

GENERAL LAUNCH · 2026-27

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award

Bronze · Silver · Gold at Blessed Hugh Faringdon

Miss E Wright – DofE Manager



BLESSED HUGH FARINGDON
CATHOLIC SCHOOL



What we'll cover tonight

01

What is the DofE?
and why do it

02

The three levels
Bronze, Silver, Gold

03

The sections
with lots of ideas

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**Recording &
assessment**
eDofE and assessors

05

The expedition
a short overview

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Gold & residential
Year 12 only

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Costs
and refunds

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Key dates
for 2026–27

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Signing up
and staying on track

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Your questions
FAQs and Q&A

What is the DofE?

A programme of activities that young people choose for themselves, which helps them develop skills, confidence and resilience for life and work.

14-24

age range for taking part

3

levels: Bronze, Silver and Gold

4

sections at Bronze and Silver (5 at Gold)

- Non-competitive – young people are measured against their own goals, not against each other
- Open to everyone, whatever their background, interests or ability
- A nationally recognised award, valued by employers, colleges and universities



Introducing the DofE



Video: Welcome to DofE – youtube.com/watch?v=yN7wTcxK408

Why should my child do it?



Confidence

Trying new things and sticking at them builds self-belief.



Stands out to employers

Shows commitment, teamwork and reliability on a CV.



College & university

Great evidence for applications and personal statements.



Friendships

New friends through teams, volunteering and the expedition.



Wellbeing

Regular exercise, time outdoors and a break from screens.



Recognised achievement

A certificate and badge that stay with them for life.

How it works: the sections

At each level your child completes every section. They choose their own activities, set their own goals and work at them regularly.



Volunteering

Helping others in the community



Physical

Getting fitter, healthier and active



Skills

Learning or improving a skill



Expedition

A team adventure in the outdoors



Residential

Gold Award only

Which level can my child do?



Bronze

Who

Years 9, 10 and 12

Age

From the school year they turn 14

Minimum length

At least 6 months



Silver

Who

Years 10 and 12

Age

From the school year they turn 15

Minimum length

At least 6 months (12 months for direct entrants)



Gold

Who

Year 12 only

Age

From age 16

Minimum length

At least 12 months (18 months for direct entrants)

Bronze Award

A graphic for the Bronze Award. It features a dark brown header with the word 'BRONZE' in white. Below this are three horizontal bars: a pink bar for 'Volunteering 3 months', a yellow bar for 'Physical 3 months', and a blue bar for 'Skills 3 months'. To the right of these bars, in white text on the brown background, is the phrase 'PLUS a further 3 months in the Volunteering, Physical or Skills section.' Below the bars is a green bar for 'Expedition 2 days 1 night', which includes a white tent icon.

BRONZE

Volunteering 3 months

Physical 3 months

Skills 3 months

PLUS a further 3 months in the Volunteering, Physical or Skills section.

Expedition 2 days 1 night

- **Volunteering, Physical and Skills: 3 months each**
- Plus 3 more months in one of those sections – your child chooses which
- Expedition: 2 days and 1 night
- Minimum 6 months overall – the sections run at the same time
- Available to Years 9, 10 and 12

Silver Award

SILVER

Volunteering 6 months	
Physical	one section for 6 months, the
Skills	other for 3 months

Direct entrants must do a further 6 months in the Volunteering, or the longer of the Physical or Skills sections.

Expedition **3 days 2 nights**



- **Volunteering: 6 months**
- Physical and Skills: one for 6 months, the other for 3 months
- Expedition: 3 days and 2 nights
- Direct entrants (no Bronze) add a further 6 months to Volunteering, or to whichever of Physical/Skills is longer
- Available to Years 10 and 12

