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Parent / Carer Information Pack

A guide to help you support your child on their DofE Expedition



schoolofoutdoors.uk

INTRODUCTION

We are pleased to confirm that School of Outdoors has been selected by your school to run the expedition section for your child's Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE).

As a company, we have over 40 years expedition and event management experience in Lowland and Mountainous environments, both in the UK and overseas. We have a real passion for sharing our knowledge and experience with young people across all three levels of DofE.

Top Tips!

The following information will help your child prepare for their expeditions. Please remember that it is their experience and their training, so avoid packing that rucksack for them! Head to our [Top Ten Top Tips](#), and read one instructors blog on [getting \(or not\) lost](#) page to start your child off on the best foot

We wish your child all the success in their expedition.



Content

INTRODUCTION	2
Top Tips!.....	2
Our Team	1
What qualifications do our Instructors hold?	1
Examples of National Recognised Qualifications for walking expeditions	1
Event team roles	1
Course Director.....	1
Course Instructors	1
The Expedition Journey	1
Bronze	1
Silver.....	1
Gold.....	1
Training day	2
Walking Team Size.....	2
Practical Training Expeditions.....	2
Practice expedition	2
Qualifying expedition.....	2
Pass	2
Deferral	2
Health and Fitness	3
Supervision	3
Levels of Supervision explained.....	3
Direct Supervision	3
Close Supervision.....	3
Remote Supervision.....	3
Electronic Tracking Devices.....	3
Overnight Pastoral Supervision.....	3
Behaviour	3
Dates, Times and Locations	4
Adjustments to timings.....	4

Late Pick up fee	4
Travel Arrangements	4
Parental Consent	4
Mobile Phones	4
Emergency Procedures	5
How to contact my child in an emergency.....	5
Contact by your child in an emergency	5
Emergency Contact.....	5
What happens if my child is ill during the event.....	5
Insurance.....	5
Personal Injury Cover	6
Risk Management	6
Food and nutrition.....	6
Equipment	6
What to bring and how parents can help.....	6
Equipment loss / damage.....	6
What School of Outdoors provide.....	7
Equipment Hire.....	7
FAQs	7
Our Top Ten Tips	8
Appendix.....	1
Equipment Checklist	1

Our Team



School of Outdoors are an [Approved Activity Provider](#) with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and our instructors are highly trained and qualified in working with young people on expeditions.

What qualifications do our Instructors hold?

Our Instructors will either hold a nationally recognised qualification for the terrain and mode of transport used, or if working towards qualification, will have had their competence signed off by a Company Director. All our instructors hold a current enhanced [DBS](#) and current first aid qualification.

Examples of National Recognised Qualifications for walking expeditions

Below are some examples of the qualifications our instructors hold;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mountain Leader • Hill and Moorland Leader • Lowland Leader
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 3 Qualification in Lowland Walk / Expedition Leadership
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Countryside Leadership award.

Event team roles

Course Director

The Course Director is the lead instructor on an event and will have overall responsibility for all aspects of safety and management.



Course Instructors

The Course Director will be supported by a number of Course Instructors who work directly with each team. The number of instructors will differ depending on the levels of supervision required. The course instructor will be the main point of call for your child throughout the event.

The Expedition Journey

For your child to **complete** their expedition section they must **attend and be signed off** on all stages of the program.

Bronze

- Complete the required training day and Practical training
- Complete 2 day 1 night qualifying expedition

Silver

- Complete the required training day
- Complete (min) 2 day 2 night practice expedition
- Complete 3 day 2 night qualifying expedition

Gold

- Complete the required training day and Practical Training

- Complete (min) 2 day 2 night practice expedition
- Complete 4 day 3 night qualifying expedition

Training day



Our training days normally take place at school and involve a mix of practical and theoretical learning. We love experiential learning and gamifying our sessions. Your child can look forward to active sessions, where they will develop their teamwork skills and build confidence in the tools, as a team they will need to succeed.

