

October 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Bronze Duke of Edinburgh award – Next steps in Year 11

Firstly, I hope this letter finds you and your families well. I wrote to you back in July to explain the cancellation of award expeditions due to the pandemic and us being in lockdown. I now would like to reiterate some of that information and also explain some further details on plans to move forward.

We hope that students have been able to work hard to still do their Physical, Skills and Volunteering sections of the award. DofE have released lots of COVID safe activities that can now be used and signed off for these sections. Please see the table below for these examples.

Physical	Volunteering	Skill
Yoga / Boxcercise / Pilates	Virtual support for the elderly	Learning to draw
Coach to 5K	St Johns ambulance social media volunteer	Learning musical instruments from watching YouTube
Joe Wicks work outs	Help prepare meal parcels in the community	Learning first aid (online with St Johns)
Fitness challenges – attending school PE clubs afterschool	Prefect / support in school with clubs / student council	Learning to cook at home
Bike riding in the local area	Morocco fundraising	Sign language online

Certificates of recognition

It's become increasingly clear that COVID-19's impact will be long-lasting, and will halt our progress planned to complete the Silver programme this year. To recognise the dedication, resilience, and accomplishments of the students in these extraordinary circumstances, DofE have launched a new accolade – 'The 2020 DofE Certificate of Achievement'. This will be awarded to any student who started their programme from summer 2019 onwards and who has completed the Skills, Physical and Volunteering sections of their award. These will need to be approved by myself, Mr Rampling on EDOFE for the certificate to be issued to students.

This is not the 'full' Bronze Award, but recognition from DofE for what has been completed up to this stage. Once students get the opportunity to complete their expedition section following the restrictions of the pandemic being lifted, this will then activate the full award status and normal procedure will follow.

Please can I ask all pupils to now spend time adding their evidence and submit their sections for their Volunteering, Skills and Physical on EDOFE. Once this is added, we will be able to ask for the Certificate of Achievement to be sent to you.

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Expeditions

Following the postponement of the expedition this year, we are hoping we will be able to run expeditions in summer 2021 after the GCSE exams. This will take place in July for Year 11 pupils who started their Bronze in Year 10.

At present we are in weekly communication with the City of York Council and also receive regular updates from the Department of Education. We hope that by March we will be able to release further guidance on the package for the award moving forward.

There are many considerations for us to take in to account, with two of the most important being the safety of the pupils and staff and the experience of DofE. The potential of camping in a tent alone, walking 1m/2m apart, hygiene control and not being able to help each other as normal, is something of great concern at this stage. We hope by next summer things will be different and DfE will allow educational visits outside of school.

We have also decided that we will **NOT** be running the Silver award this year and will only push to get the Year 11 pupils their Bronze Awards finished where we can. With so much uncertainty and the pressures we face in school, we feel this is the best decision all round.

For now we have pencilled in some dates for the weekends but won't be sharing these with everyone until after Christmas at the earliest, in the hope we have had further guidance.

Payments and finances

The overall cost of the Bronze DofE was £100, with £40 being a non-returnable deposit which was paid to the City of York for your subscription and online portal for Bronze. The further £60 was for two weekends which if paid to school already, was returned to parents before the summer via the Parentpay system.

The costs of the assessed weekend will be £30, however we will confirm this in writing later in the year.

DofE Bronze Year 11 meeting

For those students on the Bronze Award, I would really like to hold a meeting with all these pupils in F8 on Thursday 22 October from 3.05pm – 3.45pm. This will be for us to discuss DofE plans and also log on to EDOFE in G2. Please can I ask that all students attend.

We are sorry we could not complete the awards this year and hope that in to 2021 we can. The staff at the Vale of York Academy and I work really hard to deliver this award and are looking forward to getting the pupils out as soon as we can. I will continue to keep you informed as plans start to come together.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me on m.rampling@voy.hlt.academy

Yours sincerely,



Mr Mark Rampling
Head of PE and Enrichment