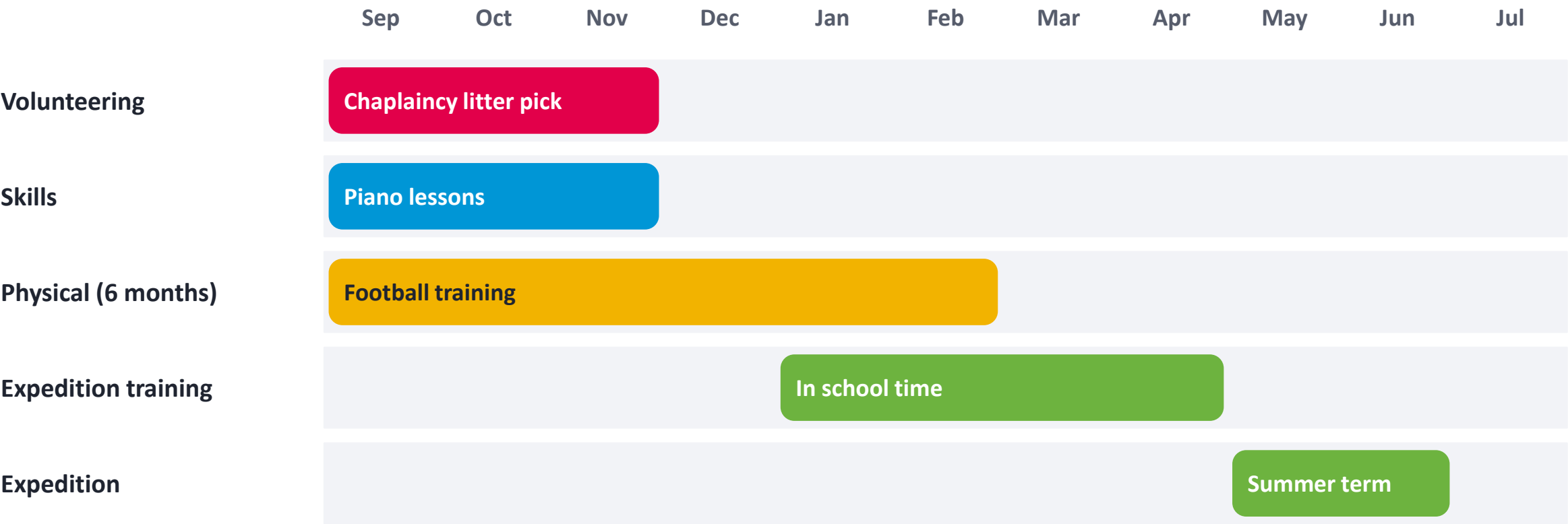
Gold Award

GOLD		<i>Direct entrants must do a further 6 months in the Volunteering, or the longer of the Physical or Skills sections.</i>
Volunteering 12 months		
Physical	one section for 12 months, the other for 6 months	
Skills		
Expedition 4 days 3 nights		
		
Residential 5 days 4 nights		

- **Volunteering: 12 months**
- Physical and Skills: one for 12 months, the other for 6 months
- Expedition: 4 days and 3 nights
- Residential: 5 days and 4 nights (Gold only)
- Direct entrants (no Silver) add a further 6 months to Volunteering, or the longer of Physical/Skills
- Available to Year 12

What it could look like: a Bronze example

One possible plan for a Year 9 student starting in September. Sections overlap – they are not done one after another.



Months shown are an illustration only – expedition training and expedition dates are confirmed at the Expedition Launch on 13 January 2027.

Gold at BHFCs: two options for the expedition

1

Expeditions through school

- Students must come and declare the group they will complete their expeditions with before signing up.
- All students in the group are then committed to following through.
- Groups are a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 7 students.

2

Expeditions externally

- Students complete their expeditions with an external provider – we can help find one.
- BHFCs acts only as their Award Holder (for Volunteering, Physical, Skills, Residential and sign-off).
- No expeditions are completed with the school.

Volunteering



Giving time to help other people, the community or the environment – about an hour a week, unpaid.



What counts

- Helping a charity, church or community group
- Coaching or leading younger children
- Environmental work such as litter picks
- Helping at school outside lessons
- Campaigning or raising awareness



What doesn't

- Being paid for it
- Helping your own family at home
- Replacing a paid job (e.g. unpaid shifts for a business)
- One-off events only – it must be regular

Volunteering: ideas

In school

- Chaplaincy volunteering
- Litter picking around school
- Reading buddy or homework club helper
- Helping at open evenings and events
- Peer mentoring or library helper

In the community

- Community litter picks
- parkrun volunteer (marshal, timekeeper, tail walker)
- Helping at a church or parish group
- Young leader at Cubs, Brownies or a junior club
- Charity shop helper (check age limits)

Around Reading

- ReadiFood – Reading's food bank
- parkrun and junior parkrun events across Reading
- Reading Libraries volunteer roles, e.g. the Summer Reading Challenge
- Clean-ups along the Thames and Kennet
- Local Scouts, Guides and Cadets as a young leader

Physical



Any sport, dance or fitness activity that gets their heart rate up – about an hour a week.



