

September 2022

Dear parent / carer,

As promised in the summer newsletter, I'm pleased to confirm that Arden Academy offers the Bronze level of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) to students in year 9. I spoke to students in their assembly this morning to tell them to find out what they can about the Award Scheme so they can decide if they have the time and commitment to complete the programme. The DofE is a great chance for your child to broaden their horizons, discover new interests and talents, have fun with friends, develop essential skills for their future and achieve an internationally renowned Award.

As Arden's DofE Manager, I wanted invite you to discuss the Award Scheme with your son/daughter; to send you links to information about what a DofE programme involves and how they can sign up; there is a school google link that must be completed by interested students with their parents below (see Signing up and Deadlines).

About the DofE

The DofE is non-competitive and open to all young people – it's about setting personal challenges and pushing personal boundaries. There are three levels of DofE programme which, when successfully completed, lead to a Bronze, Silver or Gold Award.

Through their DofE, students will make friends; create memories; build confidence; resilience and self-esteem, which can benefit mental health. They'll gain skills and attributes for work and life, like problem-solving; personal organisation; team-working and self-motivation – and they'll achieve an Award that's recognised by top employers, because it is not easy to complete, so it can help them stand out when applying for university or jobs.

To achieve their Bronze Award, participants must complete four sections: Volunteering, Physical, Skills and their Expedition. The DofE sets rules about these activities so please check before committing to them (for example a Skill cannot be learning a new sport, that is a Physical activity).

I recommend the following video as a helpful and informative way of finding out about the Bronze Award:

<https://www.dofe.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Bronze-Presentation-FULL-VERSION-v4-with-subtitles-1.mp4>

Every young person's DofE programme is personal to them – they find activities they'd like to do for their Volunteering, Physical and Skills sections, and many activities they are doing already might count. We will provide guidance and support, and students can either choose to continue an activity they already do or discover something completely new. Students chose their own activities and if they want ideas the DofE website can help: <https://www.dofe.org/do/ideas/> .

Because of the impact of Covid-19 on young people, participants who complete their Skills, Volunteering and Physical sections will receive a DofE Certificate of Achievement – a formal recognition, by the DofE, of their efforts.

Activities for each section take a minimum of one hour a week over a set period of time, so they can fit around studying and social lives. For more details about programme criteria and timescales see the [parent's leaflet](#) and <https://www.dofe.org/do/> .

About the expedition

The Expedition section involves your child working as part of a small team to complete training; plan their expedition and plan their route to make sure they are fully prepared – before spending two days and one night in the countryside. Participants will only be able to do their expedition if they attend a weekend's training in / near school covering basic expedition principles and introducing them to expedition equipment.

Expedition weekends are advertised well in advance so we would ask that students keep weekends in September 2023 free for these expeditions and dates will be given when your son/daughter's enrolment is confirmed.

The DofE and COVID-19

The full DofE experience, safely and in line with Government guidance, has been possible during the COVID-19 outbreak. The motivation and focus the DofE gives, and its positive impact on mental and physical health, can play an important role in helping your child navigate our 'new normal', safely expanding their world and give them skills and experiences to open doors in the future.

eDofE and the DofE app

Participants must create their DofE programme and record their progress using eDofE, the DofE's digital system, available online at eDofE.org and through the DofE app – downloadable for free from Google Play and the App Store.

If your child decides to enrol, we will set up their eDofE account and they will receive details of how to sign in and get started. We will issue full written instructions and through Edulink to parents.

Signing up through Arden Academy and Deadlines

This school year Arden Academy has reserved 100 places which will be offered to the first 100 year 9 applicants. The cost of taking part in the DofE at Arden is £36 per participant. This covers your child's participation place and Welcome Pack, which will be sent to their home address (direct from the Award Scheme Limited after enrolment and eDofE confirmation) and includes their personalised DofE Discount Card. The cost also includes an admin fee which goes towards Arden's annual DofE Licence Fee.

If your child would like to take part, please complete the application form through this google link: <https://forms.gle/AfSoV7GTyX5EUkj1A> before the end of September.

If the application is complete and fulfils the criteria, payment of £36 will be added to ParentPay and should be paid before half term. Once enrolment is confirmed, the enrolment fee will be non-refundable. Please note the Expedition cost is usually around £160 and the Expedition will be open to students who have completed two of their Volunteering, Physical and Skills sections before Easter and the third before the end of year 9. Students have to show they have started two of their three sections before the end of November (one of them being the longer 6 month section). **If students fail to evidence their activities through eDofE and don't meet the deadlines they will be withdrawn from the programme at Arden.**

(If the cost of taking part is prohibitive, please let me know as there may be financial support available to you.)

We will advertise a parent's question and answer session for an evening before half term because we don't have the resources to answer individual emails and the information is all set out in the information your son / daughter will be given on enrolment. Communication will be through Edulink and students can see me in my office by reception if they have any questions. Please read the [parent's leaflet](#). Information is also available on the DofE website: <https://www.dofe.org/do/> and <https://www.dofe.org/DofEWithADifference>. We try to support a lot of students through their Awards at all levels so we value students who are independent and self-directed but we also recognise that we can only help when we know it is needed. We endeavour to keep parents and students in touch and up to date with all developments but have to assume the emails are read on receipt. Please ensure the email address given on the google form is the same as the one in Edulink.

Many thanks for your support and we look forward to helping your child to achieve their DofE.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs Mary Foulkes

DofE Manager

Arden Academy

ArdenDofE@arden.solihull.sch.uk

Information for parents: <https://www.wbvs.co.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=738&type=pdf>