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Email: office@urmstongrammar.org.uk
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Headteacher: Mr T Kennedy-Fowler

Urmston Grammar School

September 2026

Dear Parents/Guardians,

RE: Duke of Edinburgh's Silver Award

This letter is to inform you about this year's Duke of Edinburgh's Silver Award scheme at Urmston Grammar. The award is open to all students in year 12 and lasts 12 months for those who have not completed Bronze and 6 months for those who have. There are four sections to the award scheme and students need to be totally committed to completing all four sections before they join the scheme. Three of the sections, Service, Skill, and Physical Activity (sport), are organized and completed independently by students outside of school. In order to complete the award students must participate in a sport and practice a skill for three or six months. Students choose which of the two sections they will pursue for the six month period. Participants must also volunteer in the community for six months. Students who have not completed the bronze award must volunteer for a further six months OR add six months to the longer of the sport or skills section.

Examples of some of the activities that students have undertaken in the past include:

- Service: working in a charity shop, volunteer lifeguarding, volunteer refereeing, volunteering as an assistant at a sport, dance, scouting, or other group, helping in a care home;
- Skill: learning a musical instrument, dancing, drama, singing, martial arts, photography, cookery, language;
- Sport: football, volleyball, basketball, swimming, horse riding, tennis, hockey, climbing- basically any sport of their choosing, as a long as it involves a regular, ideally weekly, commitment.

Students may wish to continue with an activity that they already participate in to complete a particular section and this is permitted. However, in the spirit of the award, I would encourage them to use this as an opportunity to pick up at least one new activity.

Further information about the various sections of the award, including ideas for each section can be found at: https://www.dofe.org/do/ideas/

The fourth and final part of the award is the expedition and this is organised through Urmston Grammar. Participants must complete a practice expedition involving two nights (youth hostel and camp) and three days of walking and a qualifying expedition, which also lasts two nights and three days. The practice expedition will take place in the area around Hawes and Dent in the Yorkshire Dales from Thursday June 10th to Saturday June 12th 2027. The provisional dates for the assessed expedition are Friday July 8th – Sunday July 10th 2027. This will take place in the Lake District. Students must be able to make all of these dates in order to sign up for the award programme.

Travel to the practice expedition will be by coach. However, I will need parents to pick students up from the village of Dent on the Saturday afternoon. Dent is about one and a half hours drive from Urmston. Transport to and from the Lakes for the qualifying expedition will be by coach. The expeditions are usually undertaken in groups of 6-7 students. All the arrangements for the expedition and will be outlined at a parents' evening, which will be held in the Spring Term in the school hall.

I have capacity for 35-40 places on the award this year. If your son/daughter would like a place on the silver award they must fill in the application form attached to this letter AND sign up for D of E on the COPE schedule. Students should spend the next few weeks finalising their plans for each section of the award. After the deadline, I will go through the applications and, if necessary, hold a draw if there are more applicants than places. The deadline for handing in the award application is **Friday September 25th**. Applications should be handed in to the school **finance office**.

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Once you have been notified that your son/daughter has a place on the award, the school will ask for an initial payment of £42 through parent pay. This covers the cost of registration with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme and access to their online logbook, as well as a contribution towards to the cost of Urmston Grammar's DofE Operating Licence. A further payment of between £260-£275 will be required by the end of April but this can be paid in instalments. The payment schedule will be confirmed later this term. This payment covers the costs associated with the two expeditions and includes campsite fees, one night in the Youth Hostel, staffing, D of E kit, assessor and training costs, fuel and coach transport. The exact amount of the expedition payment will be finalized nearer the time and will largely depend on the numbers who sign up to the award. I should also make you aware that there are other additional costs associated with the expedition section of the award – students will need their own hiking boots, waterproofs, sleeping bag and rucksack (the school does have rucksacks that I can lend to students, but you may want to purchase one for university/college). The cost of purchasing relatively cheap, but reliable, sets of the aforementioned items of kit from somewhere like Go Outdoors is around £120-180.

I will hold a meeting for the silver students in an IT rooms before October half term to hand out their eD of E log in details so that students can complete their registration and fill in their section pages on e D of E.

If you have any further questions regarding the award, please do not hesitate to contact me by e mail – mmcpartland@urmstongrammar.or.uk

Many thanks for your support.
Yours faithfully,

Dr M McPartland
(Duke of Edinburgh's Award co-ordinator)