

THE NORTON KNATCHBULL SCHOOL

An International School with Language and Science Specialisms



(Founded 1630)

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Dear Parents/Carers

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award ('DofE') at NKS

Introduction

This letter is for parents/carers whose child would like to enrol on the DofE Award at NKS. It contains information about the DofE, the sections, the expeditions, enrolment and communication. With the letter, there is an information sheet and forms that need completing and returning by the final enrolment date. Students enrolling on DofE at NKS are expected to be committed, trustworthy, reliable and responsible; exemplary behaviour is required throughout. The website www.dofe.org provides detailed, current information. At NKS, we offer the DofE at Silver level to Year 10 and Gold level to Year 12. Within each level there are four sections: volunteering, physical, skill and expedition. There is a fifth section for Gold, a 5-day residential project.

The Sections

Students are required to arrange their own volunteering, physical and skill activities with guidance from the DofE website and the DofE leaders at school. Parents/carers are asked to support students with these sections that must be carried out voluntarily in students' own time and must average 1 hour per week.

The Expeditions

School staff and other volunteers deliver the training and supervise the expeditions. We train students in route planning, campcraft, cooking, navigation, equipment, safety procedures and first aid. We issue them with a training booklet. Following training, in teams of between 4 and 7, students plan and carry out a practice expedition of the required level and duration. If successful, teams plan and carry out an assessment expedition, where external assessors will either pass or defer a team. If deferred, it might be possible for a team to have another go, at an additional cost.

Dates for the current academic year are included on the information sheet with this letter. Students must be available for **all of the dates** and for additional lunchtime, form-time or after-school meetings. Please note that some of these dates are in school holidays and bank holiday weekends.

DofE expeditions are unaccompanied and remotely supervised. This means that students do not have an adult with them for most of the expedition. Each expedition team carries a satellite tracking device and a basic mobile phone. The tracker enables supervising staff to know the location of each team at any time. It also has a facility for teams to alert staff if non-urgent or emergency help is required. With Silver expeditions, staff can normally reach students within 1 hour. With Gold, this could be longer. We brief students about what to do if an incident arises. On most expeditions, students will be using campsites that provide drinking water, toilets and showers. They will need to drink plenty of water. At Silver, we plan to meet every team at least once during each day with additional water, as well as every morning and evening. At Gold level, students will be more self-sufficient as they will be journeying in remote terrain where road access is limited. They will use natural water sources such as streams, with water purification tablets as necessary.

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Equipment and clothing required for expeditions is available on the DofE website and in the students' training booklet. Please note that students must **not** bring their own mobile phones, music players, GPS devices, 'smart' watches, devices that access internet, aerosols, raw meat, fresh milk or knives (other than a penknife and eating cutlery). On Gold expedition events, where a long minibus journey and pre-expedition overnight stay is required, students can bring phones at their own risk but must hand them over to staff at the venue prior to expedition, when they will be stored in the minibus. Any student with prohibited items on the expedition will cause their team to defer.

Enrolment

The cost, enrolment date and compulsory expedition dates for the required level of the award are on the information sheet. Before the enrolment date, please complete and return the following:

- Kent DofE enrolment form (complete all information but ignore the DofE/KCC fee as this is paid from school).
- NKS yellow medical questionnaire.
- One payment of the relevant fee stated on the information sheet.

The payment includes the DofE/KCC enrolment fee, DofE annual licence, administration costs, all expedition expenses including assessor/supervisor expenses, transport to venues from school, campsite fees, YHA accommodation for Gold, satellite tracking and DofE mobile phone subscriptions, team equipment, maps and printing. Please include **one payment** for the full amount to **Norton Knatchbull School** either by cheque or through the school's on-line payment method. In the unlikely event that the school is unable to deliver the expedition section, your child will remain enrolled with DofE centrally up to their 25th birthday. Refunds will be provided only in so far as the school can claim reimbursement. Should a student withdraw voluntarily from the DofE Award, and the school has incurred prior costs, monies already paid will not be refunded.

Once enrolled on DofE, we will provide students with login details for 'eDofE', the on-line system used to monitor and record their progress through the sections.

Communication

This letter and the associated information sheet should be kept for reference. Students' school email addresses will be added to a contact list through which key information for parents/carers about specific events will be communicated. This information will include times, places, equipment and other details. Students are required to check their school email regularly and forward relevant information to parents/carers.

We ask parents/carers to notify the school of any changes to the information provided on the yellow medical questionnaire which we will store and use throughout the period of the current award level. It is vitally important that this information is up-to-date. Whilst students are away on expeditions or practical training days, the DofE Coordinator will be contactable on **07718 948034** or by email smaytum@nks.kent.sch.uk

Should parents/carers need to contact the school during an expedition please use the main switchboard number **01233 620045**. If out-of-hours, a mobile number for the duty SLT member will be provided on the answering system.

Closing

Please contact the DofE Coordinator by email smaytum@nks.kent.sch.uk with any questions you may have. In the mean time we look forward to seeing your child achieve the DofE Award at NKS.

Yours sincerely



Simon Maytum (ML, DofE Coordinator)