Walking Team Size

At this point we will support the participants to create their walking teams unless the school have already organised. Teams will typically have 7 participants in each. We are not allowed more than 7 and try to avoid less than 6 participants

Practical Training Expeditions

Our practical training expeditions continue the training learnt at school and allow participants to start to put into practice skills developed. They also provide an opportunity for a lot of participants to experience overnight camping for the very first time. This is a minimum of one day and one overnight.

Practice expedition

This is where all the learning comes together and the team put into practice their new skills. During this time, the groups will be closely supervised and will complete a journey to or from a campsite, set up camp, cook and spend the evening under canvas.

It is therefore not a given that teams progress to their qualifying expedition. If the Course Instructor has any concern, School of Outdoors will then discuss further training options with the school.

Qualifying expedition

Your child will be assessed on the [DofE's Expedition Aim and Requirements](#) and must comply with these in order to successfully complete the qualifying expedition.

There are two potential outcomes from the qualifying expedition.

Pass	The Assessor is satisfied that the team have successfully met the requirements of the expedition section.
Deferral	The team have not met one or more of the requirements and the Assessor confirms either during or at the end of their qualifying expedition that they have been deferred. At the stage the Assessor and Course Director will explain next steps for the team and how they can return to try again.

Health and Fitness

Your child will need a good level of fitness to help them enjoy and complete their expedition program. If they actively engage with sport in school, walk to school or are active for more than 30 mins each day, this will help towards them enjoying the experience rather than worrying about that rucksack on their back. They do not have to plan to summit Everest!

It is too easy for teams to over-estimate fitness and under-estimate the effort of carrying a full pack. Training walks and the practice expedition should help participants identify their capabilities.

Supervision

During the Practice and Qualifying expeditions, we will be remotely supervising your child. At times during the practical training we will also adopt this level of supervision. Remote supervision involves the safety and well-being of a team being monitored from a distance, with limited direct contact with the team. Remote supervision can take different forms and instructors will move between different types of remote supervision to ensure that the safety of a team is managed without compromising the expedition experience.

Levels of Supervision explained

Examples of how we create our supervision plans are:

Direct Supervision

During a training day or at the start of the practical training or practice our instructors will always be with the team.

Close Supervision

On the practical training and practice expeditions the instructor will take a step back as the team become more confident with their navigation, allowing the team to work independently, but still checking in with them at

agreed points.

Remote Supervision

We aim for all teams to be supervised from a distance with limited intervention towards the end of their practice. For all qualifying expeditions, the teams will be remotely supervised. Instructors will move between remote-close-direct in line with the events risk management plan.

Electronic Tracking Devices

Electronic tracking devices are used as part of the Course Directors overall event supervision plan. For the safety of all teams, this information is only shared between Course Directors, Instructors School teachers.

Overnight Pastoral Supervision

Course Directors will have agreed with instructors the supervision plan for all teams overnight. A number of factors will be taken into account including any rules set by the campsite. Your child will still need to follow the expedition [behaviour](#) policy for the duration.

Our timeline for a Bronze or Silver expedition would be:

9.00pm In tents We are not asking participants to go to sleep but simply to return to their tents whilst instructors continue to safely supervise.

10.00pm Quiet. (Go to toilet in pairs). No noise until **7am** and remain in tents unless pre agreed toilets. This is in line with the curfew on the majority of sites used

Behaviour

The Expedition section is about developing teamwork and success is dependent on the whole team completing the expedition. If a team finishes their expedition and meets the requirements, they have successfully completed this section of their award.

School of Outdoors, your child's school and the DofE all have codes of behaviour that your child

has agreed to follow. If these are not adhered to, during any stage of their program, the Course Director may take the decision to remove them from the event and ask you to collect them. Please ensure the emergency contact is available throughout for this reason.

Assessors cannot pick out individual participants as being unsuccessful if they have made it to the end of their expedition. If an individual persistently and deliberately flouts the behaviour expectations they may be deferred during the expedition



Dates, Times and Locations

You should have now received an email with full details of your child's event times, locations and travel arrangements. If you have any questions, please email the office info@schoolofoutdoors.uk.

