



# OUNDLLE

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## School

*Gold Award Group Leader*

January 2010

Dear Parent,

As you are no doubt aware, your son/daughter wishes to take part in this year's Gold Award Expedition. This letter endeavours to answer any questions you may have, and to set out what is required.

The Expedition section of the Award consists of a practice and an assessed expedition. All of this must take place in what the DofE defines as "wild country". We use the Peak District (late in the Easter holiday 2010) and North Yorkshire/Cumbria (late June) respectively for Walking Expeditions. The cycling option will also be run on these dates, with the practice taking place in The Peak District and the assessed expedition following the Coast to Coast route across northern England. If your child has opted for the Katanoeing venture we will be using the River Nene for the Practice Expedition (early in the Easter holiday 2010) and the River Trent in late June 2010.

Such activities carry some risk, which is part of their value. However, the Award and the School are obviously concerned to minimize the hazard on such expeditions and, therefore, we have a fairly Draconian safety policy in place. All the groups are trained in the DofE syllabus (or above) in navigation, first aid, etc., and have a common emergency procedure. They all have first aid kits, survival bags and emergency procedures, which is standard practice for this type of venture. There is usually one supervisor per group and all the vehicles we use carry spare equipment, first aid kits and a mobile phone. During the assessed expedition all groups are seen in camp in the morning and evening to check on their status. We aim to see each group up to three times a day – and if we don't, the groups have a series of unmanned checkpoints to go through. We also have the DofE assessors, who provide an extra layer of safety cover. We aim not to coddle the groups, but we make sure that were anything untoward to occur we can be there. In the eleven years the Award has been running at Oundle, we have had over six hundred candidates pass the expedition, with only one casualty, a dislocated shoulder.

Much is expected of the candidates. They need to plan their own routes and to plan and provide their meals. They *must* go on the practice expeditions and *must* be available for the Assessed Expedition period. They must also train most Wednesday evenings from 1700-1830 during Quarters. As to equipment, much can be borrowed from the School. A good waterproof jacket is vital: the Gold Expedition is a challenge and is one that the body will easily take if it is dry, but, if

candidates are wet, they will find the physical and mental challenges combine and become too much. Boots are an important part of kit for the walkers. While these can be borrowed from friends and family, I would advise against it – leather boots in particular shape themselves to one pair of feet and never transfer without numerous blisters. A cheap pair of boots (say £50) will suffice for the expedition and cause a lot less suffering provided they are worn in! If your child has opted for the Katacanoeing Expedition a cheap pair of decking shoes should suffice.

Please complete and return the Medical and Consent form which can be found on the School website under /noticeboard/trips (or by following [this link](#)). One form will suffice for both practice and assessed expeditions (dates as listed below). The form must be signed but can then be scanned and emailed (ad@oundleschool.org.uk) or faxed FAO Ali Dean to 01832 273930. Postal replies should be sent to Ali Dean, Oundle School, New Street, Oundle PE8 4EN.

The total costs for the two expeditions will be in the region of £300 for the Katacanoe venture, Walking around £200 and the Cycling around £475. The transport and supervision provided by the School for Horse Riding will be around £350 per pupil.

Many thanks for taking the time to read this. Further information regarding the award can be found on the school website. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Ali Dean  
Gold Award Leader

### **Expedition Dates 2010**

*Departures will be at 9.00a.m. on the first day from the swimming pool car park, expected return times 7.00p.m. swimming pool car park on the final day. For the walking and cycling practice the Peak District at Easter pupils have the option of joining at 12:30 on the 15<sup>th</sup> and leaving at 3pm on the 17<sup>th</sup> from Hope Station. Please contact me directly should you like you son/daughter to do this.*

#### ***For All Walkers-***

Practice Peak District 15<sup>th</sup> -17<sup>th</sup> April 2010 . Assessed Yorkshire 26<sup>th</sup> -30<sup>th</sup> June 2010

#### ***For All Cyclists-***

Practice Peak District 15<sup>th</sup> -17<sup>th</sup> April 2010 . Assessed Coast to Coast 26<sup>th</sup> -30<sup>th</sup> June 2010

#### ***For all Katacanoeists-***

Practice River Nene 27<sup>th</sup> -29<sup>th</sup> March 2010. Assessed River Trent 26<sup>th</sup> -30<sup>th</sup> June 2010

#### ***For All Horse Riders-***

Practice Yorkshire 12<sup>th</sup> -15<sup>th</sup> April 2010. Assessed North Wales 26<sup>th</sup> -30<sup>th</sup> June 2010