

Grace Academy Solihull

Duke of Edinburgh's (DofE) Expedition Policy

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1. Policy Statement

- The policy outlines the academy's approach to managing Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) expeditions.
- This policy has been written in accordance with the information provided by the Duke of Edinburgh's Award guidance, including the National Guidance from the OEAP (Outdoor and Expeditions Advisors Panel) Handbook for DofE Leaders and the [DofE Expedition Guide](#).
- References to the Academy within this policy specifically include Grace Academy Solihull.
- This policy does not form part of any member of staff's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time.
- The academy is committed to leading a mentally healthy organisation, which includes a commitment to and promotion of emotional wellbeing and mental health. Therefore, all academy policies and procedures ensure this commitment is incorporated in order to support all staff and students. Members of staff are encouraged to speak to their line managers, and students are encouraged to speak to any member of staff, if they feel any part of this policy would affect their emotional wellbeing and mental health. Any such comments should be passed to the academy's HR department for appropriate consideration at the next available point in the policy review cycle.

2. Roles, Responsibilities and Implementation

- Leaders and Managers have a specific responsibility to ensure the fair application of this policy and all employees are responsible for supporting colleagues and ensuring its success.
- Each Academy's DofE Manager has overall responsibility for planning, organising and running DofE expeditions in accordance with this policy and Award licensing requirements.

3. Aims

- To ensure that all DofE expeditions are planned and implemented in accordance with legal responsibilities, Award Licensing requirements and recognised good practice, in a way which maximises the safety of students, staff and volunteers.
- To provide a framework of responsibilities and considerations which must be applied at all times in the planning and implementation of any DofE expedition on foot.

4. Planning a DofE Expedition

- All DofE expeditions on foot should be planned and organised in line with the guidance set out in the academy's Health and Safety Policy.
- If it is necessary for any part of the expedition to be organised in such a way that it will not comply with the Health and Safety Policy then this must be highlighted by the relevant DofE Manager to the relevant members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), who must sign off on any changes. If necessary, any amendments to the organisation should be included within the expedition risk assessment.

5. Expedition Supervisor and Assessor Roles

■ Academy DofE Manager/Designated Person

The DofE Manager or an appropriate person nominated by them will have overall responsibility for the planning, organising and running of an expedition.

■ DofE Expedition Manager

The Expedition Manager, if different from the DofE Manager/Designated Person, will support the DofE Manager/Designated Person by remotely coordinating, tracking and monitoring expedition group progress and coordinating supervisory activity as required by the DofE Manager/Designated Person.

■ DofE Group Supervisor

Each Expedition group will have a nominated Group Supervisor, if different from the DofE Manager/Designated Person who will have overall responsibility for the supervision and safety of the group in accordance with the expedition supervisory plan.

■ DofE Assistant Group Supervisor

An Expedition group may have an additional Assistant Group Supervisor, to assist the DofE Group Supervisor.

■ DofE Assessor

All Expedition Assessors must be trained and accredited at the appropriate level through the DofE Expedition Assessor Accreditation Scheme (EAAS). All groups taking part in qualifying expeditions will have identified Assessor(s) as required. Assessors will be allocated a number of groups in accordance with current DofE guidelines. All Expedition Assessors must hold a valid DBS certificate issued through the Academy.

6. Expedition Terrain

- DofE Expeditions do not need to be within a specific terrain, they simply need to be more progressively challenging as a young person moves through the levels.
- Lowland Country is defined by the Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel (OEAP) as the following: Farmland, valleys and woodland with no hazardous terrain (e.g., cliffs, very steep slopes, water hazards etc.) and no more than 3 km away from a key access point such as a car park, lay-by or populated area (any potential escape routes should also lie within Lowland Country). Walks should follow paths or tracks that are both marked on a map and clearly visible on the ground and that do not require navigation across untracked areas, and should use bridges or other recognised water crossing points.
- Relevant minimum qualifications for expedition leader:
 - Lowland Leader Award, with Camping Leader Award if camping (www.mountain-training.org);
 - Lowland Expedition Leader Award (previously Basic Expedition Leader) (www.sportsleaders.org/qualifications-programmes/expedition-leadership);
 - Countryside Leader Award (www.countrysideleaderaward.org).
 - DofE expeditions on lowland terrain may be led by a person able to demonstrate and

evidence the appropriate skills and experience who is in the process of attaining the appropriate qualification as described above.

