



September 2018

Dear Parent/Carer

DofE Practice Weekend – 22/23 September 2018

Following a very positive DofE training day at the end of last term, we are really looking forward to taking your child away for their first practice expedition on the weekend of 22/23 September. We will be walking to, and camping at, Hudnall Park, a fantastic facility with toilets and a couple of showers. Staff will all be camping on site but students are expected to display their independent skills: putting up their tents, cooking for themselves and getting organised to walk back to Ashlyns the next day. There will be route planning sessions on Thursday 6, Monday 10 and Tuesday 11 September. It is important that students attend these sessions as route planning is a crucial part of the expedition.

The Essentials

- **Paperwork:** Route card completed as a group, menu plan (one each). These will be issued at the route planning sessions.
- **Drop off:** **8.30am** at Ashlyns School Dining Room.
- **Start walk:** from 10.00am after group kit issue and kit check.
- **Sufficient food:** Bring your menu plan for the weekend and boil-in-the-bag meals for the Saturday night. Please avoid any nuts in your planning due to allergies. Emergency rations, such as Mars Bars and energy bars, should be kept in case of actual emergency. Students should have something hot for breakfast to set them up for the day; whether this is a hot chocolate or porridge is up to them, but we will expect them to have had something hot before setting off on the Sunday.
- **Return to school:** from 4.00pm to 4.30pm on Sunday. If students have mobile phones (see more information overleaf) they will be able to switch them on towards the last hour of their walk to let parents know they are arriving. Timing will vary for each group.

Aims of Expedition

All groups need to have an aim for their practice expedition. This will be discussed in the route planning sessions in September. On the return from the expedition they will need to do a group presentation based on this aim to the Duke of Edinburgh Team.

Personal Kit

It is essential that your child has suitable ankle-supporting footwear: trainers will not be acceptable. Please see Mr Tonge if you need any advice on suitable walking boots for your child. On the morning of departure a full kit check will be done in the main hall to help students pack their rucksacks, and make sure they are all prepared appropriately to undertake the expedition. Spare kit can be issued at this time if anything has been forgotten.

The importance of warm clothing cannot be over-stressed. Your child needs spare clothes carried in a sealed waterproof bag, a dry sleeping bag and thermals to wear at night. Waterproofing your back pack with a suitable liner should achieve this. Please ensure they have a thermal layer, mid layer or fleece layer and more layers if cold (sweatshirts are not particularly insulating). Fashion leggings and jeans are not effective when wet and should not be worn. Hats, gloves and scarves for the evenings are essential at this time of year. Waterproof gloves such as ski gloves are ideal: having cold wet hands is not a nice experience! DofE advice is that bags should not weigh more than 25% of the participant's body weight. Please check bag weights before arriving at school.

Aerosol cans are banned; they will be confiscated if seen during the kit check so please do not pack them.

Group Kit

Maps, tents and Trangias will be issued on Saturday morning by Mr Tonge. One storm shelter will be issued per group, plus two tents and cooking Trangias. Fuel will be given out at the campsite and will not be carried by students. Please respect group kit, look after it well and ensure you keep all parts together. There are often problems with lost parts and it can slow your day down considerable if you have to look for them.

Mobile Phones

The DofE Award has a strict no mobile phone policy (apart from an emergency phone) throughout the event; this will be a weekend when students are switched off from technology. In addition to this it should be noted that photography can only be used for approved project work. The team will only be allowed to carry one of the group's phones; no other phones will be allowed (they must be left at home or switched off in their bags). The phone to be used will be sealed and can only be used in a real emergency. No other electrical equipment will be allowed.

We are looking forward to another positive weekend away and expect students to represent Ashlyns appropriately and with pride, out and about in our local area.

If you wish to contact your child or a member of staff over the course of the weekend then please use the following DofE contact telephone numbers:

DofE Contact 1 – 07415 631719

DofE Contact 2 – 07904 656505

Important Dates

In addition to the expedition dates we also have route planning sessions and computer room sessions focusing on the other sections and using eDofE. Please ensure you son/daughter has logged into eDofE before then and brings their login details. Students were given their login details on the training day and it is stuck to the front of their packs. Their school email has also been used in case they forget their password.

Monday 10 September - Bronze DofE route planning in room 86 - 3.30pm – 5.00pm
Tuesday 11 September - Bronze DofE route planning in room 86 - 3.30pm – 5.00pm
Wednesday 19 September - eDofE session with County in F67 - 3.30pm – 4.30pm
Saturday 22– Sunday 23 September - Bronze Practice Weekend
Monday 5 November - eDofE session with County in F67 - 3.30pm - 4.30pm

Monday 14 January - Bronze DofE route planning in room 86 - 3.30pm – 5.00pm
Monday 21 January - Bronze DofE route planning in room 86 - 3.30pm – 5.00pm
Monday 25 February - Bronze DofE route planning in room 86 - 3.30pm – 5.00pm
Monday 29 April – Pre-expedition meeting for students in room 86 - 3.30pm – 4.30pm
Saturday 4 – Sunday 5 May - Bronze Assessed Weekend
Wednesday 5 June - Bronze eDofE in F67 - 3.30pm - 4.30pm
Monday 10 June - Bronze eDofE in F67 - 3.30pm - 4.30pm

Yours sincerely

Miss C Tubbritt
ctubbritt@ashlyns.herts.sch.uk