Adjustments to timings

Due to the nature of our events, and groups becoming navigationally challenged (lost) some teams may finish later than the advertised time. We will endeavour to keep you informed if this is the case.

Late Pick up fee

As you can appreciate timing is crucial to the success of our events and the event team will have procedures to complete once participants have finished. With this in mind if you are more than 15 mins late in collecting your child an additional fee of £10 per 15 minutes intervals per child will be charged to cover any instructor overtime.

Travel Arrangements

School of Outdoors does not provide travel to and from the event location. Your school will advise on travel arrangements, although the norm is for parents to drop and collect from each location. If you have any questions, please first talk with the DofE Manager at your child's school or email us if you still required support info@schoolofoutdoors.uk.

Parental Consent

School of Outdoors operate an online parental consent system – **Evente**, **this is separate to any consent process your school has** if you have not yet provided consent via Evente please refer back to the parent letter.

This online form **must** be completed before we can take your child on any of our events. If any of the details provided by you on the form change at any time please use the original consent link to update.

Mobile Phones

One of the great experiences of the expedition section is being away with friends and not having the distractions of social media; text messages; etc. As such, participants will only have **one mobile phone per team** (decided either by the school or during a training day), which is for emergency use only. We will not take phones off participants, but instead allow them to understand through discussion and activity, the importance of teamwork and spending time in the moment. **We will therefore look to withdraw participants from an event found to be on their phones.**

We also actively discourage direct contact with home for this reason, so please don't expect to hear from your child during their expedition. Along with the above, this also ensures that important communications go through our On Call team and Course Director. Without full context, direct contact can cause unnecessary

worry for parents, distress for participants, and it can hinder the ability of the instructors to do their job effectively.

Should you have any issues or situations arising where you need to get in contact with your child, please call School of Outdoors 24/7 on 0129 633 6644. **Please do not text** this number. If we do not pick up, please continue to call until it is answered – we will be able to get a message to your child's instructor, who will pass it onto them or arrange a call back if necessary.

Emergency Procedures

We have strict emergency procedures in place for all our events. Where the expedition teams are being remotely supervised, they are trained to contact the Course Director.

How to contact my child in an emergency

Call 01296 336644 and our team will put you in direct contact with the Course Director.

Contact by your child in an emergency

Please can we ask that if your child calls you in an emergency, you advise them to use the above protocol. If your child calls you during the night, please ask them to contact their Course Instructor. At Gold, please ask them to activate the help function on their tracker if on wild camp.

Emergency Contact

We require an Emergency Contact who is available throughout the whole event and, where needed, is able to collect your child. If you are going to be unavailable, please ensure you provide the correct emergency contact details at consent.

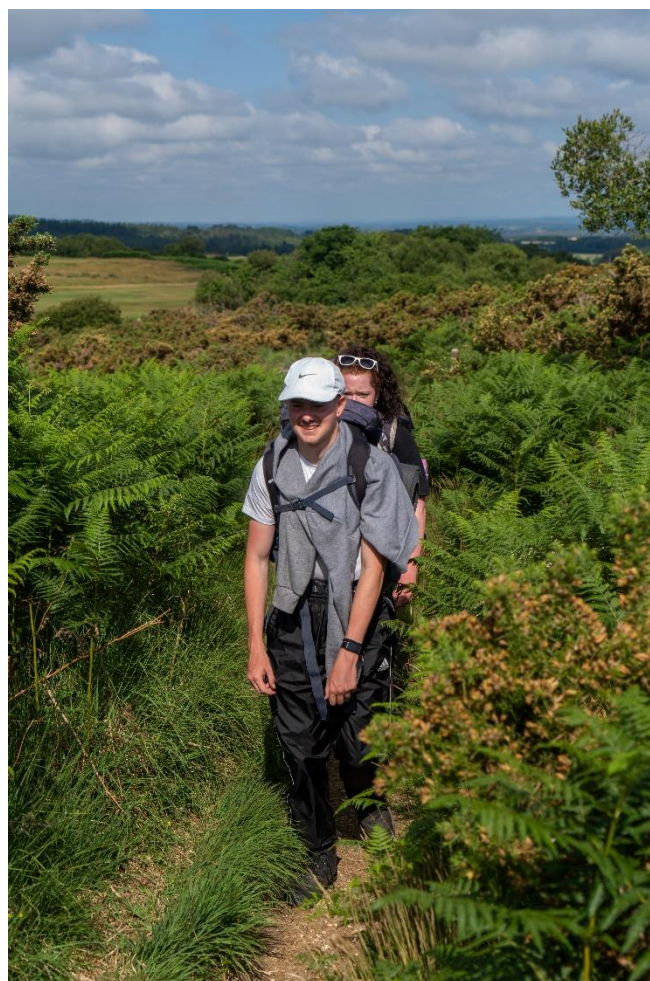
What happens if my child is ill during the event

