

27th September 2018

Dear Parent/Guardian

SILVER & GOLD DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S AWARD 2018-19

I am writing to inform you about the fantastic opportunity for your son to sign up for The Duke of Edinburgh's Award at RGS. This letter covers the following points:

- 1) What is The Duke of Edinburgh's Award?
- 2) Why should your son undertake the Award?
- 3) What are the sections or activities that he has to do?
- 4) How long does it take and how old does he need to be?
- 5) How many places are available?
- 6) How much does it cost?
- 7) When do the training and the expeditions take place?
- 8) What kit does my son need?
- 9) How does my son apply?
- 10) Volunteering opportunity

1. What is The Duke of Edinburgh's Award?

It 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.

There are three levels of programme you can do which, when successfully completed, lead to a Bronze, Silver or Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award. The main differences between them are the minimum length of time it takes to complete the respective Award, how challenging it is and the minimum age you can start.

2. Why should your son undertake the Award?

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. In this competitive world, it helps your son stand out from the crowd and shows that he is dedicated, organised, motivated and a team player, characteristics which universities and employers alike are looking for at their institutions.

The School fully supports the Award and recognises its unique value for developing skills and attributes in RGS pupils. It is a great way for RGS pupils to be recognised for their achievement in all the things they probably already do both in and out of school.

Incidentally, many of the things your son currently does will already count for the Award. Being in any sports team or sports club, learning a musical instrument or another language, the Queen's Hall Team, CCF, School Aid, Stage Lighting and Sound Team, mentoring. In addition, School clubs like Chess, Warhammer etc. are also relevant.

This past year as part of their Award, RGS pupils spent 3692 hours learning a skill, 4563 hours doing a physical activity and 3757 hours volunteering in the local community. The social value of these hours is £15215.85, which is an incredible achievement. RGS pupils also achieved 199 awards over the same period, which is the highest number for all centres across the whole of Buckinghamshire.

3. What are the sections or activities that he has to do?

He can achieve an Award by completing a personal programme of activities in four sections (five if going for Gold). 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 for and completing an adventurous journey (this section is organised by the school)
- Residential (Gold only) - staying & working away from home as part of a team of people he doesn't know

The length of time he has to spend on each section depends on the level of DofE he's doing.

4. How long does it take and how old does he need to be? ([DofE Timescales](#))

The Silver Award:

It will take him at least 6 months for Silver if he's already achieved his Bronze Award or 12 months without it. He needs to be in Year 10 or above and spend 6 months on the Volunteering section. For Physical and Skills sections, he must spend 6 months on one and 3 months on the other. If he has not achieved his Bronze, he will need to do a further 6 months in the Volunteering or the longer of the Physical or Skills sections. He also needs to plan and undertake two 3 day (2 night) Expeditions.

The Gold Award:

It will take him at least 12 months for Gold if he's already achieved the Silver Award or 18 months without it. He must be at least 16 years old to apply and must spend 12 months on the Volunteering section. For Physical and Skills, he must spend 12 months on one and six months on the other. If he has not achieved his Silver, he will need to do a further 6 months in the Volunteering or the longer of the Physical or Skills sections. He also needs to plan and undertake two 4 day (3 night) Expeditions.

The big difference at Gold level is that he also has to do a residential section - staying away from home for five days/four nights, doing a shared activity with people he doesn't know. It's great fun and a real chance to do something different. It is essential that your choice of residential is approved by me or Mrs Henry as it must meet with DofE criteria. Please refer to the attached document/link.

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

5. How many places are available?

There is no limit to the number of places available, but historically we usually have about 42 at Silver and 35 at Gold.

6. How much does it cost?

Silver Enrolment £113

Gold Enrolment £120

Silver & Gold Training £80 (only for pupils who haven't done a previous award or been in the CCF)

Silver Expeditions £195

Gold Expeditions £245

Explanation of costs:

- Cost of the staff running and administering the DofE award at RGS

- *DofE Welcome Pack (£21-Silver and £28-Gold)*
- *Licence fee to DofE South East Regional Office*
- *Training, practice and qualifying expeditions*
- *Maps and navigational equipment*
- *Access to trekking kit and camping equipment*
- *Updating and replacing of equipment*
- *Campsite fees*
- *Supervision on expeditions by a qualified Mountain Leader and other experienced instructors*
- *eDofE account*
- *School insurance*
- *Certificate and badge upon successful completion*

The following are not included:

- *Food during the expedition weekends (this will be discussed, agreed and sourced by teams in advance)*
- *Personal camping and trekking equipment (RGS has a small supply of this kit to assist those in financial difficulty)*
- *Additional costs relating to completion of other sections of the Award.*

The expedition fee covers the cost of instructors, assessors, pupil and staff accommodation, transport, updating and replacing of equipment and licence for the tracking equipment software used in Silver & Gold.

