

Thursday 21st March

Dear Parents and Participants

### **DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S AWARD BRONZE ASSESSMENT EXPEDITION – FINAL ARRANGEMENTS**

I hope you are all excited about the next phase of your DofE expedition. The final arrangements for the expedition are now complete with all staff and facilities booked in. Please ensure you take adequate time to prepare and consider any lessons learnt from your practice weekend.

I would ask all participants to be aware of the DofE Teams group as a useful tool for sharing knowledge as well as a forum to discuss and prepare ahead of your trip.

Please read through the information below thoroughly as it contains important details for the upcoming expedition.

#### **TIMES AND LOCATIONS**

**Make sure you review the start time and start location for your group.** Teams will be split into two separate start/finish locations. Upon arrival you will be met by your assessor and receive your briefing for the assessment. Teams will then undertake an assessed linear trek to a designated finishing point.

#### **Tuesday 30th April**

##### **Drop Off:**

- **Teams 1-14 – 8.30am** Penn St (Penn Wood Parking, HP7 0PY)
- **Teams 15-25 – 8.30am** High Wycombe (Kingsmead Recreation Ground, HP11 1JQ)

#### **Overnight**

Paccar Scout Camp, Chalfont St Peter – All Teams

#### **Wednesday 1st May**

##### **Collection:**

- **Teams 1-14** High Wycombe (Kingsmead Recreation Ground, HP11 1JQ)
- **Teams 15-25** Penn St (Penn Wood Parking, HP7 0PY)

Students to be collected **no earlier than 4.00pm** - Please be aware that depending on how long it takes all teams to complete the course there is no guarantee of our specific return time.

### **BRONZE ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**

Over the 2 days we have 13 independent assessors who will be observing groups throughout various parts of their assessment along with RGS support staff. Groups will operate independently for the duration of the assessment and will be observed / supervised remotely. Groups will undertake all parts of the assessment including navigation, team work, communication, physical challenge, cooking/camp craft etc.

## 5 KEY POINTS

1. **PROJECT/AIMS** – Your expedition aim is to keep our towns and villages litter free and recycle as much litter as we can. This is to prevent it from going to landfill or hurting wildlife as well as understanding the impact public use has on local areas of outstanding natural beauty. **Teams are required to complete a 1hr litter pick at a location of their choice each day as part of their total journey time each day .**
2. **MENU PLANS** – Please ensure you have completed your preparation and shopping in advance of departure. See the **FOOD** section below for more detail.
3. **TIMING** - Your assessment route must last a minimum of 6 hrs each day. Please ensure you do not arrive at your final location under 6 hrs from your start time. Groups breaching the minimum time requirements may fail the assessment under DofE Guidelines.
4. **MOBILE PHONES SHOULD BE CARRIED FOR EMERGENCY USE ONLY AND MUST BE SEALED IN A BAG TAPED CLOSED TO PROVE THEY HAVE NOT BEEN USED.** Any student using a phone or unsealing the bag for non-emergency use may fail the assessment under DofE Guidelines. Only use the emergency number you will be provided with on arrival. I must stress that students caught using phones on assessment at any time including at camp will be deferred.
5. **STUDENTS MUST BE SELF-SUFFICIENT FOR THE DURATION OF THE ASSESSMENT** (they must only use items/equipment/food that they carry on them). Any student purchasing food or other items from shops etc may fail the assessment under DofE Guidelines.

Please also remember:

- You are required to attend both days in full to pass your assessment.
- Double check your start time and location, make sure you know where to be.
- **Make sure you fill your water bottles before you leave home (there is nowhere to do this when you arrive). You will need at least 2-3 litres. Water will be available at the campsite in the evening.**

## FOOD

All teams need to plan for and provide food for the duration of their programme. All teams should have completed an appropriate menu plan as part of the pre-departure preparation. We are of course more than happy to offer further support and guidance so please feel free to email your menu plans over with any questions.

Please note that all expeditions are nut-free zones.

Teams on training also noted their need for additional snacks during the day so please take this into account when planning your menus. We received feedback from the training weekend, that a number of groups had brought food to cook and eat that was not appropriate, including raw chicken, sausages and eggs. Please remember that you not only have to prepare and cook the food reasonably swiftly, but also carry it with you - anything like raw chicken is not suitable as it cannot be refrigerated, is bulky to carry and would not be safe to cook after being in a rucksack all day. In the morning, you want to break camp as efficiently as possible so foods like porridge (that you can just add boiling water to) or scotch-style pancakes, brioche rolls etc are preferable to preparing pancakes from scratch, or having a fry-up!

You will need to plan and provide food for the following meals:

- **Tuesday: Packed lunch and dinner**
- **Wednesday: Breakfast and lunch**

## EXPEDITION KIT

Teams have had the opportunity to test kit over the course of the training and practice expedition. Some important lessons have undoubtedly been learnt as to the need for appropriate footwear and good quality waterproofs regardless of the time of year as well as the need for suitable and appropriate rucksacks.

As part of their project aim students will need to bring a bin bag and gardening gloves to facilitate the litter pick they will be completing.

Core personal kit – Due to the nature of the trip as well as the type of terrain teams will be operating in, it is essential that students have the items listed below. Students who forget or who do not have appropriate equipment may be withdrawn from training/assessment by the instructors.

- **WALKING BOOTS** (students must have appropriate walking boots with ankle support, due to safety guidelines students attending in trainers or non-suitable footwear will be unable to participate)
- RUCKSACK 65ltr (not 40-50ltr/55ltr, must have waist and chest strap)
- **WATERPROOF JACKET & WATERPROOF OVER-TROUSERS** - (not school jackets, Superdry etc or Down jackets.) I cannot stress this area enough as we have seen a number of students attend local training with clothing that is not fit for purpose
- **X2 1 Ltr WATER BOTTLES**
- **SLEEPING BAG & CAMPING MAT**– 2.5 or 3 seasons (2-5 degrees rated)
- **FLEECE** (not a hoodie)
- **HEADTORCH** & spare batteries

If you are unsure about any equipment we are happy to check items so please do let us know and we can discuss. A limited supply of kit will be available on loan, at no cost, from the RGS DofE stores. Please be aware that there are no rucksacks available.

Group kit consisting of tents, maps/compass, group first aid kit, stove (incl. pots/pans) and fuel are provided to all students on arrival. Any other group kit items such as toilet roll and tin opener must be organised by groups themselves.

Waterproof your equipment – sleeping bag stuff sacks are not waterproof and neither are rucksacks! Ensure you use sealable dry bags for anything that you don't want to get wet.

The DofE kit list can be found [here](#)

## **MEDICAL**

The School holds on file a record of students' medical information and this will be available to all staff during the trip. If there is any specific or additional information assessors should be aware of, please let Matron know in advance. All students should carry personal medication with them and it is advised that students issued with either an epi-pen or inhaler should bring a spare with them on expedition.

## **COMMS**

I am aware that a number of parents were disappointed not to receive updates during the training of how their son was getting on. Please be aware that we operate on a 'no news is good news' policy - if you don't hear from us, all is well!

I am genuinely excited to be able to support students on the final phase of their Bronze assessment. It will most definitely be a challenge but one I hope they will enjoy and remember.

If you have any questions, please feel free to email us on [dofe@rgshw.com](mailto:dofe@rgshw.com).

Good luck and enjoy!

**D Clatworthy FRGS**

**Director of Co-Curricular Education**