

Dear Parents, Carers and Guardians,

Ref: Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award

We are writing to inform you of the opportunity for your child to take part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award. The school currently offers students the opportunity to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh Award at Bronze level in Year 10 and Silver in Year 12.

Background

The aim of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) is to provide young people with an enjoyable, challenging and rewarding programme of personal development, which is of the highest quality and widest reach. Young people doing their DofE programme complete four different types of activity, the **first three must be carried out in their spare time** and not during school hours and the **fourth has to be completed at a time determined by the school**.

The four are:

- **Volunteering:** undertake service to the community. This develops compassion, commitment and the confidence to make a difference.
- **Physical:** improve in an area of sport, dance or fitness activities. This develops fitness, enjoyment and, depending on the activity, teamwork.
- **Skills:** develop practical and social skills and personal interests. This helps young people to realise their unique potential and gain greater self-esteem.
- **Expedition:** plan, train for, and complete an adventurous journey in the UK. This develops teamwork and leadership, and challenges young people to push themselves beyond their expectations.

The Award Scheme is a fantastic opportunity for youngsters to further their skills of independence and leadership and is highly regarded by higher education institutions and employers. **The Award Scheme requires persistence and commitment** and it is therefore the responsibility of the participant to find and arrange the activities that they will undertake for their volunteering, physical and skills sections. **The school can offer advice but cannot find or organise the activities.** Participants should also ideally choose something new to them and there is an extensive list of activities that are acceptable on the DofE website www.dofe.org

The Bronze Award At Northgate – Training And Expeditions

The participants will be trained for their expeditions on **Wednesday afternoons from 3.20-4.00pm**. The training sessions will start w/b **2nd March 2026** and will cover:

- First aid and emergency procedures
- Awareness of risk and health/safety issues
- Navigation and route planning
- Food and cooking
- Country and Highway Code
- Team building

Participants must attend all training sessions as they are a compulsory part of the award and without this essential training, they will not be able to take part in the expeditions.

The initial **welcome meeting** will take place on **Wednesday 17th December 2025**, where participants will receive help setting up their online eDofE accounts.

Participants will undertake **two** expeditions, a Practice Expedition and a Qualifying Expedition, the latter of which will be assessed by a Duke of Edinburgh Accredited Expedition Assessor. Participants will be in groups of approximately five to seven for each expedition. They will walk for two days and camp for one night. They will carry all their equipment whilst walking and will be assessed on their ability to plan a route, navigate, work as a team and cook and look after themselves at camp. During the first morning participants will be accompanied by a member of staff and when we are satisfied as to their ability they will be remotely supervised through the use of pre-arranged checkpoints. Participants will be accompanied at the campsite in the evening.

The **Practice Expedition** will take place in the areas surrounding Alton Water on **either Saturday 16th or Sunday 17th May 2026**. The **Qualifying Expedition** will take place in the areas surrounding Grundisburgh/Wickham Market on **Saturday 20th to Sunday 21st June 2026 or Saturday 27th to Sunday 28th June 2026**. Participants will be responsible for arranging their own transport to and from these expedition areas.

The combined cost of the **practice and qualifying expeditions is £90.00** and includes:

- 1 night camping (qualifying expedition)
- Hire of equipment (e.g. tents, Trangia cooking stoves and pans, fuel, maps, compasses and first aid kits)
- Use of satellite tracking devices
- Insurance

Participants will need to bring their own sleeping bag, sleeping mat, large rucksack (minimum 60 litres), waterproofs and walking boots.

If you think your child will be unable to attend either the training sessions or expeditions, then please do not apply for a place. **There are no alternative times for these expeditions** to take place and we are not able to take on new participants if others drop out.

Enrolling On The Award

In order to officially enrol on the Award Scheme there is a participation fee of £30.50 which goes to the DofE Charity to cover administrative costs. There will also be a small charge of £4.00 towards training material. The total fee is therefore **£34.50**.

