

12th October 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

I'm pleased to let you know that Ridgeway Academy offers the Bronze Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) to students in Year 10.

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 Ridgeway's DofE Manager, I wanted to send you some information about what a DofE programme involves, the benefits for your child and how they can sign up.

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 and memories and build traits like confidence, resilience and self-esteem, which can benefit mental health. They'll gain skills and attributes for work and life, like problem-solving, team-working and self-motivation – and they'll achieve an Award that's recognised by top employers and can help them stand out when applying for uni or jobs.

To achieve their Bronze Award, participants must complete four sections: Skills, Volunteering, Physical and their Expedition.

Every young person's DofE programme is personal to them – they can choose what they'd like to do for their Skills, Volunteering and Physical sections, and most activities can count. We will provide guidance and support, and students can either choose to continue an activity they already do or discover something completely new.

During and in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, participants who complete their Skills, Volunteering and Physical sections will also receive a DofE Certificate of Achievement – a formal recognition, by the DofE, of their efforts at this extraordinary time.

Activities for each section take a minimum of one hour a week over a set period of time, so they can fit around studying, hobbies and social lives. For more details about programmes and timescales [see the [enclosed leaflet](#) / visit [DofE.org/do](https://www.dofe.org/do)].

About the expedition

The Expedition section involves your child working as part of a small team to plan their expedition's aim, choose a location and do some training to make sure they're fully prepared – before spending two days and one nights in the countryside.

Ahead of this, they will take part in a training programme during period 6 over the course of several weeks, covering basic expedition principles and introducing them to expedition equipment. Students will also work with their group to plan their route and prepare. Participants will only be able to do their expedition if they attend the organised training.

Furthermore, a practice expedition day will take place during May half-term. The qualifying expedition will take place in the Summer Term, and details about pre-expedition training will follow.

The DofE and COVID-19

Your child can still have the full DofE experience, safely and in line with Government guidance, 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 giving them skills and experiences to open doors in the future.

As participants can choose and change their activities, they can pick ones that they can do while social distancing or from home. The DofE has provided useful advice and information, including activity and volunteering ideas, at DofE.org/DofEWithADifference.

The DofE has also introduced a number of flexibilities to allow expeditions to take place safely, in line with social distancing restrictions and Government guidance. While your child's expedition may look slightly different to those in previous years, they will be able to do theirs safely and with all the benefits and memories they'd get at any other time.

eDofE and the DofE app

Participants can 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 also hold an eDofE launch session in November/December.

Signing up

The cost of taking part in the DofE is expected to be £90 per participant, with the cost finalised once we have an understanding of the numbers of students enrolled onto the DofE this year. This covers your child's participation place and Welcome Pack, which will be sent to their home address and includes their personalised DofE Discount Card. It also covers some of the expedition costs and goes towards our centre license fee to run the DofE.

If your child would like to take part, please complete and return the enclosed enrolment form,

An information assembly has been delivered to students in form rooms and a parent / carer information presentation has been recorded and uploaded to the school website. If you would like any further information in the meantime, please feel free to contact me.

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

Yours sincerely,

Mr R Sutton

DofE Manager

dofe@ridgeway.herts.sch.uk