Great Marlow School

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Silver Duke of Edinburgh's Award 2026/27

Dear Parent / Carer,

Great Marlow School are offering the year 10 students the opportunity to participate in the Silver Duke of Edinburgh Award (DofE). On Wednesday 21st October, the students had the opportunity to attend an information session about the award, which detailed the benefits and requirements of the silver level programme.

About the DofE (if you have not completed bronze)
The DofE is non-competitive and open to *all* young people, regardless of need – it's about setting personal challenges and pushing personal boundaries. There are three levels of DofE programme which, when successfully completed, can lead to a Bronze, Silver, and Gold Award levels.

Through DofE, students will develop core life skills such as confidence, resilience, resourcefulness, readiness, and responsibility. All of which, will contribute to your son / daughter's development toward adulthood. Moreover, the students will gain significant employability skills, like problem-solving, team-working, and self-motivation – and they'll achieve an award which is recognised internationally by employers and educational institutions.

To achieve their Silver Award, participants must complete four sections: Skills, Volunteering, Physical and an Expedition. (If they have not completed the Bronze Award, they can still participate in the Silver. However, there is an increase in the specified duration for 2 of the 3 sections from volunteering, skill and physical.)

Every young person's DofE programme is personal to them – they can choose what they'd like to do for their sections, and there is a huge number of potential activities to choose from. As a centre, we will provide guidance and support on this, as well as facilitate many onsite opportunities which can contribute to the respective sections.

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 look at the school website, or visit the DofE website: www.dofe.org

About the expedition
The Expedition section is made up of the **training days**, followed by the **qualifying expedition**. To complete this, the students work as part of a small team who are responsible for the navigation of a planned route, cooking for themselves, as well as campcraft skills for overnight stays (2 nights for the training days and 2 nights for the qualifying expedition). During training, the students receive a significant amount of guidance from highly qualified staff. For the qualifying, the students are supported and monitored, however, they must demonstrate independence and self-sufficiency to pass this section, this means that there are times when they are unsupervised. We aim for the programme to be inclusive of all students, as far as is possible, regardless of need.

This year, to facilitate our expedition, GMS PE staff will be accompanied by Action Adventure Pursuits, who are an experienced expedition company, which the school has used in previous years. Currently, the proposed plan for the expedition is canoeing (walking could be used) and the dates which have been organised are as follows.

Training weekend: 10th 11th 12th 13th June 2027 (2 x overnight camping)
Qualifying expedition: 2nd 3rd 4th July 2027 (2 x overnight camping)

Students will be expected to catch up on all schoolwork missed.

The cost for the Action Adventure Pursuits expedition package is £675 (canoeing). This includes food for both weekends, the hire and use of specialist camping and navigation equipment that will be needed for the experience, as well as the boating equipment. **The canoeing Training Days and Qualifying Expedition will take place on the River Thames.** Details regarding all necessary kit / equipment and the payment schedule will follow in the new year. As with all trips involving GMS students, behavioural expectations and sanctions in line with school policies still apply.

This year, students will not be allowed on the Training Days or Qualifying Expedition if the full DofE amount it is not paid according to the schedule. Unfortunately, our leniency in previous years regarding payments has proven costly to both the school and the DofE funds.

If GMS students do not want to use our Training Days / Qualifying Expedition dates, they can use the 'Opportunity Finder' on the DofE website to find an Approved Activity Provider (AAP) offering an expedition package which suits them.

Students are required by the Duke of Edinburgh's conditions to attend all the expedition training and to have demonstrated the required level of competence and behaviour in order to be able to participate in the final assessed expedition.
***The 20 expedition conditions can be found on the DofE website.**

eDofE and the DofE app
Participants can create their DofE programme and record their progress for the 4 sections using eDofE, the DofE's digital system, available online at eDofE.org and through the DofE app – downloadable for free.

If your son/daughter decides to enrol **for the first time**, we will set up their eDofE account and they will receive details of how to sign in and get started.

Signing up
The cost of registering for the Silver level of the DofE Award at GMS is £35 per participant, payable via WisePay. This is additional to the cost for the Training Days & Qualifying Expedition. Registration will close on 6th November 2026. This covers your son / daughter's participation place, Welcome Pack, and Licensed Organisation fee. The Welcome Pack will be sent to their home address and includes their personalised DofE Discount Card.

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

Many thanks for your support and I look forward to helping your son / daughter to achieve through their DofE.

Yours faithfully
Steve Goodright
Head of Physical Education / DofE Award Manager
Great Marlow School

THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S AWARD