What counts

- Sports clubs and school teams
- Dance, gymnastics or martial arts
- Swimming, running, cycling, climbing
- Gym or fitness classes
- Something completely new



What doesn't

- Timetabled PE lessons
- Walking to and from school
- Activities with no regular commitment
- The same activity used for another section

Physical: ideas

In school

- Football training and fixtures
- Basketball, netball or other clubs
- School sports teams
- Dance or fitness clubs
- Running club

Already doing it?

- Football, rugby, hockey teams
- Dance school classes
- Swimming lessons or club
- Martial arts (karate, judo, taekwondo)
- Horse riding, gymnastics, cheer

Around Reading

- parkrun – free, weekly 5k (or 2k junior)
- Palmer Park – athletics and cycling
- Rivermead and local pools – swimming
- Rowing and canoeing on the Thames and Kennet
- Indoor climbing walls and trampoline parks

Skills



Developing an existing talent or discovering something new – practical, creative or social. About an hour a week.



What counts

- Music lessons or practice
- Art, creative writing, photography
- Cooking and baking
- Learning a language or coding
- Life skills, e.g. first aid, money management



What doesn't

- Timetabled lessons and homework
- Anything mainly physical (that's the Physical section)
- Irregular one-off sessions
- The same activity used for another section

Skills: ideas

Use what they do

- Piano or other music lessons
- Art, drawing or painting
- Creative writing or a blog
- Cooking and baking at home
- Drama or singing groups

Try something new

- Learning a language
- Coding or game design
- Photography or film-making
- First aid course
- Chess, debating, or sign language

Around Reading

- Reading Libraries – clubs, groups and resources
- Readipop – music projects for young people
- Youth theatre and drama groups
- St John Ambulance youth groups (first aid)
- Local art, craft and music classes

Six things to remember for every section



About an hour a week

Regular activity, averaging around an hour a week, for the full number of months.



From 1 September 2026

Anything done since 1 September 2026 can count for this year.



Use what they already do

Existing clubs, lessons and hobbies usually count.



One activity, one section

Each section needs a different activity.



Record it on eDofE

Regular updates with photos and notes as evidence.



An assessor – not a relative

An adult who knows the activity confirms they did it.

Record keeping: eDofE

1

Log in

Every registered student is set up at the eDofE login session on 4 November.

2

Plan

Choose an activity and set a goal for each section.

3

Add an assessor

Enter their name and email for each section.

4

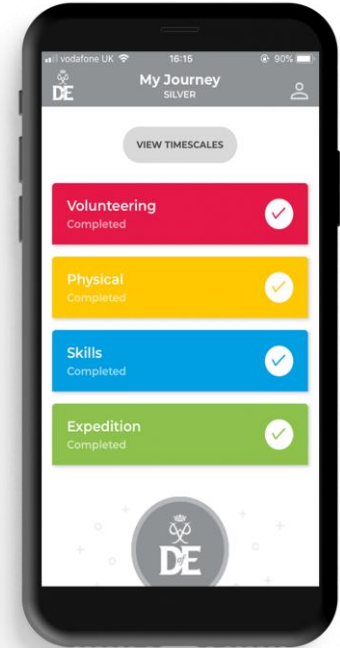
Record regularly

Upload notes, photos or videos – about 1 hour per week per activity.

