



13 October 2023

Dear Parent/Carer/Student

**Re: Gold DofE**

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is a leading programme of self-development for young people which continues to increase in numbers participating in more than 100 countries around the world. The Award is offered in 3 levels, bronze, silver and gold.

The Bronze Award is offered in almost all secondary schools in Somerset. Silver and Gold have far fewer participants and far fewer centres offer them. However, the Gold Award is the one which really makes people sit up and look carefully at applications for courses and jobs. Having all three levels is very rare and really shows you as a person of note.

The great thing is that this is nothing to do with academic ability. It is just a way of demonstrating determination, independence, reliability, organisation etc. It shows that you get things done and stay with a job until you succeed. Lots of people say they would like to do parts of this but can't be bothered. That's the point really – successful DofE participants can be bothered!

**The Gold Award at Frome College**

We know you are here primarily to get your academic qualifications, but it is not healthy to think that you have no time for anything but studies. For good health, you should be involved in physical activities and recreation, and volunteering allows you to do something for your community and make you feel good about yourself. It also gains the respect of others.

We try not to put you under too much pressure, but you do need to engage with the required activities if you are going to get the Gold Award. You can, however, manage your time – do less at exam times and do more when the pressure is off. You do need to put some thought into what you plan to do to get your award finished. The Gold Application form asks you to explain how you intend to get your award (last 2 pages of this letter) You can fill this in as soon as you are 16 years old or at the beginning of year 12. Once accepted (we will accept any seriously thought out applications), you can get started on some of your activities. We will advise you about what to do and give you any technical help you need to get you started.

**Direct Entrants**

You can do the award at gold level without doing the previous levels. People who do this are called direct entrants. As a direct entrant you have to do a little more than people who have completed the silver level. You will also be lacking in expedition knowledge and experience. We therefore require you to take part in some extra expedition training to gain the knowledge you need.

**Continuing Entrants**

If you have started any previous levels of the Award, these need to be completed before I will take you on as a Gold entrant. You will already have had plenty of time to complete previous levels, but, if you think you have a reason for not having completed, please contact me by email to explain your circumstances.



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## Expeditions

My aim is that:

- Your practice expedition will take place in September 2024.
- Your qualifying expedition will be in year 13 after exams.
- A gold expedition requires 4 days in wild country (mountainous or moorland) with 8 hours of activity per day between leaving the start point and arriving at the finish of each day. Camping will be our accommodation and you would be devising and cooking your own food.

## Volunteering, Skill and Physical

Choose something you can get started on for physical, skill and volunteering. If you are new to the award, have a look at the following video – it explains about the award in detail. You will be expected to make progress in your award to be take part in the expedition.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GuZMfKbMW6M&feature=youtu.be>

## Residential

At Gold level, you need to complete a Gold Residential, which involves 4 nights and 5 days away from home, involved in a shared activity in shared accommodation with at least 8 people, who do not previously know each other. These are usually found by searching the internet for approved residentials, but if you find something which may fit the bill, just contact me to check that it will count.

## Gold Timescales

	Minimum Age	Volunteering	Skill	Physical	Extra
<b>Gold</b>	16	12 months	One section for 12 months and one section for 6 months		Non silver holders do an extra 6 months in one of the 12 month activities.

## Cost

Initially, you will need to pay £40 to pay for Gold registration with the Award and with the Somerset Operating Authority.

We then charge for each expedition. Each Expedition will usually cost a minimum of £60 for 4 days, more if students want to travel greater distances. Payment will be required shortly before each expedition. Prices may increase this year for campsites etc. Total cost will be around £150.

Other costs – **Residentials** will vary from free to thousands of pounds, depending on what you choose. Low-cost options are always available. Residentials cannot be run by the college. Other activities may cost something depending on what you choose.

**It may be possible to get funding to help pupil premium students to complete their gold level.**

## How to get started

Log onto ParentPay, give your consent and fill in all the relevant information.

I would like to get things going for you as soon as possible. Please return consent and payment by 3 January 2024 which is the deadline for applications. You can get going on your sections right away.

Yours sincerely



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