

23 January 2026

Gold Award DofE Information

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope this letter finds you well. Over the Christmas break I have received a number of emails from parents with very similar questions. Instead of emailing everyone individually I believe it would be easier to communicate the questions and their answers to you all.

The first query surrounded the number and cost of expedition. To complete the gold award participants are required to complete two expeditions, a training/practice expedition and qualifying expedition. I understand the original letter sent out said that 'the total cost would be £275' this was inaccurate and for that I can only apologise. This cost covers the sign up cost plus the cost of the practice expedition, which will take place in July.

To complete the award student will have to undertake a qualifying expedition, this can be done one of two ways:

1. This can be carried out through school like the practice expedition in summer term 2027 – following the completion of A-level exams – the cost would be paid to the school in autumn 2026.
2. Alternatively, if students want to get the expeditions completed before a-level exams you can opt to sign up to an open expedition. Information for BXM open expeditions can be found here: [Open expeditions - BXM - The School Expedition Specialists - BXM Outdoors Ltd](#) – the cost of this would be paid directly to the expedition provider and students would not need to sign up to the in school Gold expedition in autumn 2026. Other expedition providers are available and can be found through the DofE opportunities finder [Opportunity Finder - participants - The Duke of Edinburgh's Award](#)

With regards to Residential section – this section is organised independently by students and consist of a 5-day, 4-night stay in an unfamiliar place doing a shared, purposeful activity (like conservation, training, or volunteering) with a group where most people are strangers, staying in shared accommodation, and completing activities both day and night.

Examples include the following:

Service to others

- Being a leader at a UK-based holiday camp for disadvantaged young people.
- Undertaking a voluntary teaching placement overseas.
- Being part of a service crew at a large summer camp for Brownies.
- Volunteering on a YHA residential summer camp.
- Volunteering at a residential summer school.
- Being an assistant to support an eco-friendly waste project at an outdoor education centre
- Helping out on a pilgrimage.

Environment and conservation

- Joining a tree planting project with your local environment trust.
- Attending a conference on climate change as a youth representative
- Helping the preservation team of a railway or canal
- Studying coral bleaching in Australia.
- Joining a National Trust working holiday and join different conservation projects in various locations across the UK.
- Taking part in a Field Studies course learning about biodiversity and conservation.

Learning

- Undertaking a cookery course.
- Doing a photography course and exhibiting your work.
- Taking part in a bushcraft residential.
- Spending time on a narrowboat and training towards becoming a skipper.
- Taking part in a field studies course.
- Learning to write and produce music and putting on a show.
- Taking part in an astronomy course, learning about constellations, black holes and solar systems.
- Taking part in a week-long Gaelic or Welsh language and culture course.

Activity based

- Taking part in a sport based residential developing your basketball skills.
- Taking part in multi-faith residential, studying different religions.
- Joining an ACF activity week with members of different detachments you don't know.
- Learning to snowboard on an intensive course in Scotland.
- Joining an historical re-enactment society

This is not an exhaustive list but gives an idea of activities that could be undertaken. If students have a particular interest/degree they are considering studying. Some universities offer summer courses that can be used for the residential section of the gold award.

A parent meeting will be taking place on Thursday 29th January at 6pm and can be accessed using the following link: [Gold Information Evening - St Johns Marlborough | Microsoft Teams | Meet-up-Join](#),

This will be led by a representative of BXM Outdoors and will cover everything students need to know. A class charts group will also be set up to allow for communications with students and parents when required.

Yours Sincerely,
Mr L Broadhurst
Assistant Head of Year 12
DofE Coordinator