

## **Additional notes to families DofE Silver Expeditions May/June/July 2026**

### **1. Meeting your students after the expedition**

Please note that groups will be **walking and navigating at various paces so finish times will vary between groups**. They will stay for a debrief from instructors before leaving. They will be asked to contact you approximately 1 hour before collection to confirm their finish time.

*Please ENSURE that your child has personally signed out with LPGS staff before you leave.*

### **2. What to bring**

Please see attached kit list. Notes from our training sessions will also be sent to the students on Firefly. Many of the main stores have promotions on at the moment. Your DofE membership also gives discounts at some suppliers..

We strongly recommend **walking boots** with ankle support for uneven and muddy ground, rather than walking shoes or trainers which increase the risk of twisted ankles and wet discomfort/blisters. Boots are available from about £30-60. They should be **'worn in' in advance** of the trip so that they mould to fit well, to reduce rubbing and blisters. We recommend a pack of **blister plasters** so that prevention can be applied at the first sign of trouble.

Our advice is to invest in good **walking socks** rather than spend too much on boots for growing feet.

**Water-proofs** are an assessed item on the qualifier and essential on all our expeditions. A number of layers of clothing work well for warmth and flexibility. A thick coat is **not** recommended as students will get too warm and end up carrying them.

Students should bring their **rucksacks** already packed but please REMEMBER I will then be giving them bulky items which they will need to carry with them (**tents, stoves etc**), **so please leave ample space for these**. Leaders will check sufficient food, water, and waterproofs are carried by each student.

**Rucksacks** should be around 65/70 litre size with padded shoulder straps and wide padded waistband.

Sleeping bags should be 2/3-season, pack away in a stuff sack and preferably have a draw-string top.

Please remember to pack clothes in plastic bags or line the rucksack with a bin liner, and have spares for separating any wet clothing.

For students entitled to Pupil Premium, we have a limited number of rucksacks, sleeping bags, and sleeping mats available to borrow. Please let me know if you would like to reserve a set for each expedition. It is possible I may have one or two spares available for other students so please ask.

### **3. Food**

Please be clear that students will plan, purchase and bring with them on day 1 all their food for the whole weekend. They will cook for themselves and clean up afterwards. They will leave no rubbish at the camp, but take it out with them on days 2 and 3. **There is no electricity or refrigeration.** Students will be planning menus for their teams, and need to take account of allergies and preferences. No nuts please. Pot noodle and super noodles are **not** acceptable to assessors for a meal, only as a snack. Homemade and pre-frozen bolognese/chilli, will impress!

We remind students of the importance of good nutrition, and hydration, to fuel their bodies for the physical and emotional challenges of the expedition, including keeping warm at night. They will be using much more energy than on a usual weekend or school day and should test out quantities in advance, using only two small cooking pots, to answer the question 'how much pasta/rice etc will we need to carry for 7 tired and hungry walkers?!' Looking forward to a great dinner will keep spirits up. A simple satisfying meal in camp will help teamwork, relaxation, and perseverance on day 2/3. Remember cake and custard or hot sauce makes a great dessert, with hot choc sachets to finish!

A small pancake or croissant or cereal bar is great for a snack, but not sufficient for breakfast on Sunday. Think of flap jack or porridge pot or 'overnight oats' in addition, for slow-release energy rather than short term sugar. Add fresh or dried fruit for interest and vitamins.

Plenty of snacks help along the way, but **not just** sugar/sweets!

Don't forget 2-litre water bottle(s), non-breakable bowl/plate/mug and cutlery, small quantity of washing up detergent and scourer, rubbish bags.

### **4. Expectations**

Please note how important it is that students have had a good night's sleep on Friday and a proper breakfast on Saturday. They will be burning energy all day, so please do not skip this.

Students will walk in their groups on the routes they mark up at the start. This is a fundamental part of the training as they are expected to plan their own routes, with guidance, for the qualifier in May. They will be walking with their expedition leaders for at least the first part of Saturday, and will need to pay close attention to the navigation techniques being taught. They should all play an active part, and feel free to ask questions, or for demonstrations to be repeated as many times as needed, so that they all understand and grow in confidence. This will help enormously when they are ready to continue unaccompanied. For most of the expedition, and when they are ready, participants will be **remotely supervised**, and walking in their groups without an adult. We will be monitoring their progress, aware where they are, and meeting them at checkpoints along the way. We will refill water bottles.

On expeditions, students will find the walking with full packs, navigating and supporting each other a challenge, but they will also have fun and make great memories. *However, please remind them that they are here because they have chosen to learn the skills and techniques we are delighted to pass on to them, this is not just a giant sleepover!* School rules apply with our usual high expectations of engagement and behaviour, including settling into tents when asked and a quiet camp so that all can sleep. It is rare that we encounter difficulties with this but please be clear that any inappropriate behaviour will result in a call home for parents to collect their child at any time, day or night.

## **5. Mobile phones**

For each group, 2 mobile phones will be chosen at random to stay on as set out below. All other phones will be taped up and kept packed away for the whole expedition. Numbers will be shared with vetted expedition staff and deleted on Sunday.

The authorised phones may ONLY be used for

Contact with expedition staff

As a torch

Taking photos if agreed with the assessor in advance.

Battery charge needs to be maintained for emergencies. There will be no electricity to recharge in camp. We will unpack fully-charged phones for the second day if needed.

If your child has a genuine need to use their phone or device for medical monitoring, this can be arranged but please make this clear on the consent form.

Please refrain from contacting participants by phone during the weekend. Unauthorised phone use can mean disqualification for the whole team. Please feel free to use my school mobile number to relay any messages to them. We will be operating in an area of limited signal reception.

## **6. Travel to and from Qualifying expedition Ashdown Forest July**

We plan to travel together by train from and to East Croydon station on a group train ticket. So please ensure participants arrive at East Croydon in good time to catch the reserved train on Saturday.

Please record on the consent form how your child will travel home from East Croydon station on Monday afternoon.