

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award

A Guide for Students and Parents, Carers and Guardians

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (often called **DofE**) is a nationally recognised programme that challenges young people to develop independence, resilience, and leadership skills through a combination of physical activity, volunteering, and adventure. Open to young people aged 14–24, it offers three progressive levels: Bronze, Silver, and Gold.

In this guide, we will focus on the Bronze and Silver Awards—two fantastic opportunities available at Winchmore School. It is hoped to introduce the Gold Award in 2026.

What Are the Sections?

To complete a DofE Award, students must complete four key sections:

1. **Volunteering** – Helping others or supporting the community.
 - Examples: charity work, mentoring younger students, helping at a youth club or care home.
2. **Physical** – Taking part in sport, dance, fitness, or physical improvement.
 - Examples: football, swimming, martial arts, cycling, yoga.
3. **Skills** – Learning something new or improving a personal interest.
 - Examples: cooking, photography, playing an instrument, learning a language, coding.
4. **Expedition** – Planning and completing a self-sufficient journey in a team.
 - Involves map reading, camping, teamwork, and navigating through rural areas.

How Long Do You Have to Do Each Section?

The time commitment varies depending on the level of the award.

Bronze Award (Age 14+)

- **Volunteering**: 3 months
- **Physical** and **Skills**: 3 months each (you choose one to do for an extra 3 months)

- **Expedition:** 3 days and 2 nights (plus practice expedition 2 days and 1 night.
- This complies with Winchmore School's arrangements with the DoE approved Expedition Provider

Silver Award (Age 15+)

- **Volunteering:** 6 months
- **Physical and Skills:** 3 months each (if you didn't do Bronze, you must extend one section to 6 months)
- **Expedition:** 3 days and 2 nights (plus training and a practice expedition)

Participants can spread out their activities over time and fit them around school, hobbies, and other commitments.

What Happens on the Expedition?

The expedition is often the most memorable part of the award. Working in small teams, students plan, prepare, and complete a journey in the countryside. They carry all their own kit, cook meals outdoors, and camp overnight. It's a real challenge that tests teamwork, navigation, independence, and perseverance.

- **Bronze** expeditions usually take place in local countryside or national parks
- **Silver** expeditions are a step up and often in more remote or challenging areas.

Before going on the final expedition (called the "qualifier"), participants complete training and a practice walk to build the necessary skills.

At Winchmore School our expeditions are organised using a DoE approved, highly experienced provider called Aim High and our training is conducted during a practice expedition.

How Does the DofE Award Help with Employment?

Completing a Duke of Edinburgh Award shows employers and universities that a young person is motivated, reliable, and ready to take on responsibility. The award helps students develop valuable "soft skills" that are highly sought after in the workplace:

- **Teamwork and leadership**
- **Time management and commitment**
- **Problem-solving and decision-making**

- **Resilience and independence**

It can also make CVs ,university and apprenticeship applications stand out. Employers often recognise DofE as a mark of character and maturity. It shows you can work hard, take initiative, and step outside your comfort zone.

Final Thoughts

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is not about being the best at something—it's about personal development and effort. Every young person can achieve it, regardless of background or ability. It's a chance to try new things, meet new people, grow in confidence, and build skills for life.

Whether your goal is adventure, self-improvement, or a stronger CV, DofE is a path worth taking.

Links to DoE documents

- Duke of Edinburgh Main site <https://www.dofe.org/>
- Sectional Information <https://www.dofe.org/do/sections/>
- Activity Logs (Registers) <https://www.dofe.org/do/activitylogs/>
- Information for Parents and Carers <https://www.dofe.org/do/parents/>
- Assessor Reports Online <https://www.dofe.org/assessor/>