If your son has joined the CCF (Army, Navy or RAF sections) in September, has been in the CCF previously or has completed another level of DofE (Bronze or Silver), he does not need to do any further training and so therefore NO Silver & Gold training fee will be due.

We will write to you next term to confirm the training and expedition dates and to ask for those fees, as well as give you and your son more information about the training and expeditions themselves.

Incidentally, once your son has completed the training or completed an award, he does not need to do any more training to proceed to the next level as he will receive further training on the practice expedition.

As a form of comparison, last year two local grammar schools charged £445 for Silver and £500-650 for Gold. Both schools use external companies to provide the expedition and most or all of the training section, whilst at RGS we use the skills and experience of RGS staff and buy in DofE instructors and assessors to minimise the costs and make it as accessible as possible to all pupils.

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.

7. When do the training and the expeditions take place?

These are the provisional dates but may be subject to change. However, they give you a rough indication of when things take place before they are confirmed by the end of term.

Training:

10th - 12th May - Silver & Gold Expedition training days for pupils who haven't done a previous award or been in the CCF. There will also be First Aid Training at some point next year for these pupils, but this date is yet to be confirmed.

Expeditions:

<i>28 June-2 July 2019</i>	<i>Year 11, 12 & 13 Silver & Gold Practice</i>
<i>13-16 July 2019</i>	<i>Year 11 Silver Qualifying</i>

13-17 July 2019 Year 11, 12 & 13 Gold Qualifying

Late June & July 2020 – Current Year 10 Silver Practice & Qualifying. NB. Current Year 10s are not doing their expeditions in the Brecon Beacons in 2018, as we do not feel that the majority of them are physically and mentally mature enough to cope with the challenging environment of an unaccompanied Silver Expedition in the Brecon Beacons. However, completing the rest of the Silver Award apart from the Expedition in Year 10 will mean they can focus purely on their studies and just the expedition in Year 11 which should be a good balance.

Boys must complete both the practice and qualifying expeditions; otherwise they will not complete the expedition section and therefore not obtain the Award at that level. Therefore, please consider if your son will be available for both expeditions and the training before applying for him to join the Award.

8. What kit does my son need?

Please see the [DofE Essential Kit List](#). A limited supply of this kit is available on loan for free from the DofE/CCF stores and it is marked with an *. If you need to purchase any kit, please make sure you ask if the store gives a discount to DofE participants as they generally do.

9. How does your son apply?

We believe that the Award can benefit your son in many ways, but there is also a level of commitment required. Places will only be allocated once the following have been complied with;

1. Log into ParentPay before Friday 12th October, look up and pay the correct enrolment fee, either 'DofE Silver Enrolment' or 'DofE Gold Enrolment (Must be 16 to apply!)'. Once you have paid this fee, your son will have a place on the Award. NB. If you are unable to pay online, please contact the Finance Office to pay by an alternative method.
2. Read the [RGS DofE Parent and Pupil Annual Agreement](#) and complete the relevant consent form on line using the links below;

[Year 10 Silver DofE Consent Form](#)

[Year 11 Silver DofE Consent Form](#)

[Gold DofE Consent Form \(You must be 16 to apply for Gold!\)](#)

3. Complete the [Combined Programme Planner](#) and return it to sportsadmin@rgshw.com as a photo/scanned image or post/hand in a hard copy to the Resources Centre, marked for the attention of Mrs Henry by Friday 12th October.
4. Once the enrolment fee and both forms are received, we will process your son's application and he will receive registration details and a login to record his progress and adventures electronically via eDofE.
5. Your son can start any of his activities immediately or retrospectively from the beginning of Year 10 for Year 10 Silvers and from the end of Year 10 for Year 11 Silvers. Activities for Gold can be started from your son's 16th birthday. 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, he should contact Mrs Henry sportsadmin@rgshw.com as soon as possible for clarification.
6. Expedition fees will be payable in January 2019. Please note that boys will only be allowed to participate in the expeditions once the fees have been received and at least 2 sections of the Award have been completed and approved on his eDofE account.

10. Volunteering Opportunity

I am looking for 6 keen and proactive pupils who would like to help the DofE department and at the same time use it as their Volunteering section for their Silver or Gold Award. This activity will take place on Wednesdays immediately after School for an hour starting on Wednesday 3rd October. The role would entail helping in stores with a multitude of tasks ranging from logging, cleaning, checking,

repairing, disposing of DofE equipment to preparing packs for any of the expeditions and possibly helping mentor Bronze or Silver DofE pupils too. I have a maximum of 6 spaces for this so if your son would like to take advantage of this opportunity, please email me on crg@rgshw.com and I will let you know if your son has one of the coveted places.

I wish your son every success with the Award, but in the meantime if you or your son require any more information or assistance in completing his previous award, please do not hesitate to contact me on crg@rgshw.com or Mrs Henry on sportsadmin@rgshw.com or both of us on 01494 551404.

Yours sincerely



C R Greenhough
DofE Manager