- Moorland Country is defined by the Outdoor Education Advisers’ Panel (OEAP) as the following:

Open, uncultivated, non-mountainous, high, or remote country (known variously as upland, moor, bog, fell, hill or down), which should not require movement on steep or rocky terrain in either a planned or unplanned situation. Walks should be in areas enclosed by well-defined geographical or man-made boundaries such as classified roads (areas that merge with mountain regions without well-defined boundaries should be regarded as Mountain Country).

- Relevant minimum qualifications (see www.mountain-training.org):
 - Hill and Moorland Leader Award, with Camping Leader Award if camping;
 - Walking Group Leader.
- Mountain Country is defined by the Outdoor Education Advisers’ Panel (OEAP) as the following: Wild country, which may contain steep and rocky ground where walkers are dependent upon themselves for immediate help.
- Relevant minimum recognised qualification (see www.mountain-training.org): Mountain Leader

7. Expedition Supervisor Training

- Expedition Staff will be required to have undertaken where possible the following training prior to undertaking an expedition role:

DofE Course/ Qualification	DofE Manager/ Designated Person	Expedition Coordinator	Expedition Supervisor	Expedition Volunteer	Expedition Assessor (EAAS)
DBS Check	√	√	√	√	√
DofE Foundations Pathway	√	√	√	-	-
Expedition Assessors and Supervisors Course	√	√	Highly Recommended	-	Required
First Aid (requirement by GAS)	√	√	√	-	-

- The DofE Manager is responsible for identifying individual training requirements and booking appropriate training courses.
- The DofE Manager will maintain a record of staff training and competency assessments completed.

8. Expedition Supervisor Role Competency

- Following appropriate training, an individual will be expected to achieve competency through a supported structured developmental programme, described below, before they will be eligible to perform the role.

- Process for Gold Level Supervisors: Depending on the terrain for the expedition Expedition Supervisors will be required to possess a high level of experience, technical ability/qualifications and knowledge of operating in the particular terrain environment. For example individuals holding a National Governing Body Qualification (NGBQ) such as a Hill and Moorland areas such as The Peak District, Brecon Beacons and Dartmoor. Individuals not holding a NGBQ will be required to demonstrate competence as follows:
 - Produce and maintain an up to date expedition/walking log book, for submission as required by the DofE Manager.
 - Carry out the role of Assistant Group Supervisor (Wild Country), working with a competent Group Supervisor on a number of Gold Expeditions.
 - Undertake DofE Expedition competency training as required by the DofE Manager.
 - Demonstrate a high level of experience, technical ability and knowledge of operating in Wild
 - Country environments during an independent assessment by an appropriately qualified and experienced competent person.
 - A person will be considered competent to carry out the independent assessment if they possess an NGBQ, and have recent and relevant experience of operating in Wild Country environments and current knowledge of DofE Expedition Supervisory requirements.
 - The independent assessment of competence for a Group Supervisory will be normally valid for a 3-year period and is not valid in, or transferable to, any other Licenced Organisation.
 - The DofE Manager may remove an individual's assessment of competence following any evidenced concerns about their ability or performance within the role.
 - Individuals holding Expedition Supervisor accreditation previously issued by the DofE Award Office will be considered competent in the role identified until the expiry date has been reached.
 - Recording. The DofE Manager will ensure that appropriate records are maintained to support and evidence training, qualifications and competency of CPD.

9. Expedition Supervisory Plans

- Group Supervisors will be required to complete and submit an Expedition Supervisory Plan for their group for each day of the expedition, to the DofE Manager, prior to the start of the expedition.

10. Supervisory Ratios

■ **Bronze and Silver Expeditions**

There must be a minimum of 2 Group Supervisors within any DofE Expedition that takes place. If there are both male and female students then there should be a male and female supervisor. There must be a Supervisor per four groups on the Expedition.

■ **Gold Expeditions**

There must be a minimum of 2 Group Supervisors within any DofE Expedition that takes place. If there are both male and female students then there should be a male and female supervisor. There must be a Supervisor per four groups on the Expedition.

- The DofE Manager will identify an Expedition Coordinating Team and additional Supervisor(s) that may be required to support the Expedition as required, particularly in the case of Wild Country Expeditions.