That's what we are here for. Our experienced Instructors are first aid trained and are backed by the support of our On Call team. Instructors carry comprehensive medical kits and we'll proactively get in touch with you to keep you fully informed. If your child needs to be collected, we will ask you to come and collect them. In all cases we will ensure the instructor updates you at the end of an event if there has not been the need to call you during.

Insurance

School of Outdoors holds the below insurance policies for all clients and staff that take part in any activity being delivered by us.

- Public Liability Insurance – £10,000,000
- Employer's Liability Insurance – £10,000,000



Personal Injury Cover

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Provides Limited Personal Injury Insurance for Leaders and Participants Whilst Undertaking DofE activities.

For Further Information
see <https://www.dofe.org/run/insurance/>

Parents/careers may wish to obtain additional Insurance Cover in case of cancellation by yourselves or the school, lost equipment and medical cover. There are a wide range of insurance companies offering insurance cover

Risk Management

School of Outdoors follow all normal risk management procedures. A copy of our risk management plans / adverse weather plans and risk assessments can be found [here](#)

Food and nutrition

Full training will be given on food, nutrition, hygiene and hydration. Teams will plan menus for their practice and assessment during their training day. You can help by offering the following support:

- Please encourage your child to eat and drink as planned
- Participants must carry, and drink a minimum of 2 litres of water each day. Instructors can provide top ups or locations where water can be refilled

Please encourage them to go to toilet when needed as there can be health issues if they do not. See FAQs for

You can see DofE's advice on expedition food by clicking [here](#)

Equipment

Your child will be given full training on what equipment they need for their expedition. This will include what is suitable, what is not and how to pack this properly. Please see our [equipment list below](#)

What to bring and how parents can help

It is very easy to 'do it for them'. At the time, this may feel helpful but we find that non-essential items are packed. Please can we ask that you support your child's learning by allowing them the opportunity to pack their own rucksack. Your child will be carrying the entire content of the rucksack plus additional team kit provided by us. Participants must therefore arrive with at least $\frac{1}{4}$ of their rucksack empty (with only the sleeping mat attached to the outside) to allow for this additional team kit.

NB: We reserve the right to ask you to bring missing items or will ask that you collect your child if they are missing key items that will impact their safety.

Equipment loss / damage

We aim to provide the best quality equipment for your child's expedition and ensure they are aware of the importance in looking after the kit. We recognise kit does get left behind or damaged and we will charge the replacement costs to the school, who will in turn ask you to cover this cost. This ensures that future groups on expeditions, will have the same high-level experience.

We have included the replacement costs in the [table](#) below.