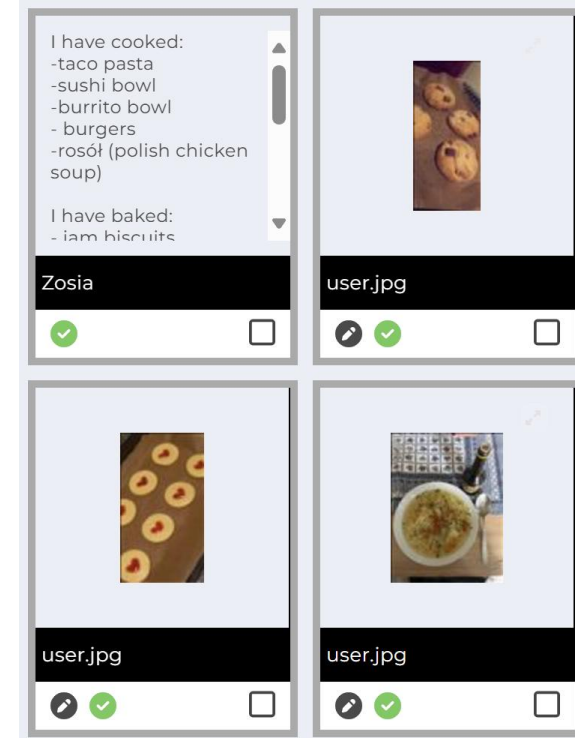
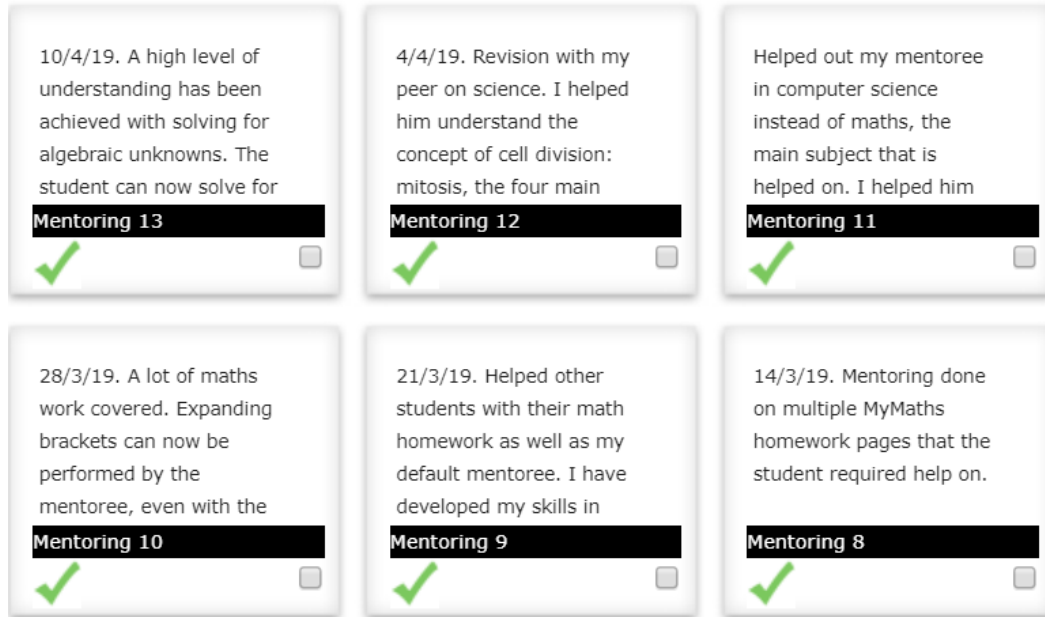
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Complete

The assessor submits a report; Miss E Wright approves it.



What good evidence looks like



Good evidence is...

- Regular – little and often
- Specific – what they did and learned
- Visual – photos of the activity or results

Left: weekly Volunteering notes (mentoring). Middle: photos of dishes cooked for a Skills section.

Assessment: who signs it off?

Start date : 02/09/2024

End date : 02/03/2025

Progress made : She has spent the season honing her skills and spending extra training sessions improving her technique. At the end of the season she was named the teams setter and she has consistently able to jump serve.

Achievements : She managed to learn how to run the team sets and jump serve.and has improved her overall knowledge.

An assessor is...

- An adult who knows about the activity and has seen your child's progress
- NOT a relative – parents, carers and family members can't assess
- Added on eDofE when the section is set up

For example...

- Teachers and tutors
- Sports coaches and instructors
- Music, dance or art teachers
- Volunteering supervisors or neighbours

The expedition



Planning and completing a journey as a small team, camping overnight and carrying everything they need.



