

Friday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2021

Dear parent / carer,

I'm delighted to let you know that Tanfield School now offers the Bronze Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) to students in years 9 and 10.

The DofE is a great chance for your child to broaden their horizons, discover new interests and talents, have fun with friends, develop essential skills for their future and achieve an internationally renowned Award.

As Tanfield's DofE Manager, I wanted to send you some information about what a DofE programme involves, the benefits for your child and how they can get involved.

### **About the DofE**

The DofE is non-competitive and open to all young people – it's about setting personal challenges and pushing personal boundaries. There are three levels of DofE programme which, when successfully completed, lead to a Bronze, Silver or Gold Award.

Through their DofE, students will make friends and memories and build traits like confidence, resilience and self-esteem, which can benefit mental health. They'll gain skills and attributes for work and life, like problem-solving, team-working and self-motivation – and they'll achieve an Award that's recognised by top employers and can help them stand out when applying for uni, apprenticeships or jobs.

To achieve their Bronze Award, participants must complete four sections: Skills, Volunteering, Physical and their Expedition.

Every young person's DofE programme is personal to them – they can choose what they'd like to do for their Skills, Volunteering and Physical sections, and most activities can count. We will provide guidance and support, and students can either choose to continue an activity they already do or discover something completely new.

During and in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, participants who complete their Skills, Volunteering and Physical sections will also receive a DofE Certificate of Achievement – a formal recognition, by the DofE, of their efforts at this extraordinary time.

Activities for each section take a minimum of one hour a week over a set period of time, so they can fit around studying, hobbies and social lives. For more details about programmes and timescales visit [DofE.org/do](https://www.dofe.org/do).

### **About the expedition**

The Expedition section involves your child working as part of a small team to plan their expedition's aim, choose a location and do some training to make sure they're fully prepared – before spending two days and one night in the countryside.

Ahead of this, they will take part in training covering basic expedition principles and introducing them to expedition equipment.

There will also be a number of training sessions in which your child and their group will plan their route and prepare. Participants will only be able to do their expedition if they attend the organised training.

The expedition will likely take place in the summer term, COVID-19 restrictions dependant, and details about pre-expedition training will follow.

### **The DofE and COVID-19**

Your child can still have the full DofE experience, safely and in line with Government guidance, during the COVID-19 outbreak. The motivation and focus the DofE gives, and its positive impact on mental and physical health, can play an important role in helping your child navigate our 'new normal', safely expanding their world and giving them skills and experiences to open doors in the future.

As participants can choose and change their activities, they can pick ones that they can do while social distancing or from home. The DofE has provided useful advice and information, including activity and volunteering ideas, at [DofE.org/DofEWithADifference](https://www.dofe.org/DofEWithADifference).

The DofE has also introduced a number of flexibilities to allow expeditions to take place safely, in line with social distancing restrictions and Government guidance. While your child's expedition may look slightly different to those in previous years, they will be able to do theirs safely and with all the benefits and memories they'd get at any other time.

### **eDofE and the DofE app**

Participants can create their DofE programme and record their progress using eDofE, the DofE's digital system, available online at eDofE.org and through the DofE app – downloadable for free from Google Play and the App Store.

We will set up their eDofE account and they will receive details of how to sign in and get started. We will also hold an eDofE launch session.

### **Signing up**

**There is no cost to you or your child.** Tanfield has sourced funding because we believe in the importance of this award for every single one of our young people. This includes your child's participation place and Welcome Pack, which will be given to them soon and includes their personalised DofE Discount Card.

If you would like any further information, please feel free to contact me.

Many thanks for your support and we look forward to helping your child to be the best version of themselves through their DofE.

Yours faithfully,

Catherine Quigley

**DofE Manager**

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