

Ref: 119/20

11th February 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award:

I am delighted that your son/daughter has shown interest in the Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award.

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Gold expedition will be delivered by Award Solutions. In previous years this has been completed as an 'Open Award' which means Award Solutions take full responsibility for the care of the students during the expedition. This is partly due to the time commitment needed for the practice and final expeditions, from school staff. This year, St Margaret's will have a little more involvement and I will be the contact but there will not be a member of the school staff present every day on either of the expeditions, only during the weekend. Hopefully the rest of the letter will make this a bit clearer.

The Gold expedition programme will be delivered in 4 separate blocks; a training day (to be arranged); a 1 day walk, to remind the students of the level of walking required; a 3 day training/practice expedition and finally a 5 day qualifying (assessed) expedition.

Your son/daughter is required to be registered with the Award through St Margaret's Church of England Academy, and have an 'eDof E' login prior to doing the training walk on the 14th March 2020. Those who did Bronze or Silver previously, will have their account with Gold added, and it is useful if all evidence that can be from previous Awards, is brought up to date. If the student completed an award in another school, we will endeavour to help them gather that evidence and transfer their account over to St Margaret's to complete. The account must be transferred to St Margaret's to take part in the Gold. Please talk to Mrs Niblock if you completed with Cadets, Scouts, Guides etc.

Students can start as a direct entry to Gold. However, this does take 6 months longer to complete. Please see attached information regarding that.

I feel it is important to remind the students that Gold is a big commitment. The practice and final expedition requires them to carry all of their kit, food etc for the full 4 days. The expedition takes place in 'wild country', travelling for 8 hours per day.

Students also have to complete a residential to achieve the award, in addition to the Skill, Volunteering and Physical sections. You can see what is involved in this on the DofE website.

Please find below dates planned for the expedition section.

A one day walk - Saturday 14th March 2020.

This will take place in the Rivington area, near Bolton which is approximately 40 miles away. A member of school staff will be on this walk but it will be conducted by Award Solutions. Transport will not be provided for the students and therefore will need to make their own arrangements to get there and back. There are however things to do in the area if parents/carers would like to stay during the day.

Students will be divided into groups and each will have a qualified member of staff to supervise them over the day. This will be a training and navigation walk to show them what a Gold Level Day will involve, walking about 8 miles during the day with their expedition kit, and food so they are self-sufficient. Staff will also debrief the groups at the end to allow students to recognise what they have achieved and learnt over the day and to identify any areas which require improvement, thus preparing them for their venture. Students will need stout, over the ankle walking boots that have been worn before, a waterproof jacket, waterproof trousers, warm clothes, hat and gloves, packed lunch and a drink, they will be out walking all day. During the day they will carry a fully packed rucksack, which can be borrowed.

There will be sessions after school to prepare the young people for their Gold Expedition, i.e food, cooking and qualifying route cards to be completed.

Three Day Gold Practice Expedition - Saturday 20th June - Monday 22nd June 2020 inclusive.

Destination is highly likely to be the Kendal Windermere area. Students will be divided into groups of 6/7 and each will have a qualified member of staff to supervise them over the 3 days.

Staff will continue to work with the students to develop their navigation skills, camp craft, and teamwork skills. Each day they will walk about 16 km (10 miles) with their expedition kit and food so they are self-sufficient. Staff will also debrief the groups at the end to allow students to recognise what they have achieved and learnt over the 3 days and to identify any areas which require improvement, thus preparing them for their qualifying expedition. Students may camp unaccompanied for one night as a trial, as they should be unaccompanied but supervised remotely as a requirement at Gold Level.

Transport will be arranged at an additional cost. A member of staff will travel with the students on the Saturday and remain over the weekend. Students will formally be in the care of Award Solutions or school staff and either Award Solutions or school staff return with them on the Monday.

Five Day Gold Qualifying Expedition – Thursday 2nd July - Monday 6th July

We anticipate the expedition will take place in North Lakes or Yorkshire depending on how the young people cope with the group and remoteness on the walk on the 14th March 2020 and their Practice in June.

This will be their qualifying venture and may be out of contact and remote for periods of time after the first day. If you require contact with your son/daughter you will be given a Team Leaders number to contact in the event of an emergency. Students should camp unaccompanied and supervised remotely by adults on this venture. However, if your child has a concern about this please talk to us as soon as possible.

Transport will be arranged but this will be at an additional cost. Award solutions or school staff will travel to and from the expedition and the students will be in their care throughout. There will, however, be a member of staff from St. Margaret's present over the weekend.

The total cost of the Gold Award is £489.00 which includes all training, enrolment to the DofE, the expeditions (excluding food and transport), loan of tents, rucksacks, roll mats, camping stoves, maps and compasses.

If you would like your son/daughter to take part in this Award and to secure his/her place, please complete the reply slip below and enclosed registration form and return to **Mrs Niblock no later than Friday 14th February 2020.** Apologies for the short deadlines.

I will back date the start of the Award to the 1st September 2019 to ensure the activities the students already do regularly, can be used as evidence. If a student wishes to include activities completed before the 1st of September, they must speak to Mrs Niblock. We can backdate as far as the student's 16th birthday.

Once we receive your reply slip the payment schedule will then be added to your son/daughter's ParentMail (+Pay) account.

Please find below a scheduled payment plan, which will be set up via Parentmail (+Pay) on receipt of the reply slip:

Deposit	£30.00	21st February 2020
1st instalment	£115	28th February 2020
2nd instalment	£115	31st March 2020
3 rd instalment	£115	30th April 2020
4th instalment	£114	20th May 2020

All payments must be made via ParentMail (+Pay)

Payments can also be made outside the above dates via Parentmail (+pay) should you wish to clear the balance sooner. If parents or carers are experiencing financial difficulties please contact me, in confidence, to discuss the matter. Please contact Miss Sue Smith in the school office should you require assistance with your Parentmail (+pay) account.

Please note, once the deposit is paid there is a commitment to pay the final amount as the school will have booked and paid for an External Activity Provider to organise expeditions etc.

There is a Duke of Edinburgh section on the School Web Site under Curriculum where you will find out more about the Award.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact via email: hniblock@stmargaretsacademy.com

Yours sincerely



Helen Niblock
St Margaret's D of E Co-ordinator



Robert Lawton
Head of 6th form

✂-----

REPLY SLIP AND ENROLMENT FORM TO: Mrs Niblock – Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award

Student: _____

Form: _____

I would like my son/daughter to take part in the Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award and understand the £30.00 deposit is non-refundable. I will make payment via Parentmail (+Pay)

Signed: _____ (parent/carers)

Date: _____