A team of 4–7

Students plan and travel together



Self-sufficient

They navigate, cook and camp themselves



Supervised

Staff accompany all expeditions



Practice, then qualify

Trained and practised before the assessed expedition

Expeditions at BHFCs

	Bronze	Silver	Direct Silver	Gold
Training	1 full day	1 full day	2 full days*	1 full day
Practice	2 days, 1 night	2 x 2 days, 1 night	2 x 2 days, 1 night	2 x 3 days, 2 nights
Qualifying	2 days, 1 night	3 days, 2 nights	3 days, 2 nights	4 days, 3 nights

**Day 1 of Direct Silver training is Day 1 of the Bronze training*

When

Summer term, during school time – training too

Who leads

Bronze: external provider.
Silver and Gold: school staff.
School staff accompany all expeditions

Kit

The school can lend all equipment

Full details

Expedition Launch, 13 January 2027

Expedition training



Basic first aid

Dealing with common injuries and emergencies



Cooking on a Trangia

Safe use of camping stoves and planning meals



Navigation

Reading maps and using a compass



Pitching a tent

Setting up and striking camp as a team



Route planning

Planning a safe route and timings



Countryside & safety

The Countryside Code, kit and staying safe

Staying safe and supported



Staff on every trip

School staff accompany all expeditions, and a first aider goes on each trip.



No phones

Students don't take phones – staff carry phones and emergency contact details.



Support for all

SEN support is provided as needed. Please tell us about medical or dietary needs.



More to come

Kit lists, dates, consent forms and expedition costs follow at the Expedition Launch, 13 Jan 2027.



The residential (Gold only)



5 days, 4 nights Away from home, in a new place

With new people Most of the group should be people they don't already know

A shared activity Working towards something together

UK or abroad Arranged with an approved provider, usually in the holidays

Residential: ideas

Service to others

- Leader at a UK holiday camp for disadvantaged young people
- Volunteering at a YHA or residential summer camp
- Helping on a pilgrimage
- Conservation project holiday

Learning

- Cookery, photography or language course
- Bushcraft or field studies course
- Narrowboat or sailing training
- Learning about astronomy or the environment

Activity based

- Sport-based residential, e.g. basketball skills
- Snowboarding or ski course
- Multi-faith or cultural exchange residential
- Outdoor activity instructor training

What does it cost?

£40

Award registration fee

Same for Bronze, Silver, Direct Silver and Gold

Pay on ParentPay by 23 October

What it covers Enrolment into the award and your child's eDofE account.

Refunds Refundable only until the eDofE login has been issued. After that, it can't be refunded.

Pupil premium Students eligible for pupil premium can use their allowance. Email Miss E Wright to discuss.

Expedition costs Charged separately. Details at the Expedition Launch on 13 January 2027.

The expedition is only one part of the award

Paying for or completing the expedition does not complete the DofE. To achieve the award, your child must finish every section.



Volunteering



Physical



Skills



Expedition

+ Residential at Gold

Key dates for 2026–27



Not finished by Christmas 2027? Students can keep working on their award until their 25th birthday.

How to sign up



STEP 1

Complete the form

Registration forms are attached to the information letter or collect one from a member of staff.



STEP 2

Return it by 23 Oct

In person to Miss E Wright (A1) or your tutor, or email e.wright@hughfaringdon.org



STEP 3

Pay £40 by 23 Oct

On ParentPay. Pupil premium: email Miss E Wright.



STEP 4

Attend the login session

4 November, 3.15–4.00pm in C1. All registered students must attend.

Staying on track – or stepping back

Keeping going

- Update eDofE little and often
- Come to the December check-in – this shows continued commitment
- Aim to have sections mostly done by the summer term
- Ask Miss E Wright for help early if they get stuck

If plans change

- Students can stop the award at any time
- To withdraw, email Miss E Wright:
e.wright@hughfaringdon.org
- The £40 fee can't be refunded once the login is issued
- Unfinished? They can keep going until their 25th birthday

How you can help at home



Help them choose

Talk about what they already do and enjoy – it probably counts.



Prompt the evidence

A quick photo or note after each session makes recording easy.



