

# SEVENOAKS SCHOOL

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## DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S AWARD SCHEME – GOLD

Dear Parent

As you may already be aware, your son or daughter has the opportunity to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme at Gold level in the Sixth Form. This letter is to let you know more about the commitment involved in terms of cost and your child's time.

The Award is run in this and other countries as a challenge to young people, encouraging them to pursue leisure activities which may be new to them or to improve their skills in those which they already enjoy. It can also be an impressive achievement to place on a UCAS application form or CV, being well-regarded by employers and admissions tutors alike. Further details on the Award can be found on the D of E website at [www.dofe.org](http://www.dofe.org).

Although students may well have already completed the Silver Award by this stage, previous experience of the Award is by no means necessary for Gold as it is possible to register for the Gold Award as a Direct Entrant; doing so entails only an extra six months' commitment on top of the minimum of one year needed to complete the Award. Students still working towards their Silver Award, whether at Sevenoaks or a previous school, may begin the training for Gold this term, although they are encouraged to complete their Silver as soon as possible. It may also be of interest to note that your son or daughter does not have to complete the Gold Award in the Sixth Form; it can be completed at any time up until the student's 26th birthday.

Achieving the Gold Award comprises completing five sections of activity; Volunteering, Skill, Physical, Residential and Expedition. A brief description of these is given below; further details can again be found on the website.

**Volunteering:** a voluntary, practical action helping the community

**Skill:** a hobby which must be followed regularly for a required length of time

**Physical:** a sport interest, other than timetabled games lessons, again followed regularly

**Residential:** a five day, four night residential post, usually helping a community or taking a skills course

**Expedition:** a four day, three night trek, camping in wild country

It is up to your son or daughter to arrange to complete the first four sections of the Award, although guidance and support is available in school, and some activities undertaken in school, for instance music lessons or VSU, can count towards these sections.

Expedition training during the L6th is given in school on a Friday after school; attendance at these sessions is a prerequisite for taking part in any school-run expedition as during the full-scale practice and qualifying expeditions students journey in small groups independently in wild country, for which rigorous training is essential for safety. Direct Entry candidates will therefore have to undertake up to two extra training weekends in order to prepare them for the full-scale practice expedition.

Both the compulsory full-scale practice expedition and the qualifying expedition will take place in Snowdonia; the practice during the May half term 2012, and the qualifying expedition a year later in the May half term following IB exams in the U6th. The cost for an expedition will be approximately £170; final details of the expedition, together with a full equipment list, which each student must have borrowed, hired or bought, will be sent to you in due course. However, please do also note that should the school-based expedition or training schedule prove impossible for a student because of other commitments, there are other opportunities to undertake both practice and qualifying expeditions with an external provider.

17/19 March                      1-night practice expedition  
For Direct entry candidates  
Location: Sevenoaks and around

14/15/16 April                    2-night practice expedition  
For all Direct Entry candidates and those without Silver  
Location: Sevenoaks and around

27 May – 2 June 2012      Week long practice expedition  
For all Gold participants  
Location: Snowdonia, Wales

It is worth noting that the last SAT exam for this academic year is on 2 June and it would not be possible to sit this particular exam and participate in the practice expedition in Snowdonia.

If you would like your son or daughter to be registered for the Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award, please encourage them to attend the meeting after school on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> September in S9; should your son or daughter decide after this meeting that they would like to register formally for the Gold Award, please fill in the online form at [www.sevenoaksschool.org/dofe-gold](http://www.sevenoaksschool.org/dofe-gold) to confirm that you are happy for them to participate and for the cost of registration, and in due course expeditions, to be added to your school bill. The cost of registration for the Gold Award is £20, although there is an additional charge of £25 for Direct Entry candidates to cover the extra training requirements.

Should you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

Julia Bevan  
Gold Award Coordinator  
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