



Our Ref: JMH

June 2016

Dear Parent / Guardian

Silver Duke of Edinburgh's Award

I am writing to you to explain about the Silver Duke of Edinburgh's Award which is open to pupils in Year 10. Your child will have the opportunity to participate in the award during the coming academic year. Abbotsholme pupils have long been involved in the Award and during your child's school career, he or she will have the opportunity to advance to Gold Level.

There are four sections to a Silver Award – Volunteering, Skills, Physical and an Expedition, and there are a wide range of activities from which they can choose to satisfy each section, many of which can be undertaken within school. Pupils can put together an individual programme that interests and challenges them and, from this, they gain a sense of responsibility and self-confidence. Further details can be found on the website www.dofe.org.

Once your child has enrolled onto the programme, he or she will be given the details of their online account. A username and password will be provided and it will be their responsibility to add details and evidence, after an initial introduction to the eDofE, as it is known, in school.

For the expedition element, the pupils will be trained in the skills of navigation, camp craft, personal safety and first aid so that they can complete a 50 kilometre expedition in open country, independent of direct adult supervision. The intention of the Award is to encourage young people to develop a sense of self-reliance and to act responsibly and competently on their own initiative. Unlike the Bronze Award, pupils will need to commit to preparing for their expedition in their own time.

A small group of pupils will be offered the opportunity to complete their expedition on horseback. For the practice and qualifying expeditions an external approved provider is used by the school. As a result this will incur further charges, which, although subsidised by the school, will be passed on to parents.

During training expeditions, there is close supervision. The staff will sometimes walk with the group and sometimes leave them on their own for part of the day. The pupils will be supervised in the evenings at the campsite and trained in the safe use of camping equipment. On the practice and qualifying expedition, however, it is in the spirit of the Award that they look after themselves as much as possible.

The training for the Expedition element of the award is mandatory and pupils will be required to attend two training weekends and to complete a practice expedition, before the qualifying expedition itself. The dates of these will be published in advance, in a letter from the Outdoor Education Department. All Year 10 pupils will also be involved in other compulsory ventures such as Hikes in October 2017 and the Year 10 journey over camps in summer 2017, which will also help build their outdoor skills and experiences.

Please note that if your child misses these weekends he/she will have to take on extra training in order to meet the qualifying expedition requirements.

The qualifying expedition will take place during Hikes in September/October 2017.

As you can see there is a level of commitment necessary from your child and they need to attend the training sessions in order to be ready for the expedition element of the Silver award. Failure to do so could mean that they miss the qualifying expedition. If they are heavily involved in other areas of OEd that involve navigation and expeditions this can be taken into account.

Whilst the cost of the weekend trips associated with preparation for and completion of the Silver expedition are included within the school fees, it is necessary for us to make a charge of £40 to cover the cost of the individual record books and the eDofE account provided by the D of E Scheme and other costs associated with your child's participation in the Scheme, notably the charge for assessment of expeditions made by the Peak Panel. As your child has expressed an interest in continuing with the Silver Award, they will automatically be entered, in the Autumn Term, and the charge of £40 will be added to the school bill. If you do not wish your child to be entered, please contact me on the above email address by the start of term in September.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries.

Yours sincerely

Joy Holmes

Mrs J M Holmes
D of E Manager