19 September 2019

Dear Parents and Carers

The Duke of Edinburgh Award - Bronze

Rickmansworth School will be running the Duke of Edinburgh Award this year. This is an award that acknowledges the non-academic achievements of young people and is recognised by colleges and universities when included on UCAS forms or in a CV.

The award requires a great deal of time, effort and commitment from the members of the scheme, it can also be costly. It is important that students and parents read the following information before starting on the scheme.

The scheme is divided into three levels, the Bronze, Silver and Gold certificates. Each level is then divided into Skill, Volunteering, Physical and Expedition sections, with a further Residential section for the Gold award.

Students in Year 9 are being offered the opportunity to complete the Bronze Award.

What does the award involve?

The Volunteering, Skill and Physical sections each require at least an hour of the activity per week for three months. Students must then choose to continue one of these sections for a further 3 months. The scheme encourages students to choose new activities, although it is acceptable to continue an old one if they can prove that they have made progress. Students’ progress through the award is monitored through the use of individual eDofE accounts which students are responsible for keeping up to date and accessing regularly in order to communicate with staff.

The Volunteering section requires students to complete at least 3 months of voluntary service to the community. In the past students have worked in charity shops, visited retirement homes, read to the blind, worked at Brownie and Cub packs and raised money for many charities through sponsored events.

The Skill section encourages students to learn a new skill. Many students have learnt to play musical instruments but we have also had students complete this section through many other activities such as cookery classes, bell ringing, sewing and learning sign language.
The Physical section can be gained through the completion of at least 3 months sporting activities. There is a vast range of suitable sports. Everything from football to skiing, archery to rock climbing can be used; the only major exceptions are the martial arts. Students are responsible for organising their own activities. As a result, the school will not be carrying out any checks on the suitability of the provider. Such measures are the responsibility of the parent or carer.

The Expedition section requires the students to attend training in first aid, map reading, route planning, cooking and camping. These will take place during lunchtimes or after school. In addition, students will need to attend a Navigation trial where they will put into practise their map reading skills in the local area, a Practise Expedition and a Qualifying Expedition. The Qualifying weekend is assessed and students will not automatically qualify purely through attendance.

During the weekends students are required to walk approximately 15 miles over two days, carrying all their equipment. They walk in teams of four to seven, navigating through manned checkpoints. They will not be accompanied along the route. They camp in the evening and prepare their own meals on camping stoves.

Due to the nature of the Expedition section of the award it is vital that the standard of behaviour is faultless over these weekends. The aim is to encourage independence, and the ability to work as a team, therefore they are not supervised at all times. The safety of the entire group is of the utmost importance and any student whose behaviour is considered unacceptable will be sent home, the cost of this will be charged to the parents.

Of the three phases - Physical, Skill, and Volunteering – **Students must complete all three of these** before coming on the expedition. Failure to do so will prevent participation on the expedition. This means the students are far more likely to complete the award. It has been our experience that students often complete the expedition phase and do not get around to completing the other three sections.

**When are the expeditions?**
Throughout the year there will be training following The Duke of Edinburgh Syllabus. There will also be a navigation walk after school one afternoon to assist with the map reading and navigation modules. This date is still to be confirmed.

**The Practice Trial Expedition is on Saturday 16 and Sunday 17 May 2020**
**The Qualifying Expedition is on – Monday 13 and Tuesday 14 July 2020**

**Students will be in School on 15 July 2020** working on and presenting their final project whilst ensuring all equipment is dry and packed away correctly and returned.

This is the only expected Residential Trip that will be offered to Year 9 students in Enrichment Week. On the Thursday students will join other Year 9 students with the planned year group activity.

Students are required to attend both the Practice and the Qualifying dates in order to be able to complete the award.

The Duke of Edinburgh award is an extra-curricular award and students are expected to attend school on the Monday following the practice and the Wednesday following the Qualifying. Failure to attend school without a letter from a medical professional will result in the student being unable to continue or complete the award.
Training

Students are required to complete a training syllabus before attempting the expeditions. This will take place weekly after School one day a week, mainly on a Tuesday at 4.30pm. Students will need outdoor clothing including waterproofs on these days as we will be completing modules both in and out of the classroom. Unfortunately, this year there will be no catch up sessions run at lunch time should students not be able to attend the after School sessions. Students will also need to complete a local navigation walk to put the classroom skills into practice prior to the main practice walk.

