

Duke Of Edinburgh Award Expedition FAQ's

Expedition FAQ's

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Equipment

What Kit do I need?

We will cover this a number of times prior to the training weekend, and their expedition weekends. A kit list guide can be found at www.dofeshopping.org/expedition-kit.com, or in a link on the School Web-site

What happens if I forget something?

If you are close enough to home, it is probably best you go home to get the item you've forgotten and text another group member to let them know you will be a few minutes late. If you realise you've forgotten something once you've started, then please tell a member of staff at the earliest convenience

Why can't I wear trainers or inappropriate shoes for the expeditions?

When walking over rough ground, your ankle can be affected, and a trainer/low cutting shoe would not offer the type of support you'll need. It is recommended your shoes have a good grip, heels and ankle support.

Why must my walking boots cover my ankle bone?

You will be carrying a heavy load during your expedition, so to prevent injury you will need extra support from your shoes to reinforce your ankle

Do I need to bring a spare pair of shoes/flip flops?

Bringing a spare pair of shoes is optional, if you have enough room and don't mind carrying a little bit more weight, they can be nice to wear once you have arrived on the campsite.

Can I wear shorts?

There is no reason why you can't wear shorts, however wearing trousers can provide protection from the sun (especially the back of your knees), from cuts and scratches from long grass and from biting insects, such as ticks

Which items of clothing should be avoided whilst on your expedition?

Cotton and Denim both absorb lots of water and dry very slowly – so if they get wet, they will potentially make you feel very cold and uncomfortable. Fleece and quick drying synthetic materials are better.

Why should I carry a woolly hat and gloves, even though it will be summer time?

During the day could be really warm, but once the sun goes down it can turn quite cold in the evening – so have a look at the weather forecast to

How many spare clothes should I carry?

This depends on the length of your expedition. As a minimum, you should have the clothes you are wearing (including a warm jumper), as well as complete spare set of clothes.

Can I bring my Phone and/or music device?

You can bring your phone with you. During the entirety of your Expedition, you will need to turn it off and put it in a sealable waterproof packaging and then left securely put into your bag. Your phone is with you for taking photos for your Expedition Aim and for emergency purposes

Can I bring a Camera and/or Video Recorder?

Yes – this is a great idea and will help to record some of those great DofE memories. Any pictures/videos which are taken can be up-loaded as evidence for your presentation, and means you will be able to save your phone battery for an emergency. If you did bring a camera/video, make sure you can protect it from the elements.

Do I need Walking Poles?

Some participants find poles really useful – particularly when the participant has issues with their ankles/knees/hips. When Poles are used correctly, they help to take some of the weight off your legs and help with balance over rough terrain.

What are Gaiters? Do I need them?

Gaiters are a waterproof material which range in size and cover the top of your boot/bottom of your trouser and can come up as high as the top of your calf. Gaiters are used to keep the top of your boot/bottom of your trouser mud free, grit free and keeping water out.

Will I need a midge head net?

Generally these are only needed for expeditions in Scotland and North Wales. If you are likely to need one, you'll be advised so on your training weekend

Do I need to bring any money?

Yes – this is initially for if there is an emergency situation and you don't have any cell reception but there is a pay phone. This money could be used before your expedition, on something you have forgotten, or afterwards – whilst you are waiting for your transportation

Can I bring any fun items?

Once you arrive at camp, and have put your tent up and had your evening meal, you may want a form of entertainment – this could include a deck of cards, a book, a Frisbee etc. No electronic devices (including pads, laptops etc) please

Food and Water

How much water should I carry?

As a minimum, you should carry 2 litres of water when you are walking. It is worth having water prior to leaving the campsite in the morning and upon your arrival into the new campsite.

Will I be able to top up my drinking water throughout the day?

Please make sure you have filled up your bottles prior to leaving camp. Additionally, Throughout the day, SGB Staff and your assessor will have spare water with them so you'll be able to top up any water bottles

Do I need water purification tablets?

For Bronze and Silver, you should not need Purification Tablets, as you will be filling up your bottles from a tap on the campsite, or from staff members whilst you are walking.

For Gold, you will be advised on a range of different methods to use, and the most appropriate method to use for the location you are walking.

Can I use a Camelback, Platypus or other Hydration system?

These are good, as you can take on water without messing around to get a water bottle from your bag. The downside is it is difficult to keep an eye on how low your supply of water is getting. These type of water storage devices have been known to leak, so it is worth carry a 1 litre bottle too

What Food do I need?

Prior to the Training Weekend, and Expedition, we will suggest some idea to the students. The type of food you should think about bringing should be able to cook in one pan and can be quickly prepared. For menu ideas, please see the School Website or use the following link:

<http://www.theadventureelement.co.uk/downloads/DofE-Expedition-Menu-planning-top-tips.pdf>

How will I cook my food?

The students will be cooking on Trangia's. Trangia's are a fuel based stove – each Trangia will contain 2 pans, a hob, gas can, a lid and a handle. All students will be given training on how to use the Trangia safely and when they are in Camp they will be supervised whilst they use them

Should I avoid any food?

Yes – you should avoid any raw meat, poultry or fish – as refrigeration is an issue. The participants menu will be discussed prior to their training, practice and expeditions weekends.

