



NEWSTEAD WOOD SCHOOL

"creating opportunities for success"

THE SUNDAY TIMES

SCHOOLS GUIDE
2025

STATE SECONDARY
SCHOOL OF THE YEAR
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9 October 2025

Dear Parent/Carer,

Bronze Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE)

We are pleased to offer Year 10 students the opportunity to participate in the Bronze level of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award here at Newstead Wood School.

The Award Comprises Four Sections. These are Skill, Physical, Volunteering and an Expedition; all need to be completed to achieve the Bronze award.

All students are expected to complete the award by the end of the school year in July 2025, which will allow them to progress to higher levels in subsequent year.

VOLUNTEERING	Each section must be undertaken on a weekly basis and requires commitment of at least an hour a week, for a minimum of three months , with one section continuing for a minimum of six months .
PHYSICAL	
SKILL	<p>Each section has a wide variety of activities to choose from but once chosen these must be entered on to the eDofE site, which must then be approved by the school's Coordinator. A suitably qualified individual should supervise Physical and Skill activities, and it is the parent/carers' responsibility to ensure that the activities have the appropriate Public Liability insurance policy, and that they are run by reputable organisations who have vetted their staff/volunteers.</p> <p>Students are responsible for finding their own activities for each of these sections. It is worth noting that there are many opportunities within school to complete these sections, including clubs and societies. Activities undertaken as part of the Elective Programme can be included, if they meet the time requirements, do not contribute towards GCSEs, and provided that the students do enough sessions to qualify for the appropriate section.</p> <p>If the student chooses a Skill or Physical activity that they already participate in, this can be backdated by maximum of 2 months. For example, for applications received by 15 November 2025, this can be backdated to 15 September 2024. This is the earliest possible start date.</p> <p>Please see https://www.dofe.org/do/sections/ for further information about the options for these three sections.</p>

Headteacher: Mr Alan Blount, MA, BSc, QTS

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PRACTISE	<p>The Practise consists of an accompanied hike from school to a set location, an onsite training and overnight camp, then an unaccompanied hike back to school. This part of the hike will be remotely supervised. The overall distance will be approximately 24km through the local area. Whilst this practise and training expedition will be challenging to the students, both mentally and physically, we aim to make it achievable and enjoyable to all participants.</p> <p>Teams will be made up of 6 - 7 students (this is a Newstead Wood DofE policy).</p> <p>Each student will be required to carry all equipment, tent, stoves, clothing and food etc., in a rucksack. The following equipment will be issued to all: Tents, Trangia (cooking stove), gas. A menu for their team's meal will need to be compiled.</p> <p>A planned route will be supplied for Day One, and teams will be required to plan the return route.</p> <p>Mobile devices are not permitted, although one can be used in the event of an injury or emergency, and NOT as an aid to navigation or entertainment.</p>
EXPEDITION	<p>The main expedition, like the practise, is a two-day event, with an overnight stay in tents. Both days will be remotely supervised hikes with an overall approximate distance of 30km through Kent countryside</p> <p>Each student will be required to carry all their equipment (as per the practise expedition).</p> <p>Students will be expected to plan their own routes (start and finish grid references will be provided), as well as planning a menu, preparing and cooking their own food and implementing learned navigation skills.</p> <p>Mobile devices are not permitted although one can be used in the event of an injury or emergency, and NOT as an aid to navigation or entertainment.</p>

Introductory training for all participants will commence in early December and practical training from mid-April to early May, delivered by an external provider.

All students participating must have completed two of their sections before the practise expedition (**May 2026**) Their third section should be completed prior to the final expedition in **July 2026**.

Consideration can be given if the participant must change section or has personal issues that delay the process.

Please be advised that if a student fails to complete of two sections in the allocated time, they will not be allowed to take part in the main expedition.

Key Dates for 2025/26:

10 October 2025	Initial DofE introduction (video) and registration opens.
4, 5, 11 and 12 December 2025	Introductory Training sessions will run after school from 3.35-4.35pm in Computer rooms All participants must attend two of these days (one per week).
15, 22, 29 April and 6 May 2026	Bronze DofE Training inhouse: will run after school from 3.35-4.45pm on in the Main Hall All participants must attend all days.
15 and 16 May 2026	Bronze DofE Practise: From 1.05pm on Friday to Saturday afternoon. From School to Downe Activity Centre and back to school
13 and 14 July 2026	Bronze Assessed Expedition: 8.00am start from Leigh Station, Village Green, Camping at Adamswell Scout Campsite, Tunbridge Wells and finishing at Penshurst Station.

After School Intro and Training

Students must commit to two of the Introductory training sessions (one per week), held on Thursday and Friday evenings from 4 to 12 December 2025 from 3.35-4.35pm.

Students must also commit to attend **all** after-school training day with our provider, TES. These will run every Wednesday from 15 April to 6 May 2026 from 3.35-4.45pm.

Attendance at TES training sessions is mandatory. Failure to attend training sessions could lead to your child being withdrawn from the expedition and thus unable to complete the award.

Areas to Consider Before Signing up to the DofE Award:

Undertaking the DofE Award at school is in addition to normal school studies and as such:

- Academic progress must come first for each student and if at any point their progress or attainment drops, this may result in removal from the Duke of Edinburgh's award scheme.
- The school retains the right to remove students who do not uphold the school's behaviour or attendance policy; participation will be considered in consultation with the Head of Year on an individual basis.

PLEASE DO NOT SIGN UP FOR DOFE, IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO COMMIT TO ALL THE TRAINING SESSIONS, PRACTISE AND EXPEDITION DATES

Payment

The fee for entering the award is **£300.00**, which covers the registration on eDofE, insurance, training days and the cost of the practise and expeditions. Please note, payment constitutes permission for the expedition and training.

If your child would like to participate in the Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award, please make the required non-returnable payment of **£100.00** by **Tuesday 17 November 2025**. The balance of **£200** is due by **Friday 31 January 2026**. We are not able to accept late applications to take part in the award so all students wishing to take part must make these payments by these dates. If you have any concerns regarding payment for the award, please contact finance@newsteadwood.co.uk in confidence. Some financial assistance is available for pupil premium students from the DofE, please contact me at aandrews@newsteadwood.co.uk if you would like to discuss this further.

This £100 fee is non-refundable.

Equipment

Student will need the following equipment: a 65lt rucksack, sturdy walking boots/shoes (no trainers) and waterproof trousers and coat. A comprehensive kit list can be found on the DofE website: <https://www.dofe.org/shop/dofe-expedition-kit-list/>

The school will loan the following items: tents, cooking stoves, maps, and compasses and tracker. In the unlikely event that one of these items is damaged or lost, the team responsible will be billed

Information about students for this trip will be taken from the school database for the purpose of trip safety, emergency contact and medical information. Please check and update the school with any changes via the Arbor app.

Should you have any other queries or questions, please contact me at aandrews@newsteadwood.co.uk.

Further information regarding the award can also be found on the [DofE website](#).

Yours sincerely,

A Andrews

**Mr A Andrews
DofE Manager**