

TON/TDY

5 November 2018

Dear Parent/Guardian

Re: Gold D of E Assessed Expedition

I would like to take this opportunity to write to you regarding this summer's Gold Assessed D of E Expedition before preparations for the final examinations start in earnest. The practice Expedition in April showed that the students had resilience and determination, as it was affected by kit issues (supplied tents) and the miserable British weather. It was such a disappointment and was cut short by a day. However, the students did fulfil the minimum time requirements set by the D of E. BXM, the company I was using did accept blame for the faulty tents, claiming a change in staffing and procedure in their kit store. The Director offered a small refund for the inconvenience it caused the students.

However, I have decided to run the qualifying expedition independently as I have for 16 years. This will require buying in additional support for ML (Mountain Leader) cover and taking more NSB qualified staff. The costing therefore balances out and will remain the same as initially advertised in September 2017.

All payments should now have been paid as the deadline was July 2017. If you still have an outstanding balance then please pay as soon as possible as I need to know the number of students participating in the qualifying expedition.

Expedition information

This year's expedition will take place in the Lake District, Cumbria, travelling through some of the most beautiful and dramatic locations in the National Park. The expedition will take place on **18 to 23 July 2019**.

With the Lake District being such a distance, we will travel on the 18 July and stay in a Youth Hostel giving the students a chance to review their routes and meet their assessor before they embark on their 4 day expedition. On the 22 July, the day they complete their expedition, I will also book them into a Youth Hostel, where students can then give their presentation to their assessor before we go out as a group for a celebratory meal. The Hostel is Bed and Breakfast but students will need extra money for the two evening meals. This wasn't built into the BXM costings, so it would have been an extra; I believe with the small refund from BXM, I have been able to build this into the price of the expedition.

As it will have been over a year since the last expedition, I have included with this letter a Residential Consent/Information Form for completion and return to me ASAP.

Equipment

Your son/daughter should now be well versed in what equipment they need take on expedition. A kit list was issued during expedition training. Should another copy be required it can be found on the D of E website.

This expedition is the longest the participants will have undertaken; therefore, they will need to work on the packing of the expedition rucksack - “Light is Right” will be a very useful mantra. Students must work on their own clothing and equipment as well as that of the team. Communication with others in the team will be essential – this is a vital skill that some of the groups found difficult during the practice expedition.

The most important part of carrying any equipment is that it is water tight. With the weather in July being increasingly unpredictable, I would highly recommend the use of a specifically designed waterproof rucksack liner. There’s nothing worse than a wet sleeping bag!

Tents due to the fact we are no longer using the company students will have to supply their own tents – I would like to see these at the Pre-Expedition Kit Check.

Pre-expedition check

Before the expedition it is normal for the participants’ kit to be checked by the Expedition Assessor. To give your child enough time to correct any potential issues with their equipment, pre-expedition checks will take place on **Saturday 13th July 10.00am at the school.** Whilst it is imperative all participants attend, should there be an issue with attendance, I would appreciate it if you could inform me prior to the above date. Students have also been asked to bring along all paper work including route cards, map tracings and menu plans. The assessor may wish to scrutinise these as not all food may have been purchased at the time of the check.

Pre-expedition expectations

If your child participates in sporting activities, they should cope well with the demands of an expedition in wild country, the challenges of steep terrain and the carrying a well packed rucksack. If, however, they do not participate in much sport or physical activity, then it would be advisable that they start to improve their fitness now, even if it is just walking at weekends. If new boots (not walking trainers) or rucksacks are to be used on expedition, they should be thoroughly broken in and well fitting. Although the students have been fully advised, they may need you to encourage them that this will make the expedition a much more comfortable and, ultimately, more enjoyable experience!

Arrangements for Travel

An additional letter will be issued with the travel arrangements closer to the time of the expedition.

Help

The expedition is one section of five that your son/daughter needs to complete in order to achieve the award. For most the Skill/ Volunteering /Physical section are underway, but for the majority the residential section hasn't been achieved, planned or booked in. In my experience if they do not complete this Residential section they will never complete the Gold Award. Students have been told where to find information on this section; they are expected to spend five days and four nights taking part in a shared, worthwhile activity with people they've never met before. www.dofe.org/residential-section. **Parents please please encourage your child to arrange this either for before their exams or in the summer holidays**

Yours faithfully



Mrs T O'Neill
Leader of Duke of Edinburgh Award

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Please return reply slip to Mrs T O'Neill by Wednesday 14 November 2018, together with the completed Residential Consent/Information Form.

I/We* have received the letter regarding the July Gold Expedition 2019 and wish my son/daughter* to take part. Having read the information sheet, I agree to him/her* taking part in the activities described.

Any outstanding balances MUST be paid by Wednesday 14 November 2018 and failure to do so will result in being withdrawn from the Expedition.

Name of student: **Form:**

Name of Parent/Guardian (please print):

Signature of Parent/Guardian:**Date:**.....

(*Delete as necessary)