The Campsite

What type of tent will I be sleeping in?

The training provider will give the students. These tents will be 2 or 3 person tents and will be carried by the participant for the whole expedition.

What Facilities will be on the campsite?

Facilities on a campsite vary from site to site. As a minimum for your hygiene, it is recommended you carry soap, deodorant and a towel.

For Bronze and Silver Expeditions - The majority of the campsites used will have basic facilities, such as a toilet and washbasins – it is unlikely there will be any showers

For Gold Expeditions – you may use proper campsites, which will have some facilities, but you may also wild camp, with no facilities. If you are using a wild campsite during your practice or expedition then camp hygiene, and how to get fresh water, will be discussed during your training weekend

Should I bring toilet paper?

Yes – it is so you are self sufficient. Some campsites may not supply toilet roll, or the toilet roll may have run out. There are a number of tubeless toilet rolls out there – if you do carry some, make sure it is protected from the elements.

Medical and illness

If I have a medical condition, illness or injury – Can I still take part?

We will try to be accommodating to your needs wherever possible; however, expeditions are strenuous and often operate in remote areas – so we need to be considerate of this. If you are ill or have an injury in the days prior to the practice or qualifier, please talk to your DOfE Mentor/Manager. If you need to take regular medication, please can you advise your SGB mentor. For other conditions, there may be a way to apply for some exceptions from the DofE 20 conditions. Please see the tab on the School Web-site or see your DofE Mentor to discuss the situation.

What happens if I am ill or injured whilst on the practice or qualifying weekend?

SGB Staff and Entrust personnel will be on hand to give you support and first aid. If necessary you will be seen by a medical professional. If you are unable to continue with the expedition due to medical reasons, your parent/Guardian will be asked to collect you, and all parties will be told of the next steps.

What happens if I get bitten by a tick?

Ticks are common in some of the expedition areas. To prevent being bitten by a tick, it is recommended you cover up (such as wearing trousers instead of shorts or a long sleeved top instead of a t-shirt) and use insect repellent. If you are bitten by a tick please inform a member of SGB Staff. If you find a tick once you arrive home, please find advice to safely remove the tick and information on the signs and symptoms of Lyme disease.

Electronic Communication

Can I bring my mobile phone?

Yes – but your phone should only be used in case of emergencies. During the expedition your phone should be in a waterproof bag, and securely sealed. Please ensure your phone is fully charged and has sufficient credit

Will I be able to contact/receive any communication my family/friends during the expedition?

It is highly recommended that you don't try to contact your Son/Daughter – as your Son/Daughter needs to save their phone battery in case of an emergency. In addition, the phone signal in a national park varied, so it may be difficult to contact anyone.

How can my parents get hold of Son/Daughter during the expedition?

If your message is urgent, please contact the School Emergency Mobile contact number and we will relay the message to your Son/Daughter

My Son/Daughter has called and is lost or upset – what should I do?

Please reassure them, and tell them to talk to phone the Entrust number provided to them or alternatively the School Emergency Mobile number. During the training, practice and expedition, SGB Staff will be trying to see the groups at a number of their checkpoints throughout the day. In addition, each group will have an emergency contact number for the SGB staff in the area.

If you are concerned please contact us and we will pass on a message to your Son/Daughter. Please try not to worry, as the expeditions are challenging and participants may want to call their parents if they are tired and upset. Quiet often the participant forgets to call you back to tell you everything is ok.

The Expedition Programme

What if I miss the training weekend?

You cannot take part in the practice weekend unless you have completed the appropriate pre-expedition training. If you do miss the training, please talk to your DofE Mentor or Manager

What if I miss the practice expedition?

For Bronze – We currently do not run a practice weekend (under the option in the regulations from the DofE Award 2019). If we did, it would be under the same conditions as Silver and Gold

Depending on if your centre is completing a practice

For Silver and Gold – you cannot participate in the qualifying weekend unless you have successfully completed one, or more, practice expeditions. If there are any issues, please talk to your SGB Mentor or Manager

Can I do my practice expedition when the rest of the group do their qualifying expedition?

No – a lot of training still takes place on the practice expedition, so it would be appropriate to include a participant who has not completed their practice expedition in a group who are undertaking an unaccompanied qualifying weekend

If I drop out, will I get a refund?

You will not receive a refund for your DofE pack. For the payment for the expedition, you may be eligible for a refund but does depend on what has already been paid.

What happens if I drop out of the practice expedition before the end?

If you do not complete the practice expedition then we cannot sign you off to go forward to the qualifying expedition – so you would need to repeat your practice expedition. On the very rare occasion, such as falling ill/becoming injured on the final day and the participant has demonstrated the necessary skills and they are competent then the participant will be signed off

What happens if I drop out of a qualifying expedition before the end?

You will need to repeat the whole expedition – please see your DofE Mentor or Manager to discuss the possible outcomes.

How hard will it be?

The DofE expeditions are supposed to be challenging, so you will find it hard. You may feel like giving up at some point during your expedition. During the expedition, the support of your other group members will help you to continue. Upon completion, the sense of achievement and good memories will definitely outweigh the low points.