Unfortunately places on the Award Scheme are **limited** as we do not have the ability to facilitate larger numbers. Therefore, in order to allocate places in the fairest possible way, we are asking students to show that they would be committed by completing the task outlined below. The task is to:

Demonstrate commitment by **organising an appropriate activity for the volunteering section of the award**. This must be something which is of benefit to the local community and students will also need to arrange for someone to act as their assessor to verify that they have been completing their chosen activity. This must not be an immediate family member. More information about this section of the award can be found on the DofE website www.dofe.org. If students are unsure of whether their activity is suitable they should check on the website or ask us.

Students need to demonstrate that they have arranged their volunteering work by asking their assessor to fill in the '**Volunteering Information Slip**' which is attached to this letter. Students need to return the slip to school by **3.10pm on Friday 7th November 2025**.

If numbers exceed what can be accommodated, then the names of the students that complete this task will be **entered into a ballot** and places on the Award Scheme will be allocated by a random lottery draw. To see the reasons why the Local Authority, Senior Management and Governors have all agreed to this process, please see the Frequently Asked Questions in the Learning/Extracurricular/Educational Visits section of the Northgate website. If you have any questions or queries regarding the random lottery process, please contact our Educational Visits Coordinator, Miss Armstrong, via email (sea@northgate.suffolk.sch.uk).

This allocation process means that students securing a place on the Award Scheme will already be progressing through one section of the award while those that miss out will still benefit from the value of volunteering and helping others.

The Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme is about commitment and persistence and therefore if the successful participants do not show that they are in the process of completing their 3 activities or do not turn up to the training sessions then they will not be allowed to continue with the award through the school.

Applications

Students wishing to apply to take part in the Award Scheme will need to make sure that the following actions are completed by **3.10pm on Friday 7th November 2025**. This includes:

- The **enrolment payment of £34.50**. Please make payment online via the MyChildAtSchool (Bromcom) app or web page, where you will have the option to pay by debit card or credit card. If you have not yet signed up to Bromcom, please see the Northgate website for further information.
- The **completed enrolment form** (from the section on the school website under Learning - Extracurricular – Duke of Edinburgh Award - Silver) to be returned to school.
- The **completed and signed volunteering slip**

The completed enrolment form and volunteering slip should be put into an envelope and placed into the box marked 'Office Post' situated next to the school reception. The envelope should have the following information marked clearly on the outside:

- Your child's name
- Your child's tutor group
- DofE Bronze Award

It is essential that all the items above are brought into school by the deadline, as students cannot be enrolled without them. Students that are not successful in securing a place will have their money returned in full.

As a school, we are committed to promoting equal access to enrichment opportunities, including the Duke of Edinburgh Award. Financial support towards the enrolment fee and expedition costs is

available for students in receipt of Free School Meals. In addition, the school can provide loan equipment to support students' participation.

To request the above financial assistance, please do not hesitate to contact the Finance Team to discuss by emailing info@northgate.suffolk.sch.uk using the subject 'DofE Bronze' and including your child's name and form group. **It is essential that requests for financial support are received before Friday 7th November 2025.**

Please note that in paying the enrolment fee you are committing your child to participate in Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award and to covering the cost of the two expeditions associated. Any withdrawal (including your child being removed due to poor behaviour) will result in the loss of any sums paid or owed to external companies, unless the withdrawal is for reasons covered by the cancellation section of the school's insurance policy. For further information regarding our charges and remissions policy, including what help might be available please see the Northgate website - About Us/Statutory Information/Charging and Remissions.

If you have any queries, or would like to discuss this further, then please feel free to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Ms A Turner & Mr S Songhurst
Joint DofE Coordinators

Volunteering Information Slip



Participant's Name: _____

Volunteering Activity: _____

Starting Date: _____

Brief description of what the participant will be doing:

Assessor's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Assessor's Name: _____

Position: _____

To be returned to the school post box **by 3.10pm on Friday 7th November 2025**