

## What makes a good Duke of Edinburgh participant?

You don't have to be the most academic or sporty person to be a brilliant D of E participant. Our best participants are the ones who fully throw themselves into everything, who make the most of their opportunities and who are willing to challenge themselves. It is always a joy to see students develop over the course of the award and succeed in ways that they never believed possible. Our best participants show commitment to succeed whilst keeping a sense of humour throughout.

### Top Tips

- Shop around for kit – once you have decided what you want look around for the cheapest option. Lots of shops offer discounts to D of E participants and some places will price match if you can find it cheaper somewhere else.
- Practice packing your rucksack to make sure the weight is distributed evenly and the straps are comfortable. You want to make sure you can get out your lunch and First Aid kit easily without having to pull everything out of your bag.
- Pack your waterproofs! Even if it isn't forecast to rain, your waterproofs are essential. If it does rain and you don't have any waterproofs you will become uncomfortable very quickly. Make sure your rucksack either comes with a waterproof cover or you buy an extra one to go with it to keep your kit dry. We also recommend packing your spare kit into separate bags and putting your roll mat into a bin bag.
- When thinking about spare clothes don't go overboard – remember, you have to carry everything! One thing you don't want to leave behind is some spare socks. You're likely to get soggy feet at some point over the weekend and if you have to put your wet socks back on later you won't be happy!
- Practice putting up your tent AND packing it away. You may have to do this while it is raining and windy and it is easy to get frustrated if you don't know how to do it, especially after a long day walking.
- Pick activities you think you will enjoy doing and that you can get something out of. An hour a week for 3 months can seem a long time if you are doing something you don't enjoy.
- Wear your boots and break them in before your Expedition. You do not want to get blisters on your first day and have to put your boots back on again for your second day of walking. Also, bring blister plasters!
- Stay organised! There are lots of training sessions you have to attend on top of completing your activities for your 3 sections, fitting in your school work and still having time for yourself. Use your planner if this helps or put up a weekly schedule at home to help you keep on top of everything.

- Check the D of E noticeboard on school regularly – this has all the training dates posted and will be updated regularly with any news or changes we make. We also add volunteering opportunities and good offers for D of E students when we find them.
- Try out any new foods you are thinking of taking on expedition to make sure that you like them.
- Print a copy of the training dates and put it somewhere visible at home so that you and your parent/carer always know when you are needed and to help you avoid double booking yourself.