



**THE DUKE OF
EDINBURGH'S AWARD**

Guide for parents and carers



Guide for parents in Hampshire

Introduction

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is voluntary, non-competitive programme of practical, cultural and adventurous activities designed to support the personal and social development of young people aged 14-25, regardless of gender, background or ability. It offers an individual challenge and encourages people to undertake exciting, constructive, challenging and enjoyable activities in their free time. All Awards must be completed by the participant's 25th birthday. The scheme started in 1956 and its Founder and Patron is HRH The Duke of Edinburgh.

Who operates DofE?

The delivery of DofE is entrusted to over 400 organisations ("Operating Authorities") in the United Kingdom licensed to run the Programme. They include local authorities and national voluntary organisations and they authorise awards once applicable conditions have been met.

DofE groups are based in schools, colleges, universities, youth clubs, voluntary organisations (Scouts, Guides, ATC etc), open centres, young offenders institutes and many businesses. DofE Centres are run by adults, many of whom are volunteers, and include youth workers, teachers, employers, trainers, instructors, assessors and individuals from the community. All of whom are keen to share their skills, enthusiasm and organising abilities to help young people reach their potential.

Your son/daughter has shown interest in joining DofE through the Hampshire County Council Licence which is organised through Outdoor Education, PE & Sport, a part of Hampshire Children's Services.

There may be times when he/she is working with DofE participants from another Licence Holder, particularly if they are a member of a youth organisation offering DofE – in these cases it is important that all are clear which Licence Holder is taking responsibility (see section on "Insurance"). We have a County policy to encourage co-operation between the various bodies making DofE widely available, so in most cases DofE Leaders are aware of the possible legal pitfalls. Where courses have been organised by Field Officers and Local DofE Committees for participants from all Licence holders – these are the responsibility of Hampshire County Council.

Entry into DofE

All participants need to complete an enrolment form available from the DofE Co-ordinator or DofE Leader. The Co-ordinator will advise you of the registration fee (payable to Hampshire County Council) which should be returned with the enrolment form to the leader. These are then sent to the County DofE Office where a welcome pack is issued to the young person registering. The welcome packs are sent to the DofE Co-ordinator or Leader for distribution to participants. During busy periods of the year the County DofE Office can become overwhelmed with entries and sometimes there can be a delay of a few weeks before receipt of the packs. The official date of entry into DofE is the day on which the applications are received at the County DofE Office, not the date on which the pack is issued, so no-one is penalised. When moving to a higher level of award, an additional fee is payable for the new welcome pack.

How long does it take?

The fastest anyone can complete DofE is six months, but most young people take their time or find that certain activities they wish to do are only available at certain periods of the year, so it often takes about a year to complete a Bronze Award.

Level	Minimum period of participation by:	
	Direct Entrant	Previous DofE Holders
Bronze	6 Months	
Silver	12 Months	6 Months
Gold	18 Months	12 Months

The term *direct entrant* refers to those entering DoE at either Silver or Gold, and who do not hold the previous level of DofE award.

DofE can be fitted around the many other commitments young people have at different stages in their lives e.g. examination periods etc. Participants can work towards any of their four sections at any time: some will choose to be working on two or more at the same time while others will undertake one at a time. There is absolutely no rush as the 25th birthday is the upper limit for completing any level of DofE.

What activities are available?

The welcome pack contains brief details of the challenges acceptable for DofE though of course not all activities will necessarily be available in all parts of the county or at a price which everyone can afford. DofE Leaders will have copies of the Handbook giving a full list of the requirements and options available.

Information is also available on the DofE web site www.dofe.org. It is important that a chosen activity is checked out with the DofE Leader before starting.

Leaders will generally assist the young people in finding activities they would like to do for their DofE - often some will be hobbies in which the participants are currently involved. One activity followed prior to entry into DofE may count if undertaken during the preceding three months. The Expedition Section is usually organised through the DofE Centre although sometimes participants will join up with young people from other DofE Centres.

How much does it cost?

DofE has a one-off registration fee at each level as mentioned above. Sometimes participants may need to pay by instalments for the welcome pack - in these cases we will back-date the entry into DofE to the date of the first payment made to the DofE Leader. We would ask that all payments are completed within two months and welcome packs will only be made out to participants when the total registration fee has been received by the County DofE Office. Some DofE Centres, particularly independent schools, may ask parents for an additional subscription to the overall cost of operating DofE in their school and these schools should make a clear distinction between the DofE registration fee and the school subscription.

Any other costs fall broadly into those for activities and those for equipment. There is such a range of choice available to participants that most young people can find something that they'd like to do and something that they can afford without too many problems - the Volunteering section is generally free unless the participant is enrolling on certain training courses (only a max. of 25% of the total time can be spent training); the Skills and Physical Sections can vary enormously in cost depending on what is chosen; the Expedition Section does involve young people in paying towards transportation, campsite fees, food and often something towards the expenditure of organising and supervising the venture. Most Bronze expeditions are undertaken locally and costs for each trip are often kept down to around £25.

