

Dear parent / carer,

I'm pleased to let you know that The Milton Keynes Academy offers the Bronze Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) to students in Year 9.

The DofE is a great chance for your child to broaden their horizons, discover new interests and talents, have fun with friends, develop essential skills for their future and achieve an internationally renowned Award.

As The Milton Keynes Academy's DofE Manager, I wanted to send you some information about what a DofE programme involves, the benefits for your child and how they can sign up.

### **About the DofE**

The DofE is non-competitive and open to all young people – it's about setting personal challenges and pushing personal boundaries. There are three levels of DofE programme which, when successfully completed, lead to a Bronze, Silver or Gold Award.

Through their DofE, students will make friends and memories and build traits like confidence, resilience and self-esteem, which can benefit mental health. They'll gain skills and attributes for work and life, like problem-solving, team-working and self-motivation – and they'll achieve an Award that's recognised by top employers and can help them stand out when applying for university or jobs.

To achieve their Bronze Award, participants must complete four sections: Skills, Volunteering, Physical and their Expedition.

Every young person's DofE programme is personal to them – they can choose what they'd like to do for their Skills, Volunteering and Physical sections, and most activities can count. We will provide guidance and support, and students can either choose to continue an activity they already do or discover something completely new.

During and in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, participants who complete their Skills, Volunteering and Physical sections will also receive a DofE Certificate of Achievement – a formal recognition, by the DofE, of their efforts at this extraordinary time.

Activities for each section take a minimum of one hour a week over a set period of time, so they can fit around studying, hobbies and social lives. For more details about programmes and timescales visit [DofE.org/do](https://DofE.org/do).

### **About the expedition**

The Expedition section involves your child working as part of a small team to plan their expedition's aim, choose a location and do some training to make sure they're fully prepared – before spending two days and one night in the countryside.

Ahead of this, they will take part in a day's expedition training on a Saturday at The Milton Keynes Academy covering basic expedition principles and introducing them to expedition equipment.

There will also be a number of training sessions after school (during COVID it will be during form time) in which your child and their group will plan their route and prepare. Participants will only be able to do their expedition if they attend the organised training.

## **The DofE and COVID-19**

Your child can still have the full DofE experience, safely and in line with Government guidance, during the COVID-19 outbreak. The motivation and focus the DofE gives, and its positive impact on mental and physical health, can play an important role in helping your child navigate our 'new normal', safely expanding their world and giving them skills and experiences to open doors in the future.

As participants can choose and change their activities, they can pick ones that they can do while social distancing or from home. The DofE has provided useful advice and information, including activity and volunteering ideas, at [DofE.org/DofEWithADifference](https://DofE.org/DofEWithADifference).

The DofE has also introduced a number of flexibilities to allow expeditions to take place safely, in line with social distancing restrictions and Government guidance. While your child's expedition may look slightly different to those in previous years, they will be able to do theirs safely and with all the benefits and memories they'd get at any other time.

## **eDofE and the DofE app**

Participants can create their DofE programme and record their progress using eDofE, the DofE's digital system, available online at [eDofE.org](https://eDofE.org) and through the DofE app – downloadable for free from Google Play and the App Store.

If your child decides to enrol, we will set up their eDofE account and they will receive details of how to sign in and get started. We will also hold an eDofE launch session before the Christmas break.

## **Signing up**

The cost of taking part in the DofE is £22 per participant. This covers your child's participation place and Welcome Pack, which will be sent to their home address and includes their personalised DofE Discount Card. Once we are able to do the expedition safely, we would require an additional £38 to cover the cost of the campsite, equipment and travel.

If your child would like to take part, please complete and return the enclosed enrolment form and return to Mr Barkus. You will also be required to pay the sum of £22 on ParentPay under the heading 'D of E Bronze 2020-21'. We will inform you when the additional £38 for the expedition is required. If you do not have access to ParentPay please contact me.

If the cost of taking part is prohibitive, please speak to me as there may be financial support available to you.

Many thanks for your support and we look forward to helping your child to achieve through their DofE.

Yours faithfully,

Jack Barkus

**DofE Manager**

Email: [jack.barkus@miltonkeynesacademy.org.uk](mailto:jack.barkus@miltonkeynesacademy.org.uk)

Contact number: 01908 341766

Name of student \_\_\_\_\_

Name of parent / carer \_\_\_\_\_

I give permission for \_\_\_\_\_ to take part in the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze award scheme.

I understand that this means he/she will take part in the afterschool and weekend activities and that he/she will be remotely supervised by the Duke of Edinburgh staff team.

I have already paid the £22 cost / I agree to pay then £22 cost by the end of the term. I also agreed to pay the additional £38 for the expedition when required.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_