 4 nights away from home on a shared activity with people that you have never met before. Your residential can have any focus or include any activities that you wish; a guide can be found [here](#).

You can find information here on how long it takes to complete the programme and the amount of time that needs to be given to any one specific section (**DofE Timescales**). On average it is a minimum of **6 months** to complete Silver and **12 months** for Gold (18 months if you sign up without completing Silver first). Your son must be 15 years old to sign up for Silver and 16 years for Gold.

NB. The length of time taken for all the Awards is stated in months. Please note a student must show **regular** activity and commitment during this time of **at least an hour a week**. He cannot achieve an Award in a short burst of enthusiasm over one weekend! Finally, all DofE activities **must** be completed by his 25th birthday.

Places available for 2022/23 enrolment and cost

50 places for Silver	Enrolment cost £135
35 places for Gold	Enrolment cost £142

Explanation of costs:

- DofE Welcome Pack, eDofE account, certificate and badge (on successful completion)
- Invitation for you plus 1 guest to attend a formal award ceremony at Buckingham Palace (or other royal palace) **GOLD AWARDS ONLY**
- Cost of the staff running and administering the DofE award at RGS
- Licence fee to DofE South East Regional Office
- In school training sessions
- Dedicated in school support for the duration of your programme
- Maps and navigational equipment
- Access to group kit and camping equipment (tents, stoves, etc)
- School insurance
- Certificate and badge upon successful completion

The following are not included:

- Cost of the expedition section
- Personal camping/trekking equipment (RGS has a supply of loan kit if required))
- Additional costs relating to completion of other sections of the Award.

NB: We would not want any RGS parent to not consider this opportunity due to cost. If you would find this financially difficult, please contact me in strictest confidence, as there may be funding available to assist you.

Expedition Section

DofE is not just about the expedition, but we know it is an important part of the programme and one that students look forward to and enjoy.

- Silver Training, Practice (3days, 2 nights) and Qualifying Expeditions (3 days, 3 nights) £350 -£395*

Provisional Expedition dates:

9th - 11th March 2024	Training/Practice Expedition (based in the Chiltern Hills)
19th - 22nd April 2024	Qualifying Expedition (based in the Brecon Beacons)

- Gold Training, Practice (4 days, 4 nights) and Qualifying Expeditions (4 days, 4 nights) £550- £595*

Provisional Expedition dates:

19th - 22nd April 2024	Training/Practice Expedition (based in the Brecon Beacons)
12th - 16th July 2024	Qualifying Expedition (based in the Lake District)

*Please note the final cost will be decided at the end of the Autumn term once we know exactly how many boys are signed up for each level. However, the above figures should give you a rough indication.

Kit

Please refer to the **DofE Essential Kit List**. Full details of what group kit will be supplied and what kit you must supply yourselves will be issued by the end of the autumn term. A limited supply of kit will be available on loan, at no cost, from the RGS DofE stores.

How to apply

1. Log into Parent Pay **before Friday 24th November**, look up either “**DofE Silver 2023/24**” or “**DofE Gold 2023/24**” and pay the Enrolment fee. **NB: If you are unable to pay online, please contact the Finance Office to pay by an alternative method.**
2. On receipt of the enrolment fee, we will process your son’s application and he will receive an automated email to his RGS email address containing his eDofE login details. *(Please note that no refunds are available after the end of the Autumn term should your son chose to withdraw from the programme)*
3. Your son can start any of his activities immediately. **It is essential that all activities are selected from the approved DofE Programme Ideas List**. If an activity is listed under Physical, it cannot be used for Skills and vice versa. If you or your son are unsure about an activity he has selected, please contact DofE@rgshw.com as soon as possible for clarification.
4. Welcome packs will be sent to you directly from DofE once you complete your eDofE registration, however, you can access Digital Welcome Packs [here](#).

I wish your son every success with the Award, and in the meantime if you or your son require any more information, please do not hesitate to contact me or Mrs Turney on dofe@rgshw.com.

Yours sincerely

D Clatworthy FRGS

Director of Co-Curricular Education