

TON/TDY

2nd December 2016

Dear Parent/Guardian

Re: Gold DofE Assessed Expedition

I would like to take this opportunity to write to you regarding this summer's Gold Assessed DofE Expedition before preparations for the final examinations start in earnest. The participants have been working on their award which should soon be complete, leaving only the experience of the expedition between them and the completion of this section of the award. If they haven't arranged their residential for the fifth element of the Gold Award, could I suggest this is done as soon as possible? Previous experience with DofE participants reflect that if this isn't arranged or completed before their final expedition, they never go on to complete the award. The DofE website has over a hundred different residential experiences they could apply for.

Expedition information

This year's expedition will take place in the Lake District, Cumbria, travelling through some of the most beautiful and dramatic locations in the National Park. The expedition will take place on **16th to 21st July 2017**.

The cost of the expedition will be **£255**. This includes transport, equipment hire, fuel, maps, campsite fees and overnight accommodation before and after the expedition. As with previous expeditions the charge **does not include** food for the expedition; this will need to be supplied by the participants.

Unfortunately, in previous years we have had a number drop out of the expedition in the build-up. This puts added pressure on the other participants and Leaders alike as this can result in the expedition not being financially viable. Therefore, this year, we have to ask that 50% of the expedition cost (**£127.50**) be a non-refundable deposit paid by **17th February 2017** with the final payment being due on **23rd June 2017**. Please send payment via Parent Pay or by cheque made payable to Northampton School *for Boys* (with **Gold Assessed DofE**, student **Name** and **Form** on the back of the cheque) to the **Finance Office**.

As it will have been over a year since the last expedition, I have included with this letter a Residential Consent/Information Form for completion and return to **me** by **Friday 9th December**.

Equipment

Your son/daughter should now be well versed in what equipment they need take on expedition. A kit list was issued during expedition training. Should another copy be required it can be found on the DofE website. Other useful information is included on the trip information sheet.

This expedition is the longest the participants will have undertaken; therefore, they will need to work on the packing of the expedition rucksack - “Light is Right” will be a very useful mantra. Students must work on their own clothing and equipment as well as that of the team. Communication with others in the team will be essential – this is a vital skill that some of the groups found difficult during the practice expeditions.

The most important part of carrying any equipment is that it is water tight. With the weather in July being increasingly unpredictable, I would highly recommend the use of a specifically designed waterproof rucksack liner. There’s nothing worse than a wet sleeping bag!

Pre-expedition check

Before the expedition it is normal for the participants’ kit to be checked by the Expedition Assessor. To give your child enough time to correct any potential issues with their equipment, pre-expedition checks will take place on **Monday 10th July 4:00pm at the school.** Whilst it is imperative all participants attend, should there be an issue with attendance, I would appreciate it if you could inform me prior to the above date. Students have also been asked to bring along all paper work including route cards, map tracings and menu plans. The assessor may wish to scrutinise these as not all food may have been purchased at the time of the check.

Pre-expedition expectations

If your child participates in sporting activities, they should cope well with the demands of an expedition in wild country, the challenges of steep terrain and the carrying of a well packed rucksack. If, however, they do not participate in much sport or physical activity, then it would be advisable that they start to improve their fitness now, even if it is just walking at weekends. If new boots (not walking trainers) or rucksacks are to be used on expedition, they should be thoroughly broken in and well fitting. Although the students have been fully advised, they may need you to encourage them that this will make the expedition a much more comfortable and, ultimately, more enjoyable experience!

Arrangements for Travel

Food on the evening of the 16th & 20th July will be down to the individual choice of the students. The accommodation has cooking facilities if they wish to cook an evening meal. There are several public houses which serve food (but are **very expensive**).

It is acceptable for the students to go to a pub for an evening meal, as long as they only purchase soft drinks. To drink alcohol on any school trip is prohibited. If I believe that any student has consumed alcohol before the expedition I will not allow the individual to set off on the expedition; thus they will fail the expedition before it gets underway and the student will need to be collected and taken home.

Emergency Contact

Due to the location of the expedition, mobile contact is sometimes difficult. If you require assistance please contact the school during office hours on **01604 230240**, the school will then endeavour to contact me. Out of hours contact should be through: Mr O Harris (Senior Deputy Headmaster) **07894 411822**. Please **do not**, under any circumstances, use this number for general information or for non emergency communication.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at school.

Yours faithfully



Mrs T O'Neill
Leader of Duke of Edinburgh Award

REPLY SLIP

Please return reply slip to Mrs T O'Neill by Friday 9th December, together with the completed Residential Consent/Information Form.

I/We* have received the letter regarding the July Gold Assessed Expedition (16th to 21st July) and wish my son/daughter* to take part. Having read the information sheet, I agree to him/her* taking part in the activities described. I understand that 50% of this cost (£127.50) is a non-refundable deposit to be paid by **17th February 2017** and the final payment is due on **23rd June 2017**.

Name of student: _____ **Form:** _____

Name of Parent/Guardian (please print): _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____ **Date:** _____
(*Delete as necessary)