Specialist equipment can often be borrowed though sometimes there will be a fee to do this - DofE Leaders will be able to advise on what they have access to in their area and what equipment you may already have which is appropriate. There is such a range of outdoor equipment available in the shops these days that it would be easy to believe that only the latest most expensive equipment is required - in practice a lot of participants will find that they have access to most of the equipment they need for the Bronze expedition through family and friends.

Please discuss any problems you may have with the DofE Co-ordinator or Leader who may be able to assist you in securing some grant aid from a variety of sources.

How are leaders appointed?

All DofE leaders operating through the Hampshire County Council Licence will have been CRB checked as required by law for Local Authorities. Each is responsible to a senior officer of their establishment e.g. the Headteacher, Chair of the Management Committee of an organisation or to a delegated member of the Children's Services. Ultimately, the responsibility for DofE under the HCC licence rests with the DofE Manager based in the County DofE Office.

How are instructors and assessors for various activities appointed?

DofE Leaders will usually discuss with your son/daughter the possibility of finding someone they know who might assist them with the activity they wish to undertake for their DofE.

For the Expedition section and all hazardous pursuits, Hampshire County Council will arrange CRB checks, including requesting references and obtaining evidence of endorsed certificates for all instructors and assessors. Registered volunteers are then sent a copy of the current Hampshire County Council regulations and guidelines for the activities with which they have offered to assist.

DofE Leaders are delegated by the authority to approve instructors and assessors of non-hazardous activities.

For the other sections (Volunteering, Skill, Physical Recreation & Residential) we generally do not CRB check and register adults with whom your son/daughter has already been working before they started to count that activity for DofE (e.g. perhaps a family friend takes your son/daughter fishing; you employ a piano teacher or your daughter assists with Rainbow Guides). If the

DofE Leader puts your son/daughter in contact with an adult who would have substantial unsupervised access, we would expect that person to have completed our registration system. Given the scope and breadth of DofE programmes, participants may undertake activities that are not directly managed or organised by their centre or Operating Authority. In such cases, parents and guardians of those under 18 are informed that it is their responsibility to ensure the activity is appropriately managed and insured.

How safe is it?

All approved activities are undertaken within the current rules and regulations of Hampshire County Council. Parents/persons with parental responsibility/ participants aged 18+ are given letters about activities away from the DofE Centre, e.g. expedition ventures, and asked for their written consent, as well as up-to-date medical information. DofE has a very good safety record and it is an aspect which is stressed on all leader training courses. If you have any questions or concerns, please check with the DofE leader, the establishment responsible for the DofE Centre or the County DofE Office if more appropriate.

Insurance

It is vitally important that all participants check with their DofE leaders what they will be doing for their DofE activities. Failure to seek authorisation for the activity and the adult involved, will nullify the insurance cover and legal protection.

Please note that the Hampshire County Council Licence does not insure young people under 18 to undertake boxing, martial arts or hang-gliding as options.

DofE provides a basic personal accident insurance cover for all participants undertaking **approved** DofE activities leading towards something being signed within the welcome pack - details can be found on the Outdoor Education website: www3.hants.gov.uk/education/outdoor-education/outdoor-education-forms.htm

Hampshire County Council does not provide personal accident cover for DofE participants undertaking activities in the establishment where the DofE group meets, however a basic personal accident insurance and some cover for property is provided for approved hazardous activities away from the DofE Centre - details can be obtained from the County DofE Office. Hampshire County Council provides legal cover and personal accident insurance for all its registered adults undertaking approved DofE activities within the County's regulations.

Neither Hampshire County Council or the Duke of Edinburgh's Award provides insurance cover for property and valuables taken or borrowed on DofE activities other than authorised hazardous activities away from base - we would recommend that these are covered through your household insurance.

What happens when my son/daughter changes DofE Centre?

There is no problem in transferring from one DofE Centre to another - all that is involved is taking the record book to the new DofE Co-ordinator for checking and amending to the new Licence if necessary. Anyone can drop out of DofE at any time but providing they keep their welcome pack, they can come back into it again at any time before their 25th birthday and carry on from where they left off. The County DofE Office can always provide advice on other DofE Centres or DofE contacts wherever a participant may be moving. The County DofE Office can be contacted at the address opposite.

What happens if the DofE Centre closes?

In spite of everyone's best efforts sometimes a DofE Centre will close, often due to failure to recruit an appropriate volunteer leader when someone is moving on. In these cases the retiring leaders are asked to ensure that their DofE participants are notified of the situation and steered towards other local DofE Centres if possible. Unfortunately this does not always happen or there may not be an alternative local DofE Centre available - should you have any problems please contact the County DofE Office.

Can you help?

Volunteers are crucial to the success of DofE. If you feel you can help in any way, please contact the DofE Co-ordinator, DofE Leader, or County Office.

Problems and complaints

These should first be discussed with DofE leaders and then, if appropriate, with the management of the establishment or organisation in which the DofE group is based. The DofE Manager in the County DofE Office will decide issues related to DofE requirements and Hampshire County Council Licence policy.

More Information

Should you require further information or clarification, please contact your DofE leader in the first instance.

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