What School of Outdoors provide

School of Outdoors provides all teams:

Item	Replacement Cost
Tents	£189.00
Cooker	£64.00
<i>These include 2 saucepans and 1 frying pan</i>	
Maps	£10.00
Map Case	£15.00
Compasses	£18.00
Team First Aid Kit	£22.00
Tracker	£100.00
Water Pump	£350.00



Equipment Hire

School of Outdoors can also provide hire of Rucksacks. The hired rucksack will be delivered to the start location where your young person will be given time to transfer their kit into the rucksack. The rucksack needs to be returned at the end of each event. To request and pay for a rucksack please refer to the Event consent link in your parent letter

Item	Hire Cost
Per program	£15

FAQs

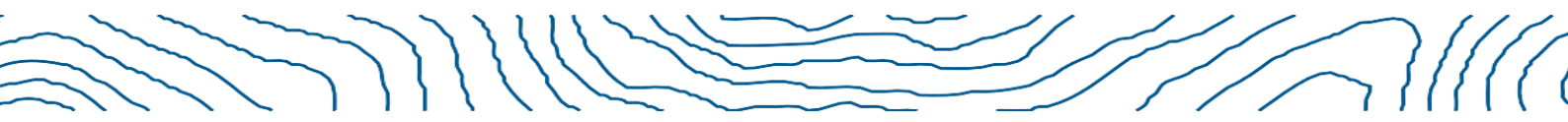
If you have any further questions, or would like clarification on any of the information in this pack, please visit our FAQs section on our [website](#) or contact the team on info@schoolofoutdoors.uk

Our Top Ten Tips

Here are our instructors top ten tips for you and your child

1. Let your child pack their rucksack themselves (they have done the training)
2. Leave at least $\frac{1}{4}$ of the rucksack empty for additional group kit
3. You can never bring too many bin bags
4. Pack plenty of blister plasters, you never know!
5. Ensure your rucksack is a min 65 litres and has an adjustable back system. Try before you buy or hire from us
6. Make sure your boots fit and you have worn them before
7. Share group kit – toothpaste, sunscreen, washing up liquid
8. Bring some sliders / flip flops for end of day at camp
9. Pack everything inside your bag
10. Do not wear strappy tops, rucksacks rub especially on sunburn. And avoid 'short' shorts, think of the nettles and chaffing.





Appendix

Equipment Checklist

Please use the handy checklist below to ensure you have all the correct kit, and still have space in your rucksack for that group kit.

NB: We reserve the right to ask you to bring missing items or will ask that you collect your child if they are not suitably prepared.

Personal Kit Items (you need to provide this kit)	Notes for Parents and Participants	Training	Practice/ Practical	Qualifying
65L Rucksack	It should have a waist belt and be 65 litres. Please ensure that it is only 3/4 full as your child will need room for the team equipment listed above. Please ensure your young person packs their rucksack ALL Kit should be inside the rucksack with the exception of the Roll mat – See below If you wish to hire a rucksack from us please go to your Event Consent link		✓	✓
Water Bottle	2 litres in total – Refillable water bottles		✓	✓
Plastic Plate, Cup and Cutlery	Mess tins are suitable		✓	✓
Wooden Spoon for Cooking	2 per team		✓	✓
Lighter/Box of Matches	2 per team and in a plastic bag to avoid getting wet		✓	✓
Washing up liquid/Tea Towel/Bin Bags/Sponge	2 sets per team (in small travel size bottle)		✓	✓
Sleeping Bag	Minimum 3 season – please pack in a compression sack so that it's size can be reduced. It should also be in its own waterproof bag		✓	✓

Roll Mat	Wrapped In a plastic bag so it doesn't get wet		✓	✓
Personal wash Kit			✓	✓
Walking Boots with ankle support	Please do not bring trainers to walk in. Light footwear (Sliders/Flip Flops) is recommended for the campsite		✓	✓
Waterproof jacket and trousers			✓	✓
Personal medication	Sanitary products, blister plasters		✓	✓
Sun cream			✓	✓
Watch			✓	✓
Torch (Not on your phone)			✓	✓
Camera (Not on your phone)			✓	✓
Suitable Clothing	Many thin layers are better than one big jumper. Avoid cotton hoodies and jeans as these hold water and will reduce the body temperature/ lead to chaffing	Outdoor coat/ jacket	✓	✓
Food	The team should have planned their meals at their Training and should share the responsibility for buying this.	Packed lunch If on a Non School Day	As Menu Plan	As Menu Plan