

Monday 18 March 2024

Dear Parents and Participants

DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S SILVER ASSESSMENT – FINAL ARRANGEMENTS

We have been working hard to deliver a full DofE Silver experience this academic year.

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 their trip. Both Mrs Turney and I monitor this and are happy to answer any questions students have as we move into the final build up.

Please ensure you take some time to read through the information below thoroughly as it contains important details.

TIMES AND LOCATIONS

For their assessed expedition, students will be operating in and around the Brecon Beacons.

Friday 19th April

- **Meeting Place: RGSHW**
- **Students to meet at 1.15pm** - coaches to depart at 1.30pm

Monday 22nd April

- **Meeting Place: RGSHW**
- **Students to be collected from no earlier than 8.00pm** – we cannot guarantee our arrival time back at school as it is dependent on what time the students complete their assessment. Once we are on our way, we will be in touch with an expected arrival time.

SILVER ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The Silver assessment begins on Saturday 20th April. Over the 3 days we have 5 independent assessors who will observe the 9 groups throughout various parts of their assessment along with RGSHW support staff. Groups will operate independently for the duration of the assessment and will be observed remotely. Groups will undertake all parts of the assessment including navigation, team work, communication, physical challenge, cooking/camp craft etc.

KEY POINTS

- **MENU PLANS** – Please ensure you have completed your preparation and shopping in advance of departure. See the FOOD section below for more detail.
- Your assessment must last a minimum of 7 hours each day. Please ensure you do not arrive at your final location under 7 hours from your start time. Groups breaching the minimum time requirements may fail the assessment under DofE Guidelines
- **MOBILE PHONES CAN 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
- **STUDENTS MUST BE SELF-SUFFICIENT FOR THE DURATION OF EACH DAY (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.

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 training. We are of course more than happy to offer further support and guidance so please do feel free to email your menu plans over with any questions.

The one area that I see teams consistently fall down on during expedition is food, as teams highly underestimate how much they will need to consume and how hungry they are after an 8-10 hour day out on the hills. As a rough guide, you should be aiming for around 3,000 – 5,000 calories a day. This doubles what most would consume on a normal day at home/school.

As part of the assessment, teams will need to demonstrate competent and safe use of the stoves. To facilitate this teams will need to provide and cook a **substantial meal** after completing their day's trek. (Chilli & Rice, Vegetable Curry, Potato & Meat stew etc). **Please note teams must cook as a group not individually.** Stoves (incl. pots/pans) and fuel are provided to all students on arrival.

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

- Friday: Packed lunch and dinner
- Saturday: Breakfast, lunch and dinner
- Sunday: Breakfast, lunch and dinner
- Monday: Breakfast and lunch

Please note that all the expeditions are Nut-Free zones.

<https://www.theordinaryadventurer.com/advice/dofe-food-ideas/> is a useful site to research ahead of your departure.

FAQ

Can I take things like ready pasta or ready couscous that simply needs warming up and then adding a sauce on DofE assessment?

Pot Noodles and Instant Pasta are not appropriate for expedition. Ready food pouches "wayfarer" etc are a good item, however they can be costly and also weigh a considerable amount. As part of the DofE 20 conditions, students must prepare "one substantial meal a day". While it may include something like pre-cooked pasta, that in itself along with some sauce does not constitute a substantial meal and students still need to consider how they substitute this with additional items to meet the criteria. This may include adding a dessert to their evening meal, Cake/Custard etc or having a Cuppa Soup in advance.

Teams should also consider the quantities required ie 100g of rice per person per meal for example. For a further example you have Tortillas planned as part of 3 meals, you are a team of 6 and are having 2 for each meal so you would need to bring 36 Tortillas.

Do also consider any waste/packaging as it is unlikely there will be any facilities to dispose of this until the end of your assessment so all rubbish will need to be carried out by teams.

EXPEDITION KIT

As part of the pre-departure training, kit checks were completed with the majority of teams.

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 40-55ltr, 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.

Group kit consisting of tents, maps/compass, stove (incl. pots/pans) and fuel are provided to all students on arrival. Any other group kit items (eg: toilet roll, 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 student's 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 the School's 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.

Lyme Disease – Though the risk is low it is prudent for us to highlight this specific issue. Ticks that may cause Lyme disease are found all over the UK but can be more common in larger remote areas such as National Parks. Most tick bites are harmless and only a small number of ticks are infected with the bacteria that cause Lyme Disease. <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/lyme-disease/> .

COMMS

Please be aware that we operate on a 'no news is good news' policy - if you don't hear from us, all is well!

PAYMENT

Royal Grammar School
Amersham Road
High Wycombe
Buckinghamshire
HP13 6QT

Telephone
01494 524955

Facsimile
01494 551410

Email
admin@rgshw.com

Website
www.rgshw.com

Headmaster
Philip Wayne

Registered No. 07492198

Please ensure that the **expedition fee is paid in full on Parent Pay by Friday 5th April**. We would not want any RGS parent to not consider this opportunity for their son 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.

Thank you all for your hard work and commitment so far this academic year. We are very much looking forward to you undertaking your expedition, it will be an exciting and memorable challenge.

If you have any questions, please email us on dofe@rgshw.com.

Good luck and enjoy!

D Clatworthy *FRGS*
Director of Co-Curricular Education