



The DofE

A useful guide for parents,
guardians and carers

The start of a life-changing adventure!

The DofE explained

Leading youth charity the DofE was founded in 1956 and we have been inspiring, guiding and supporting young people in their self-development and recognising their achievements ever since.

Doing their DofE can be a life-changing adventure for your child. On the way, they will do their own exciting and challenging programme of activities to help them reach their full potential. They'll learn new skills, help others, have fun, make new friends and gain a great sense of achievement. Employers, colleges and universities really value Duke of Edinburgh's Awards and know what it says about someone who's an Award holder.

Young people can do programmes at three levels, **Bronze**, **Silver** or **Gold**, which lead to a Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

Young people achieve an Award by completing a personal programme of activities in four sections (five for Gold). They'll find themselves helping people or their community, getting fitter, developing skills, going on an expedition and, for Gold only, taking part in a residential activity.

DofE programmes are delivered under licence by over 400 partners (Operating Authorities) who offer it through DofE centres from youth clubs, voluntary organisations, schools and colleges to Young Offender Institutions and businesses.



Our guiding principles

At the DofE we strive to achieve our mission through personal development programmes and the assessment and presentation of Awards.

All our programmes are driven by the following ten guiding principles, which are at the heart of everything we do.

- Non-competitive
- Achievable by all
- Voluntary
- Personal development
- Personalised
- Balanced
- Progressive
- Achievement focused
- Demand commitment
- Enjoyable

Get involved!

Whatever activities your child has chosen to pursue for their DofE programme, they will need your support and guidance to help them through. As well as encouraging them to keep their eDofE pages up-to-date, you may be called upon to offer lifts to their after-school activities as well as provide financial support if necessary.

You may, however, feel that you have other skills to offer. In which case, why not volunteer with your local DofE group? You don't need special qualifications to be a DofE volunteer – from giving guidance and advice or training and assessing young people's progress, to driving a minibus or helping with administration, there's a role for everyone. If you have regular involvement you will need to undergo the standard safeguarding checks. You could also choose to fundraise to support your local DofE group, other more disadvantaged groups in your area, or for the DofE Charity nationally.

DofE programmes

The concept of the DofE is simple – anyone aged between 14 and 24 can do a programme at one of three progressive levels which, when successfully completed, leads to a Bronze, Silver or Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award. There are four sections at Bronze and Silver level and five at Gold.

With assistance from DofE Leaders, your child will select and set objectives in each of the following areas:

Volunteering: undertaking service to individuals or the community. Examples:

- Raising money for a cancer charity
- Being a football coach at the local youth club
- Helping at an after-school club for kids with cerebral palsy
- Running a recycling project in their local housing estate
- Being an active member of a youth council or forum.

Physical: improving in an area of sport, dance or fitness activities. Examples:

- Playing table tennis regularly at their youth club
- Taking part in after-school wheelchair basketball lessons
- Joining a local athletics club and competing for their area
- Improving their karate skills and gaining the next belt
- Taking weekly dance lessons at a local club.

Skills: developing practical and social skills and personal interests. Examples:

- Learning how to juggle
- Taking saxophone lessons and gaining a higher grade
- Compiling a book on the fashions of the last decade
- Learning about today's digital lifestyle, creating a video and posting it online
- Being an active member of a Young Enterprise group at their college.

Expedition: planning, training for and completion of an adventurous journey in the UK or abroad. Examples:

- By wheelchair, following a disused railway track noting the current use of previous railway buildings
- By canoe, recording the wildlife found on the Strangford Lough trail
- By foot, planning a route in the Lake District to visit areas that inspired Wordsworth's poems
- Planning an expedition on horseback in the countryside including identifying suitable farm campsites and bridleways
- Using the cycle system in the Netherlands to undertake a research project on the provision and quality of cycle paths compared to the UK.

At Gold level, participants must do an additional fifth **Residential** section, which involves staying and working away from home doing a shared activity. Examples:

- Assisting at a summer camp for Brownies
- Joining an ACF activity week with members of different detachments
- Improving their Spanish language skills on a course in Madrid
- Helping deafblind young people and adults to enjoy a holiday in France
- Joining a conservation holiday.