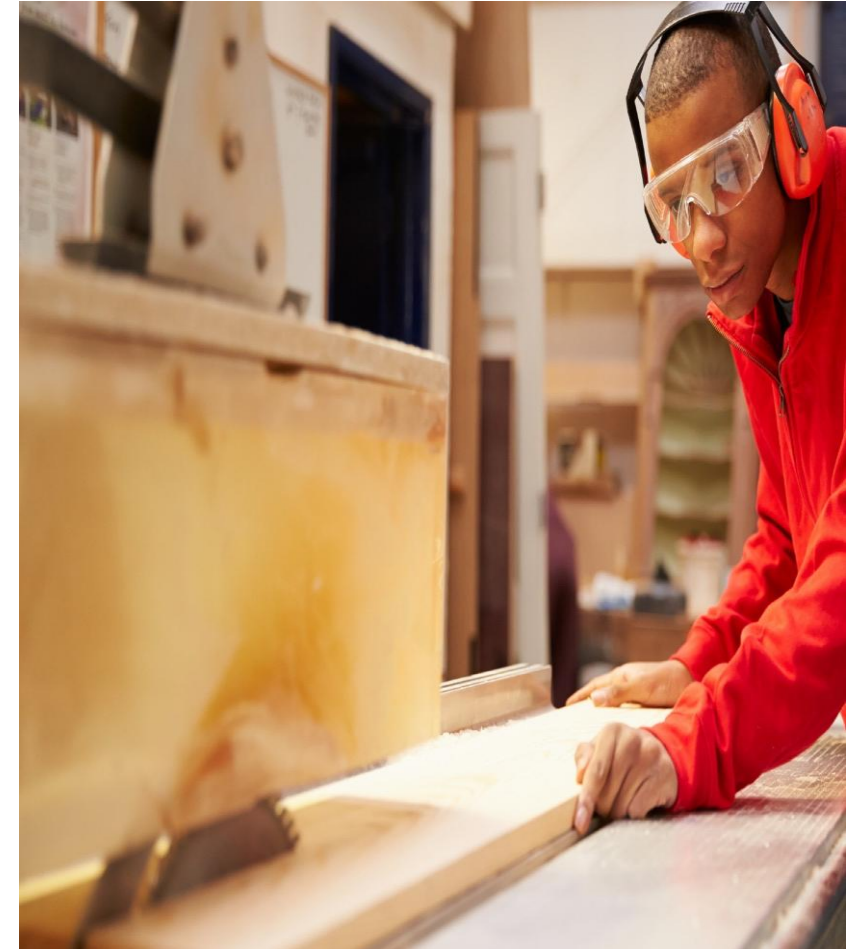
Build a routine

Pick a regular time each week to update eDofE together.



Ask and encourage

Ask how each section is going – not just the expedition.



Frequently asked questions (1)

Does my child need to be sporty or outdoorsy?

No. DofE is non-competitive – it's about personal progress. Training starts from the basics.

Can activities they already do count?

Yes – as long as it's regular, recorded and each section uses a different activity.

How much time will it take?

About an hour a week per activity, plus recording. Training and expeditions are in school time.

Can I be my child's assessor?

No – assessors can't be relatives. Coaches, teachers and tutors are common choices.

What if they miss some weeks?

Occasional gaps for holidays or illness are fine. Talk to Miss E Wright about longer breaks.

Does my child need to buy kit?

No – the school can lend all expedition equipment. Kit lists come at the Expedition Launch.

Frequently asked questions (2)

If we pay for the expedition, is the award done?

No. Every section must be completed and signed off on eDofE.

Can they do the expedition outside school?

Yes – independently with an external provider. Ask Miss E Wright for provider details.

Will they have their phone on expedition?

No. Staff carry phones, and a first aider goes on every trip.

What about SEN, medical or dietary needs?

SEN support is provided as needed. Please tell Miss E Wright about any needs early.

What if they don't finish this year?

They can keep working on the award until their 25th birthday.

Can they move up a level afterwards?

Yes – Bronze holders can do Silver, and Silver holders can do Gold, without the extra direct-entry time.

Any questions?

Miss E Wright

DofE Manager

e.wright@hughfaringdon.org

Room A1

Remember

- Form and £40 by 23 October
- eDofE login: 4 November, 3.15pm, C1
- Expedition Launch: 13 January 2027