



Dear Parents/Carers

March 2019

DofE Assessed Weekend – 4/5 May 2019

We are looking forward to the forthcoming DofE Bronze assessed weekend. In preparation for this students have planned their routes in the sessions held after school. This is a compulsory part of the expedition assessment.

On Monday 29 April, in room 86, there will be one final meeting to check paperwork and remind students of the expectations for the weekend; it is essential that all students come along as a team. In the past we have encountered a few problems with planned routes, resulting in one group re-assessing, and we want to give your child the best chance of success; this will be an opportunity to ensure all relevant preparations have been made.

Special Consideration

Some students, when they arrived at the practice weekend, requested special considerations, such as a reduced bag weight or an adapted route, which should have been approved by County in advance. If your child will require special medical considerations for the assessed weekend, please contact me before the Easter break.

Logistics

Drop off: Saturday 4 May

Location: Ashlyns School Dining Room (please leave boots outside)

Time: 8.30am

The groups will start with a kit check with their supervisor followed by a group briefing from their assessor. Four groups will then go via minibus to start their expedition from Ivinghoe Beacon, whilst the other five groups will depart from school. Groups will set out around 9.30am/10.00am, navigating themselves from check point to check point using their maps/compasses and planned routes, to their camp site at Green Park.

Due to the large number of students taking part, we do not have room in the minibuses to transport students and their bags. We would therefore be grateful if a parent/carer with a large car could transport bags on the Saturday morning; if you can help, please do get in touch.

Camping will be supervised by staff overnight and the students' camp craft will continue to be assessed. We expect Ashlyns students to represent the school well as other groups will also be using the campsite.

Groups will set off from Green Park around 9.30am on the Sunday and pick up details are as follows:

Pick up: Sunday 5 May

**Location: Groups 1 to 5 - Car Park at Ivinghoe Beacon
Groups 6 to 9 - Ashlyns School Dining Room**

Time: Approximately 4.30pm

As students are in control of their own expedition their return time will vary from group to group. Please be available to pick your child up from around 3.00pm until 5.00pm. There will be a kit check and debrief before they are dismissed so please wait to be contacted before coming to collect them. Depending on the weather, we will aim to get the groups finishing at school to get some tents dried as well. Groups finishing Ivinghoe Beacon will need to come after school on a day specified (dependent on weather) to dry their tents.

Mobile phones

Students will need to decide who will be bringing the emergency phone for their group. This should remain switched off for the whole trip and wrapped in a plastic waterproof bag in their rucksack, unless there is an emergency. This phone will be brought at their own risk so we recommend bringing an old phone if possible. We do not expect to see mobile phones at any other time unless contacting parents at the end of the assessment and only when instructed to by their assessor. This is a back to basics expedition and failure to comply with expectations may result in your child failing their assessment and repeating it in the autumn term.

Contact numbers

DofE Contact – the minibus driver who will be able to drive and pass on a message in case of emergency: 07904 656505

Please do not try and contact your child over the weekend; if students do contact you please inform us straight away as their first point of contact should be their supervisor, not family/home.

Expectations

Having completed the practice weekend your child should be prepared for this assessment, however this time the groups will complete the walk with remote supervision, meaning that their staff supervisor will meet them at regular points throughout the day, rather than helping to lead the expedition. This will mean more independence and therefore more responsibility. We have high expectations of behaviour throughout the weekend and individuals who fail to meet these expectations may be removed from the assessment, however we do not anticipate having to do this. Spray-can deodorants are not allowed on this trip as they are highly flammable. Litter must be put in bins or kept in bags until students reach a bin and basic respect of the countryside is expected at all times.

Food

I would like to emphasise the importance of students eating well and planning food carefully to cater for a high intensity weekend. Students should be eating around 2500-3000 calories a day, and to illustrate this they should each have completed and submitted a menu plan. We are recommending boil in bag meals for speed and ease of cleaning the pans after. Trangias will need to be scrubbed to a high standard before handing in.

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.

Final DofE Briefing

A reminder of the final compulsory preparation session to go over paperwork as a team on **Monday 29 April**. Please bring the completed menu plan to this session. The session will run until 5.00pm but providing all paperwork is complete your child may be free to go sooner than that.

Aims of Expedition

All groups have decided an aim for their expedition. Please bring anything additional needed for this, eg notebook, pen, camera. On the return from the expedition they will need to do a group presentation to the Duke of Edinburgh Team, based on this aim.

eDofE

Students also need to ensure they are completing all the sections for their Bronze Award on eDofE. Last term we ran after school sessions to help students learn how to use eDofE but many students have still not submitted their proposed activities for approval, for the Physical, Skill and Volunteering sections on their programme planners. It is vital they do this and then submit their assessor reports, once completed, to be able to pass. Please can all students spend time submitting their proposed activities so that we can discuss any issues.

Kit

Please check through the kit list attached.

It is essential that your child has suitable walking boots with ankle support: trainers or trail walking shoes will not be acceptable. On the morning of departure, a full kit check will be done in the dining hall to help students pack their rucksacks and make sure all students are prepared appropriately to undertake the expedition.

Please ensure all kit is properly waterproofed, rain covers are not sufficient. Fashion leggings and jeans are not effective when wet and should not be worn. DofE advice is that bags should not weigh more than 25% of the participant's body weight (including group kit).

It is each team's responsibility to decide who will bring each item of the shared group kit, eg washing up liquid, tea towel etc.

Maps, tents and Trangias will be issued on Saturday morning. 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.

Yours sincerely

Miss Tubbritt
DofE School Contact
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