wildernschool
C. Oakley BA Hons PGCE NPQH Headteacher
Wildern Lane
Hedge End
Southampton SO30 4EJ
T: (01489) 783473
E: wildern@wildern.org
S. Mann CEO

RPR/tp

19 November 2026

Dear Parent/Guardian

Re: Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme – Bronze

We are pleased to inform you that we have launched the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Scheme for Year 9 students this year. This is a scheme for young people which aims to promote leadership skills. The award is made up of 4 sections: **Physical, Skill, Volunteering and Expedition**. The majority of work which we do during school based sessions will focus on eDofE and the expedition section of the award. The level of commitment required for the award will be 1-2 hours a week. An extra hour once a fortnight will be required in an after-school session (Monday evenings) for various training. It is likely that some students already take part in extracurricular activities that can contribute towards the award, in areas of volunteering, skills or physical. The Duke of Edinburgh award is an extracurricular activity. Therefore, unlike school based lessons, the responsibility for success is up to the individual. Students will be given help and guidance by staff, but it is up to them to work with their team to ensure all aims and goals are met. A key objective of the award is to encourage the students to develop their independence.

Our aim is that in Year 9, students are completing their Skills, Physical and Volunteering sections with the support of a group leader. Then, in Year 10, students will dedicate their focus to completing their Expedition sections to ensure they have successfully completed their award by the end of Year 10.

If your child chooses to complete the Duke of Edinburgh award, they will be expected to participate fully in the expedition section. In order to do this, students will be required to be properly equipped. They will need to purchase appropriate footwear (walking boots) which will need to be broken in before an expedition to reduce the likelihood of blisters occurring. They will also need a 65+ litre rucksack, water proofs, a roll mat and sleeping bag. Advice on other smaller items will be discussed during school based sessions.

The day and weekend walks and expedition training sessions play an important role in the Duke of Edinburgh award. It is designed to teach students the navigation skills they will require to achieve the award. On these expeditions the weather can be unpredictable so it is extremely important that your child wears suitable clothing and footwear. Any student who attends an expedition wearing jeans will not be able to participate due to safety. Students will also be required to bring a packed lunch and drinks. Specific details of this will be communicated closer to the time during after school sessions.

This award will have a registration fee for the Duke of Edinburgh award **(£33)**. This will be all that is paid in the first instalment for DofE this year. We will also be completing an overnight camp, so we will be asking to provide payment for camping fees and any additional food required. This will bring the cost for Year 9 to **£40.00.**

Going into Year 10, there will also be a cost for the 4 trips to cover for camping (2 weekends) and travel to the destinations for the weekend camps. This will be dependent on the number of students who sign up, and also if we have internal or external provision for the expeditions, depending on the costs of campsites and transport at the time of booking. This will be paid in **September/October 2027.**

Due to increased interest within school for DofE and an increase in costs of coaches for transport, we will be asking parents to support the transport of students for some of the trips *(outlined in the summary of dates below)*. We would encourage car sharing for these as much as possible. If you are having difficulty with finding transport for your child, please let us know so that we can support you in arranging this or use a school minibus if appropriate.

Below are the dates for the Year 9 DofE Dates:

- Day Walk 1: **Saturday 16 January 2027 -** Introductory hike around the local area meeting at Wildern.
- Day Walk 2: **Saturday 8 May 2027 -** Walk in the New Forest learning how to read maps and take bearings with a compass.
- Overnight Camp at Lyons Copse, Shedfield: **Friday 21 - Saturday 23 May 2027 -** teach students campcraft skills and experience camping with their groups.
- Provisional Extra Walk at the end of summer term - **Saturday 17 July 2027**

Please complete the relevant sections on ParentPay to give consent for your child to attend this trip. You will be asked to provide your emergency contact details and any relevant medical information. If a deposit, or full payment, is required this will also need to be paid at the time. If you have not already activated your ParentPay account and require your login details please do not hesitate to contact the Finance Office at finance@wildern.org.

If you have been notified that we as a school receive Pupil Premium funding for your child, the cost of this trip will be covered. If this is the case, your ParentPay account will automatically reflect this but please complete the consent, emergency contact information and medical details through ParentPay as usual. The same procedures regarding oversubscription for the trip will apply.

If your child would like to participate in DofE please can they complete the Google Form on their Tutor Group google classroom to register interest before 14 December 2026.

Please have a conversation with your child about completing their Bronze DofE, as there may be a limit on places**. If you would like your child to attend please complete the relevant sections on ParentPay accompanied by a payment of £40.00 by Wednesday 6 January 2027.**

In the event of oversubscription we will endeavour to take into consideration any students who may have missed out on trips previously due to oversubscription, and will allocate any further places by drawing names out of a hat. In the event of a place not being allocated, any monies received will be returned.

When taking a trip we take as many students as possible within the constraints we are bound by. We have to consider venue restrictions, travel arrangements and the impact on the rest of the school when staff are taken out of their curriculum areas to support a trip. Staff running and supporting our school trips often do this outside of their working hours and do so voluntarily. As a school we work extremely hard to get this balance right for all parties involved.

Yours sincerely

Mr R Ryan-Heaney
Duke of Edinburgh Manager & Leader