



TON/rmc
14 May 2025

Dear Parent / Carer

I am writing to provide you with an update on your child's progress towards achieving their Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

A few weeks ago, students took part in their practice expedition, which proved to be a valuable learning experience. I have now received detailed feedback from the Approved Activity Provider. Overall, students worked extremely hard and embraced the challenge, which was no small achievement.

That said, there are several key areas that require improvement before the final qualifying expedition, which I can now confirm will take place from **Monday 7 July to Friday 11 July 2025**.

1. Pack Light & Plan Ahead

One of the main challenges students faced was carrying excessive kit. For the qualifying expedition, they must work as a team to plan efficiently and keep their kit as light as possible. This can only be achieved through careful preparation and collaborative decision-making.

2. Teamwork on the Walk

Several groups struggled with maintaining cohesion while walking. It is vital that students walk together as a group, always keeping pace with the slowest member. This not only ensures safety but allows everyone to take proper breaks and support one another.

3. Campcraft Skills

Campcraft was a particular area of concern. At the Gold level, students are expected to demonstrate independence and responsibility. They should know what is required without being prompted by staff. This includes:

- Maintaining quiet before 7:00 AM and after 10:00 PM.
- Returning to tents in the evening without being reminded.
- Leaving camp promptly and in good order at the agreed time.

Unfortunately, many students struggled with keeping their campsites tidy. Staff were frequently required to remind participants to clean up, dispose of litter properly, and organise their belongings. In some cases, tents resembled a rucksack explosion.

4. Respect for Instructions

It was particularly disappointing to hear that a small number of students refused to follow instructions from their expedition leaders. While this behaviour was not widespread, it is not acceptable and could jeopardise a participant's ability to complete their award.

I would like to emphasise that the majority of our students were polite, enthusiastic, and a credit to the school – as we know NSB students to be. I sincerely hope the issues raised were isolated incidents and that all participants will take the feedback on board in preparation for the July expedition.

Headteacher Mr R Bernard MA

Billing Road Northampton NN1 5RT T 01604 230240

E nsb@nsb.northants.sch.uk www.nsb.northants.sch.uk

X @NSBSchool Instagram @NSB_School

Company registered in England and Wales No. 07333885





A more detailed letter, confirming all the timing of the qualifying expedition will be sent out after the half term break.

Award Section Progress & Motivation

It has been encouraging to see that all students have been engaging with their Volunteering, Physical, and Skills sections. We are now approaching a key milestone, the six-month mark. One of the three main sections has a timeframe of 6 months so be should near completion.

To ensure they meet the requirements, students must have this section signed off by their named assessor. After the upcoming exam period, students should ask their assessors to complete an Assessor's Report, which can be done easily online using the following link: www.dofe.org/assessor/

These reports are essential and must be detailed, so students are encouraged to continue logging thorough evidence via the **eDofE system**.

Residential Section – Please Plan Ahead

Finally, I want to stress the importance of the **Residential section**, which is often the last part of the Gold Award to be complete and the one most frequently delayed. My experience tells me that unless this is booked in advance, students are at risk of never fully completing their Gold Award.

Please support your child in researching and booking a suitable residential experience. However, they must check with me before confirming any course to ensure it meets DofE criteria.

Good news: students are now allowed to attend residential with more than two other people from the same gold group, as long as group size doesn't exceed 50% of the final number. For ideas and options, please visit:

www.dofe.org/thelatest/low-cost-residentials/

<https://www.dofe.org/shop/aap-gold-residential-opportunities/>

Thank you, as always, for your ongoing support. With your encouragement and the students' continued commitment, I am confident we'll see many of them through to successfully achieving their Gold Award.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs T O'Neill
D of E Manager