



**From: Mr G R Hill
(i/c Duke of Edinburgh Award)**

Duke of Edinburgh Award

Dear

It will shortly be time to commence the training programme for the expeditions section of Duke of Edinburgh Award.

In order to keep you more fully in the picture, we are arranging an information evening for all parents of pupils who will be doing their Gold Award or Silver Award expedition this summer. The information evening will be on **Tuesday 23rd February** and **not** on Thursday 11th February, as stated in the printed version of the school calendar. Please come to the **Meeting Room at 7.30pm**. The meeting should take about an hour.

In the meantime, there are a number of things which parents can do to assist with the successful completion of their son/daughter's DofE programme.

- Encourage them to log on to their DofE account at www.dofe.org and activate their account. This year, for the first time, the eDofE account replaces the old 'log book' which older brothers and sisters may have used. All of us are in the process of getting used to the new system.
- Encourage participants to arrange their volunteering, physical activity and skill, if they have not already done so. They also need to approach a responsible person who can monitor their progress and 'sign off' their activity at the end of the period. This part of the programme is down to their own initiative, although they can often find me in Room K6 if they need further advice.
- Ensure that they keep the two training weekends free of other commitments. These weekends are in the school calendar and were mentioned in the initial letter to parents sent out in the Autumn. They are:

Saturday/ Sunday 27/28 February 2010.

Saturday/ Sunday 6/7 March 2010.

These weekends are an essential preparation for the practice and qualifying expeditions later in the year. Any participant who has not been properly trained won't be allowed to do their qualifying expedition.

The training course will cover the following areas:

- First Aid and Emergency Procedures
- Risk Awareness and Health and Safety
- Navigation and Route Planning, including practical map skills
- Camp Craft and Hygiene
- Food and Clothing
- Country and Highway Code
- Observation, Recording and Purpose
- Team Building

Participants will be required from 8.45am until 4.30pm on all four days of the training programme. However, those who completed the training programme last year will be required for a shorter time, as they will require refresher training only. This may seem like a rather onerous commitment at the end of one busy week and the start of another but all would agree that it is important to be fully trained before embarking on an unaccompanied expedition of several days in 'wild country.'

The practice expeditions are as follows:

Gold: (Snowdonia)

Friday 26 March: equipment check 1.00pm

Saturday 27 March : Depart from school travel to Snowdonia – day one of practice expedition (accompanied)

Sunday 28 March: day two of practice expedition (accompanied)

Monday 29 March: day three of practice expedition (unaccompanied) – return to school. (This means that we will be returning one day earlier than the date given in the school calendar.)

Silver: (Llangollen)

Thursday 15 April: equipment check 4.00pm

Friday 16 April: 4.00pm transfer to Llangollen

Saturday 17 April: day one of practice expedition (accompanied)

Sunday 18 April: day two of practice expedition (unaccompanied) - return to school.

Please e-mail me at GRH@birkenheadschoo.co.uk to confirm that you will be attending the information evening. I will assume that all participants will be attending the training weekends unless I hear of any unavoidable absences, again, by e-mail.

Yours sincerely,
Graham Hill.