Equipment

Students will need a certain amount of equipment for the expeditions. The School has a limited amount of equipment that may be loaned. Should you wish to borrow School equipment a deposit of £25 is required which will be returned when all kit has been handed in, in a satisfactory condition. Some kit is group equipment and this is the responsibility of the whole group to ensure it is returned, dry and on the return date. You should not buy equipment for your son/daughter at this time, as more information will be given about the requirements in the parents meeting. However, you can view the official Duke of Edinburgh kit list here https://www.dofeshopping.org/dofe-expedition-kit-list-download/

The Duke of Edinburgh Award is a scheme designed to develop the non-academic skills of young people. Students are placed in a position where they must be mature and reliable. They need to work as a team and be able to communicate with staff, students and members of the public. There are limited places and I would ask that students think carefully about the level of commitment they are able to give to the award. Students working towards the Volunteering section of the award carry with them the reputation of Rickmansworth School and The Duke of Edinburgh Award as they work within the community. The Expedition section can only run safely and successfully if participants are mature and reliable. It is important that students approach this award with the right attitude.

In order to cover the cost of this award there will be a fee covering the cost of transport on expeditions, campsites, School equipment and the fee to complete the award as set by the Herts County Council. The cost for the award will be £122 per student.

Applications

Rickmansworth School will be offering up to 72 places for the bronze award. Because the Duke of Edinburgh is over-subscribed each year, we are asking students to complete the attached form detailing their reasons and what they believe they will get out of the award including their ideas for the physical, skill and volunteering.

Some places will be awarded on the application above and the rest of the places will be allocated at random.

If you would like your son/daughter to be considered for a place on the Duke of Edinburgh Award, please complete the slip below and return it with the application. Please ensure the name, form and year group are on the back of the application. Slips should be returned by 23 September 2019. Once students have been offered a place you will need to make the first instalment of £60. This will be required before 20 October 2019.

Volunteers

In order to increase the amount of students we can offer the award to we need to ensure we have enough adults out on the routes to accommodate the additional amount of students and to assist on the practice walk.

Volunteering involves sitting at a checkpoint which is usually a picnic area, tea room or café for a couple of hours and reporting to teams via a text message. If you are keen and wish to walk, then that is very helpful too. Volunteers are often paired up and asked to walk with a group who may need additional confidence or tailing a group from afar to ensure their navigation. All volunteers are subject to a DBS Check. If you are interested in volunteering or have any skill
you would like to offer please contact me as soon as you can so that the appropriate checks can be put in place.

If you require any further information, please feel free to contact me at the school on the following email address: DofE@rickmansworth.herts.sch.uk. Alternatively, general information can be found on the Duke of Edinburgh website www.dofe.org

Yours sincerely

Miss J Baron
Duke of Edinburgh Coordinator
Rickmansworth School
To: Miss J Baron – DofE  
Re: Duke of Edinburgh Award – Bronze

I would like my son/daughter …………………………………………………………………………………………………….. to be considered for a place on the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.

☐ I understand that staff reserve the right to exclude students from the award at any time, should their behaviour, attitude or commitment be deemed unacceptable.

☐ I understand that students will not be accompanied at all times during the expedition phase of the award.

☐ I understand that students are responsible for organising their own activities and that the School will not be carrying out any checks on the suitability of the provider. Such measures are the responsibility of the parent or carer. Failure to complete 2 of the 3 sections will prevent my son/daughter’s participation on the expedition.

☐ Should my son/daughter be offered a place I will ensure that the first payment instalment of £60 is made prior to the 20 October, Payable to Rickmansworth School

☐ I would like to be an Adult Volunteer – Please contact me on the following email DofE@rickmansworth.herts.sch.uk

☐ The School may be able to assist with the payments for the scheme if you are unable to meet the cost. (Please Tick if this applies to you)

Signed ……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………. (Parent/Carer)

Date ……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………