How long does it take?

Each section must be done for a minimum period of time for an average of an hour a week over this time. To achieve an Award young people must show persistence, commitment and personal development.

It's not something that can be achieved through a short burst of enthusiasm one weekend! However, they may easily fit their DofE activities in around their school, college or work commitments, carrying them out in their own personal time, partly as one of a range of options in supported/core time or as an after-school or lunchtime programme. They may choose to use an activity they are already doing as a DofE activity – or go for something completely new.

Each progressive level demands more time and commitment from participants. There is no real time limit when it comes to completing a DofE programme. As long as they are under 25 years old when they complete all their activities in their



programme, they're free to work at a pace that they're comfortable with to achieve their Award. The chart below shows the minimum time participants must do their programmes for, expressed in months and usually requiring a regular commitment of around an hour a week per section. Direct entrants are young people who have not achieved the previous level of Award.

Inspiring ideas and guidance notes for activities are available at www.DofE.org/sections

Bronze (14+ years old)

Volunteering	Physical	Skills	Expedition
3 months	3 months	3 months	Plan, train for and complete a 2 day, 1 night expedition
<i>All participants must undertake a further 3 months in the Volunteering, Physical or Skills section.</i>			

Silver (15+ years old)

Volunteering	Physical	Skills	Expedition
6 months	One section for 6 months and the other section for 3 months		Plan, train for and complete a 3 day, 2 night expedition
<i>Direct entrants must undertake a further 6 months in the Volunteering or the longer of the Physical or Skills sections.</i>			

Gold (16+ years old)

Volunteering	Physical	Skills	Expedition	Residential
12 months	One section for 12 months and the other section for 6 months		Plan, train for and complete a 4 day, 3 night expedition	Undertake a shared activity in a residential setting away from home for 5 days and 4 nights
<i>Direct entrants must undertake a further 6 months in either the Volunteering or the longer of the Physical or Skills sections.</i>				

Length of time of DofE expeditions

Level	Duration	Minimum hours of planned activity each day
Bronze	2 days and 1 night	At least 6 hours during the daytime (at least 3 of which must be spent journeying)
Silver	3 days and 2 nights	At least 7 hours during the daytime (at least 3½ of which must be spent journeying)
Gold	4 days and 3 nights	At least 8 hours during the daytime (at least 4 of which must be spent journeying)

Notes: Time associated with overnight accommodation and catering is additional to the minimum daytime hours of planned activity. Participants have to undertake at least one practice expedition as part of their training. This may be more closely supervised than their final assessed expedition, which is remotely supervised to develop independence and a sense of personal responsibility.

Costs

To take part in the DofE, participants pay a nominal participation fee. This fee is their contribution towards the Charity's costs in running their DofE programme and represents a personal commitment adding value to their involvement.

They will receive:

- Their online eDofE account
- A *Welcome Pack*
- *Achievement Pack* (free PDF version, with the option to buy a professionally bound version)
- Cotswold discount card
- Certificate and badge on Award approval

The fee represents a very small proportion of the overall cost which is supported by the funds raised by the DofE Charity.

The current charge for participation can be found at www.DofE.org/go/costs

“I was really worried that my daughter would not be able to combine doing her DofE programme with her schoolwork and cultural responsibilities and traditions. The school accommodated our needs easily and she achieved her Bronze Award and is now doing her Silver.”

Aapti Agarwai

Parent

Your Operating Authority and/or centre may add a small administration fee to this amount and they must explain this clearly to you.

It is usually programme activities, rather than the cost of enrolment, that can make the greatest financial demands on your child. Encouraging them to devise a programme that matches their resources is all part of the challenge. However, more costly activities can be attainable with a little imagination and many participants organise fundraising events for special activities.





Insurance

The DofE provides limited personal accident insurance which covers payment of a certain benefit(s) in the event of a participant or adult helper sustaining accidental bodily injury whilst taking part in an approved DofE activity. As a condition of their Operating Licence, each Operating Authority must also arrange Public Liability Insurance, which will cover any claims against them for injury or damage caused to, or by, young people and adults doing a DofE programme.

