



9th October 2020



Dear Parent/Carer,

I am delighted to let you know that the Opportunity Trust Fund has agreed to finance the Bronze Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) for every Year 9 student. This is a wonderful opportunity for our young people and thanks to the Trust Fund, all students in Year 9 will be signed up to participate in the award this year. Due to our successful bid and the generosity of the Opportunity Trust Fund, The Samworth Church Academy are now the largest DofE provider in the county.

The DofE is a great chance for your child to broaden their horizons, discover new interests and talents, have fun with friends, develop essential skills for their future and achieve an internationally renowned Award.

As The Samworth Church Academy's DofE Manager, I wanted to send you some information about what a DofE programme involves.

About the DofE

The DofE is non-competitive and open to all young people – it's about setting personal challenges and pushing personal boundaries. There are three levels of DofE programme which, when successfully completed, lead to a Bronze, Silver or Gold Award.

Through their DofE, students will make friends and memories and build traits like confidence, resilience and self-esteem which can benefit mental health. They will gain skills and attributes for work and life, like problem-solving, team-working and self-motivation – and they will achieve an Award that is recognised by top employers and can help them stand out when applying for university or jobs.

To achieve their Bronze Award, participants must complete four sections: Skills, Volunteering, Physical and their Expedition.

Every young person's DofE programme is personal to them – they can choose what they would like to do for their Skills, Volunteering and Physical sections and most activities can count. We will provide guidance and support and students can either choose to continue an activity they already do or discover something completely new.

During and in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, participants who complete their Skills, Volunteering and Physical sections will also receive a DofE Certificate of Achievement – a formal recognition by the DofE of their efforts at this extraordinary time.

Activities for each section take a minimum of one hour a week over a set period of time so they can fit around studying, hobbies and social lives. For more details about programmes and timescales visit DofE.org/do.

About the expedition

The Expedition section involves your child working as part of a small team to plan their expedition's aim, choose a location and do some training to make sure they are fully prepared – before spending two days and one night in the countryside.

Ahead of this they will take part in training at school covering basic expedition principles and introducing them to expedition equipment.

There will also be a number of training sessions during their weekly, timetabled DofE session, in which your child and their group will plan their route and prepare. Further details about the expedition will follow.



The DofE and COVID-19

Your child can still have the full DofE experience, safely and in line with Government guidance, during the COVID-19 outbreak. The motivation and focus the DofE gives and its positive impact on mental and physical health can play an important role in helping your child navigate our 'new normal', safely expanding their world and giving them skills and experiences to open doors in the future.

As participants can choose and change their activities, they can pick ones that they can do while social distancing or from home. The DofE has provided useful advice and information including activity and volunteering ideas at DofE.org/DofEWithADifference.

The DofE has also introduced a number of flexibilities to allow expeditions to take place safely, in line with social distancing restrictions and Government guidance. While your child's expedition may look slightly different to those in previous years, they will be able to do theirs safely and with all the benefits and memories they would get at any other time.

eDofE and the DofE app

Participants will create their DofE programme and record their progress using eDofE, the DofE's digital system, available online at eDofE.org and through the DofE app – downloadable for free from Google Play and the App Store.

We will set up your child's eDofE account and they will receive details of how to sign in and get started. We will also hold a eDofE launch session so that they know exactly how to use the system.

Signing up

All Year 9 students will participate in the DofE award this year and an hour's PE lesson each week will be dedicated to DofE sessions. This will begin after half term.

The cost of taking part in the DofE is being met by the Opportunity Trust Fund. This covers your child's participation place and Welcome Pack, which will be sent to their home address and includes their personalised DofE Discount Card.

We will hold an information event for parents and students when it is safe to do so. If you would like any further information in the meantime please feel free to contact me.

Aside from the DofE, The Opportunity Trust Fund is in place to enable students to enhance their activities and experiences through extra-curricular activities. If you think that the Opportunity Trust Fund could help your child with extra-curricular opportunities and would like to make an application, in the first instance, please contact your child's Learning Manager.

Many thanks for your support and we look forward to helping your child to achieve through their DofE.

Yours sincerely

Deborah Lagdon
DofE Manager
dlagdon@tscacademy.org.uk