



DOLLAR ACADEMY

DOLLAR FK14 7DU
SCOTLAND
Rector: D .Knapman, M. Phil

February 2011

Dear Parent/Guardian

Your son/daughter, as part of his/her Duke of Edinburgh's Award at Gold level, has to take part in expedition work to satisfy the demands of the Award. Expeditions at Gold level involve four days of strenuous walking with heavy rucksacks and three nights camping in tents. These expeditions take place in wild, remote countryside and foul weather conditions may be encountered. The experience is usually an arduous one and much is expected from Gold candidates. Therefore pupils must be physically fit and in good health before embarking on such ventures. It is essential that candidates prepare themselves fully beforehand - training walks with boots and heavy rucksacks are recommended to condition the feet and shoulders.

Only candidates who have completed the Bronze and Silver expedition sections or who have arranged for a direct entry to the Gold award will be eligible for involvement in Gold level expeditions.

In school preparation

All Gold candidates must attend an expedition training and preparation day before taking part in our expedition programme. Training/preparation days will take place on **Monday 6th June** and **Monday 13th June**. Expedition groups will be given safety briefings, plan the routes for their assessment expeditions and visit the expedition stores to collect equipment. This is an essential part of our expedition preparation and attendance at one of these days is **compulsory** for all Gold candidates.

Gold training expeditions

The emphasis on these training expeditions will be to further develop the necessary expedition skills of campcraft, navigation, load carrying and teamwork. Pupils will be accompanied by qualified and experienced staff but may be asked to tackle certain parts of the expedition route on their own in order to develop their independence and navigation skills. Candidates who complete their training expedition and are judged to be competent, will be allowed to take part in an assessment expedition. Competency in the following areas must be demonstrated:

- Physical fitness
- General organisation
- Care of equipment and cooperation with staff in expedition store procedures
- Commitment to group expedition preparation and route planning

Gold assessment expeditions

Candidates must plan and carry out an assessment expedition with the minimum of assistance. Staff, therefore, will not accompany groups on their expedition route. Staff will check that groups reach their campsite safely and may shadow candidates closely in the event of poor weather conditions. Assessment will be carried out by external assessors who will also visit candidates at their campsite, and who may shadow the group for part of their route.

The following expeditions are being planned:

Training

Tues 7th – Fri 10th June Training expedition group 1 West Highlands/Cairngorms

Tues 14th – Fri 17th June Training expedition group 2 West Highlands/Cairngorms

On both of the above trips candidates will leave Dollar and travel to the training area by minibus. The four days will be spent walking and camping in the area and there may be an opportunity to ascend some of the local high peaks. Candidates will arrive back in Dollar in the evening on the day of return. There will be charge of **£20 per pupil** for this trip to cover the cost of minibus hire and fuel.

Candidates must choose one of the above training expeditions.

Assessment

Sun 19th –Thur 23th June Assessment expedition group 1 NW Sutherland

Sun 26th - Thur 30th June Assessment expedition group 2 NW Sutherland

On both of the above trips candidates will depart Dollar on the Sunday morning and travel to NW Sutherland by minibus. Sunday evening will be spent at Scourie campsite where groups will make their final preparations and also be interviewed by the expedition assessor. Expeditions will start on the Monday morning and groups will spend the next four days walking through the spectacular scenery of the area. Pupils will return to Dollar late on the Thursday evening. There will be a charge of **£75 per pupil** for this trip to cover the cost of minibus hire, fuel, assessor fees and pupil and staff accommodation. There is a maximum of 35 places available on each trip.

Candidates must choose one of the above assessment expeditions.

It is expected that candidates will be in the same group for both training and assessment whenever possible. Candidates in training group 2 will not be allowed to participate in assessment expedition 1 because of the short time period between these trips. Participation in both of these trips would not allow adequate time for recovery between training and assessment.

Candidates have been provided with an equipment list and should note that carrying the correct equipment is compulsory. Pupils without essential safety equipment and clothing will not be allowed to participate in expeditions. Certain items of equipment can be hired from the school store. A deposit of £20.00 is also payable which is refunded when equipment is returned on time and in good order.

Please note that the use of mobile phones by candidates is not encouraged on these expeditions except in emergency situations. The recreational use of mobile phones goes against the ethos of isolation and adventure that is an essential part of these trips. It can also lead to a false sense of security in remote mountain areas in which mobile phones often do not work. The inappropriate use of mobile phones on assessment expeditions could result in candidates failing that assessment. Each group however will be asked to carry a mobile phone for use in emergencies only. Candidates are also requested not to use iPods or similar devices when out on expedition.

An early notification of commitment by candidates is required so that planning for these challenging expeditions can begin as soon as possible.

If you require any further information do not hesitate to contact me in school by phone or e-mail at fraser-jb@dollaracademy.org.uk

Yours faithfully

John Fraser
Expedition Organiser

Please print out and complete the permission slip below and return to Mr Fraser by **Monday 7th March**

Please note that a **£25 cancellation fee** will be charged in the event of a withdrawal from the expedition programme by a candidate.

Gold D of E expeditions PERMISSION SLIP

Please complete the following form, detach and return to Mr Fraser **by Monday 7th March**

Iparent/guardian of
.....in Form Class have received the details of the Gold D of E expeditions and give
permission for my son/daughter/ward to take part in a training day on and to take part in expeditions on
..... and

I enclose a cheque for £..... payable to Dollar Academy to cover costs for transport and accommodation.

I understand that in the event of serious accident or injury to my son/daughter/ward every effort will be made to contact me. Where this proves impossible, I hereby consent to my son/daughter/ward receiving any medical/surgical/dental treatment including a general anaesthetic and/or blood transfusion (please delete as appropriate), as considered necessary by the Medical Authorities present.

I understand that it may be necessary, in exceptional and emergency circumstances, for me or a nominated representative to travel to the site of medical treatment (which may be to the group's location) to take over responsibility for my son/daughter/ward.

Should my son/daughter/ward require treatment for minor ailments, I give permission for expedition leaders or their deputies to administer, as appropriate (*strike out whichever does not apply*):

1. paracetamol or other analgesics (for relief of pain or fever)
2. antihistamine (for relief of hayfever, insect bites or other allergic reactions)

I give details below of any other medication, prescribed or non-prescribed, that my son/daughter/ward may need to carry, or those to which he/she is allergic.

I furthermore give permission for expedition leaders or their deputies to help administer these medicines if required.

1. Current medical conditions or concerns of which expedition staff should be aware (please include any relevant condition already notified to the school):

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2. Medication required for this / these condition(s)

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3. Instructions for the administration of any medication being carried to treat the condition(s):

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4. I understand that if my child is not carrying the medication noted at (2) above at the time that the trip begins he / she will not be permitted to participate and I will be responsible for collecting him / her from the intended point of departure.

I can be contacted at the following numbers at all times during the time of the trip:

Signature

Date