However, please note that the insurance does not provide cover for any personal belongings or equipment damaged or lost whilst doing a DofE activity. It will also not cover your child for any injury or damage caused to them whilst undertaking an activity arranged by you with an external organisation, you will need to check what cover is provided by the activity provider. For more information regarding insurance, please visit www.DofE.org/go/insurance

Supervision

Our DofE Leaders and Expedition Supervisors are always trained to high standards of child safety and supervision through their Operating Authority and their DofE centre.

However, given the scope and breadth of DofE programmes, your child may choose to undertake activities that are not directly managed or organised by your group, centre or Operating Authority (i.e. at their local gym or conservation group). If this is the case, you, as their parent/guardian/carer, are responsible for ensuring that the activity is properly managed and insured, and that the adults are suitably qualified and checked.

Remember too that, when using online technology, you should ensure that your child is aware of how to keep safe and how to get help if needed. See www.ceop.gov.uk

DofE Leaders are sensitive to all participants' individual cultural, religious, physical and other requirements. Consequently, they regularly organise single-sex activities and schedule around important religious events as appropriate.



“Keelan’s really come out of his shell through doing his DofE. He discovered that he’s got a skill for designing and building websites which he started for his DofE – he’s now taking ICT for A Level and has got himself a holiday job at a local web design agency.”

Max O’Leary
Parent

The Welcome Pack and eDofE

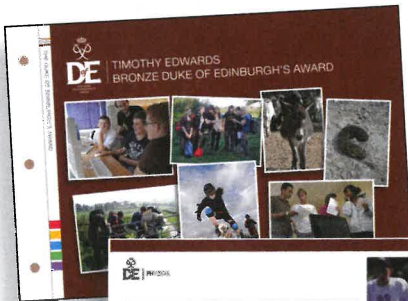
Once they've chosen to start their DofE, your child will be sent their login details for eDofE (our online record system) and a *Welcome Pack* which contains: a *Little Book of DofE* to tell them everything they need to know; a *Keeping Track* booklet for them to log their activities in and an *Assessor Card* for each section for them to give to their Assessor to provide them with information on what's required of them in their role. They will also get a discount card giving them 15% off purchases from Cotswold, the outdoor equipment retailer, in stores or online.

Using eDofE or the *Keeping Track* booklet, participants have to prove what they've done for each of their sectional activities. They can upload their evidence on to eDofE by scanning in pages of their signed *Keeping Track* booklet as well as pictures of them doing their activities, signed notes from their Assessor, movies... anything they can think of to prove their hard work! Their Leader will then sign off each section as and when they have proved their commitment to their activities for the necessary time period. Your Operating Authority will approve their final Award.

“ I love the core principles of the DofE, which yell out ‘access and achievement for all’. We all grow, develop and mature at different stages, and the DofE recognises this – allowing young people to achieve without competitive pressures.”
Jenny St. John, Parent



When their Award is approved, they will have the opportunity to create their *Achievement Pack* (pictured below) containing the photographs, scans and words that they have uploaded or input into eDofE. This allows them to create a permanent memory of their experiences to treasure, so the more high quality items they upload, the better!





The world's leading
achievement award
for young people.

“My son was having trouble making friends at his new school. When he joined the DofE group, though, he quickly found like-minded boys and made some really good mates as they trained for their expedition and did their volunteering work together as a team. He's now really motivated at school and has a new lease of life!”

Jayne Maythorpe
Parent

There are several ways you can get more detailed information:

- Talk to your child's DofE Leader or Co-ordinator
- Contact your Operating Authority via www.DofE.org/contact
- Visit our website: www.DofE.org
- Email us: info@DofE.org
- Call us: 01753 727400

A range of clothing and other merchandise is available from our online shop:
www.DofEshop.org

Our Charity's Mission

To inspire, guide and support young people in their self-development and recognise their achievements.

Local contact: