



Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme

Policy Reference	
Committee	LGB
Completed Review Date	May 2026
Policy Owner	DofE Lead
Ratified by Governors	
Next Review Due	May 2028

Signed by Principal	
Signed by Chair of Governor	

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed when there are changes in the law or at least every two years, to assess implementation and effectiveness in line with DfE guidance September 2022.

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1. Preface

Chiltern Hills Academy is a learning environment at the heart of its community. We encourage every person in our community to:

Create, Aspire and Excel to 'Live life in all its fullness' (John 10:10)

We achieve this through our dedication to the seven Christian values of love, hope, self-discipline, compassion, forgiveness, respect and honesty.

We are a community in which staff, students and parents work collaboratively to develop a learning environment and organisation which is spiritual, safe, innovative, creative and exciting. All members of the Academy are motivated and inspired by the vision to give their best and to play a full part in the life of the school and in their own developing lives.

The Governors at Chiltern Hills Academy are committed to achieving the vision and values. They oversee and monitor this policy to ensure that this is being achieved.

2. Foreword

This policy contains the following generic documents from the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Organisation:

TITLE	CODE
Key Abbreviations and Terminology	N/A
Foreword	N/A
Expedition Planning Process	DofE001
Walking expedition staffing ratios	DofE002
Expedition Supervision Arrangements	DofE003
First Aid	DofE004
Staff Documentation	DofE005
Serious Incident and 'Near Miss'	DofE006
Walking Expeditions at Gold Level – additional guidance	DofE007
Using Approved Activity Providers (AAPs)	DofE008
The Variation Process	DofE009
EVOLVE & Notification	DofE010
Quality Assurance & Positive Development Strategy	DofE011
Full Abbreviations and Terminology	Appendix 1

This document is designed to support and guide CHA DofE staff through the expedition section and clarify the planning arrangements and staffing levels centres are expected to work to. It also outlines the key responsibilities of the role and how they are implemented.

This policy has been effective since August 2016 and Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) centres should be working within standards and requirements outlined. Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC) will continue to offer support and guidance through the Evolve process as with any other CHA trip.

This document primarily covers walking expeditions; however suggested ratios/qualifications have been added for water-based activities as these have become more popular. For expeditions using other modes of transport, CHA staff should request specific guidance from the regional Operations Officer.

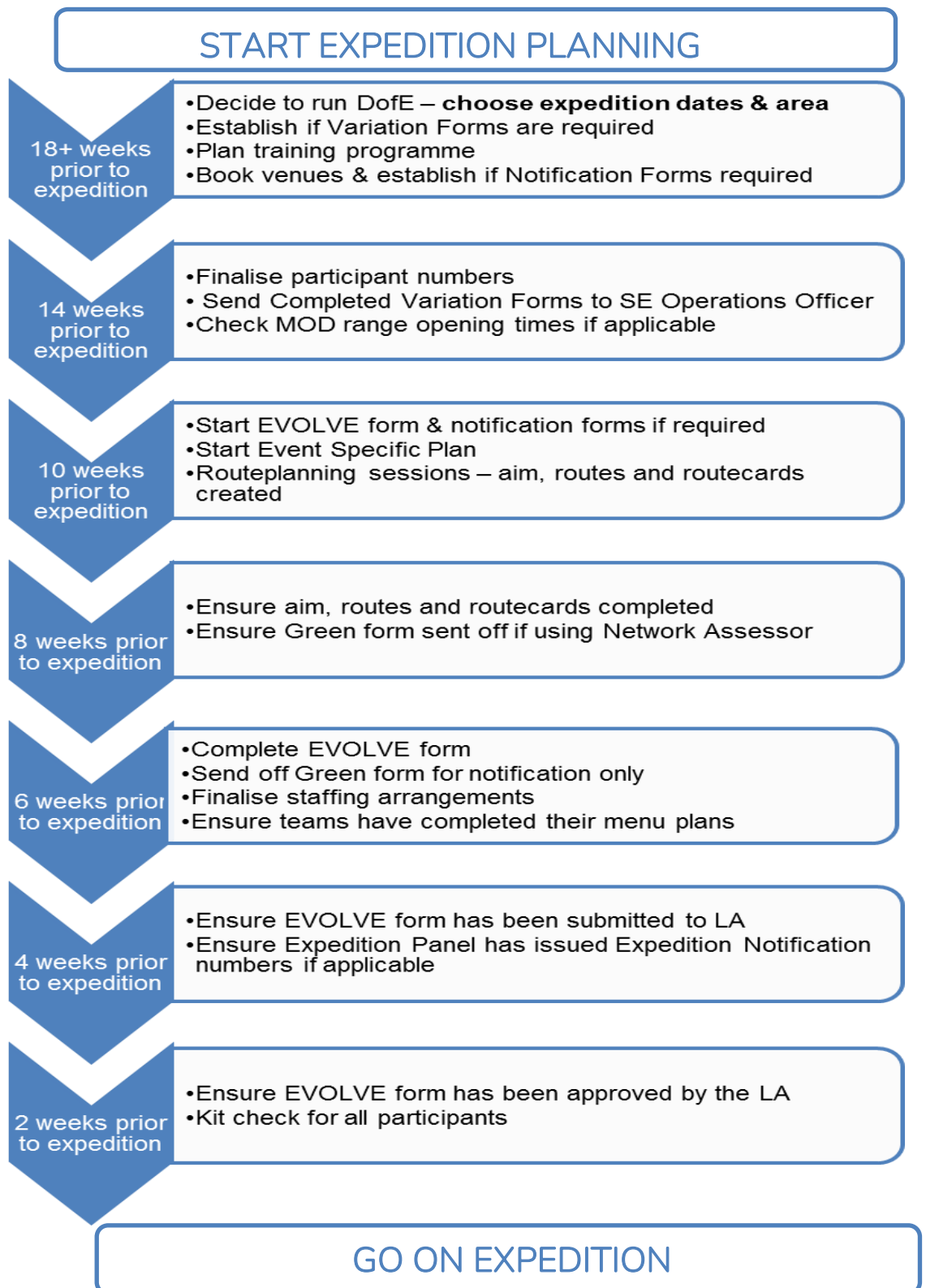
- 2.1.1. All resources named in this policy can be requested from the Buckinghamshire Operations Officer, Hannah Mizen-Carney or other members of the Central England Regional DofE Team.

DofE Contact: Hannah Mizen-Carney, Operations Officer – Buckinghamshire DofE
Email: hannah.mizen-carney@dofe.org

The documents below are taken directly from the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Organisation; there are minor deviations from the below process at CHA which are clearly outlined towards the end of this policy. These minor deviations have been made to ensure the smooth running of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award taking into account the unique setting at CHA. Any deviations made remain compliant with both DofE and BCC requirements.

- 2.1.2. For the safe and effective running of Duke of Edinburgh at Chiltern Hills Academy we work alongside an external company called Ocean Rock Adventure. OceanRock Adventure are an Approved Activity Provider (AAP) and they plan and execute the expedition routes, ensuring full safety and responsibility of our students. Any DofE expedition run by Chiltern Hills Academy will use an AAP to ensure compliance with DofE requirements.

EXPEDITION PLANNING PROGRESS (DOFE001)



3. Walking Expedition Staffing Ratios and Supervision (DOFE002)

Training exercises – Direct supervision

Practice Expeditions – Direct and close supervision

Assessment Expeditions – Normally remote supervision, using close when necessary

- Groups must be trained and supervised by appropriately qualified staff
- Ratios and supervision decided by AAP and agreed by the establishment
- There should be a minimum of 1 staff member from the establishment on any trip

Qualification and Supervising Ratios

Expedition Type	Minimum Expedition Leader Qualification	Minimum Leader to Team ratio	Minimum Expedition Staff Qualification	Minimum Staff to Team ratio
Practice	LLA/BEL/CLA	One to four	Experienced Adult	One to two
Assessment	LLA/BEL/CLA	One to four	Experienced Adult	One to two

Lowland (e.g. Chiltern Hills, New Forest, Forest of Dean)

Expedition Type	Minimum Expedition Leader Qualification	Minimum Leader to Team ratio	Minimum Expedition Staff Qualification	Minimum Staff to Team ratio
Practice	HML/WGL	One to two	Experienced Adult	One to one
Assessment	HML/WGL	One to two	Experienced Adult	One to one

Moorland/Upland (e.g. Dartmoor, Peak District, Yorkshire Dales)

Mountain (e.g. Snowdonia, the Lake District, the Cairngorms)

Expedition Type	Minimum Expedition Leader Qualification	Minimum Leader to Team ratio	Minimum Expedition Staff Qualification	Minimum Staff to Team ratio
Practice	ML	One to two	Experienced Adult	One to one
Assessment	ML	One to two	Experienced Adult	One to one

3.1 Examples

- 3.1.2 *7 young people on a Gold practice in one group would be accompanied by one ML. They would need another competent / experienced adult of the opposite gender on the trip, but this person does not need any specialist skill or experience. HOWEVER, 8 young people undertaking an identical expedition must be in two teams. So, they need 2 ML holders, but no assistant.*
- 3.1.3 *Young people on a gold assessed would only need one ML holder and one competent assistant, as they are deemed competent by their supervisor and the expedition has undergone an approval process, AS LONG AS THEY ARE ONLY IN 2 TEAMS.*
- 3.1.4 *Young people on a gold practice trip and in 4 groups need 4 ML/WGL holders (one walking with each group). BUT, when they come to the assessed, they need 2 qualified and 2 experienced. However, if 2 drop out, and the groups decide to merge into 2 teams of 7, when it comes to the practice and qualifying, they only need 1 qualified and 1 competent / experienced assistant, as there are only 2 teams.*

3.2 Expedition Leaders should also hold:

- Current First Aid Qualification: Lowland minimum 8hrs, Moorland/Mountain minimum 16hrs (*more details in first aid section*)
- DofE accredited Expedition Supervisors Course
- Enhanced DBS check (previously CRB check)

3.3 An Experienced Adult should have:

- Knowledge of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award
- Knowledge of the expedition environment
- Should have sufficient technical abilities to be self-sufficient in the environment
- Should be known to the Expedition Leader
- Should **not** be a parent of a participant

A designated Expedition Deputy Leader should be named who is competent to perform the duties of the Expedition Leader should the need arise.

If you are unsure about any of the above, please contact the DofE Operations Officer at the earliest opportunity.

4. Expedition Supervision Arrangements (DOFE003)

- If the minimum staff ratios cannot be met, the SE DofE should be contacted to discuss appropriate supervision plans.
- Expedition staff will employ a range of supervision styles depending on the terrain, weather conditions and competence of the group.
- When NGB qualified staff are supervising two teams on assessed expeditions, the supervisor must be able to reach either team in the event of an emergency. This means both teams must be in the same area.
- Expedition staff will be familiar with the terms 'Direct Supervision', 'Close Supervision' and 'Remote Supervision' as described in the DofE Expedition Guide, 13th Edition, p165.
- The Expedition Leader will perform a detailed location specific risk assessment, identify all local hazards on each group's route.
- At Silver Assessment and Gold level, groups may not be directly supervised overnight but participants must be checked into their camp in the evening, especially if wild camping. Participants must also know how to access staff overnight if issues arise and clearly understand their escape routes and what to do in an emergency. This should also be clearly stated in the parental letter and event specific plan.

4.1 Additional Guidance

- Clearly state how participants will be supervised, whether staff will be on the same campsites and define what 'wild camping' actually entails in the parental letters.
- Where necessary set up a base camp for the duration of the expedition and consider access to shelter or bunkhouse/camping barns.
- Assess how realistic it is for teams/leaders to access additional staff in an emergency. This will depend on how remote the routes go and the availability of phone reception.
- Plan for the worst case scenario by ensuring you have thought through and noted contingency plans and escape routes.
- For assessed events try to liaise with your assessor to ensure teams are not over/under supervised.

4.2 Late Back Procedure

- A formal written late back procedure should be included with the ESP.
- It is expected that one person will be nominated to control **all** communications with the Home Contact and Mountain Rescue and then control distribution of search parties.

5. First Aid (DOFE004)

All staff should hold a current first aid qualification. The recommended course is a 16hr outdoor-based course such as an ITC or REC accredited course.

5.1.1. Expedition staff should carry a substantial first aid kit and spare personal medication for participants in their group e.g. EpiPens, inhalers. Any such medication is administered by the AAP, or if by CHA staff, the Expedition Leader must be notified.

- All participants to have undertaken at least basic first aid training (in accordance with the DofE training syllabus).
- All participants must carry personal first aid kits/personal medication plus the group must share a larger first aid kit to cover more substantial first aid issues.
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5.1.2. Although CHA requires at least one member of staff on expedition to be first aid trained, ultimately all first aid administration and care is carried out by The AAP.

6. Staff Documentation (DOFE005)

It is expected that all staff on the expedition will carry the following documents:

- Event Specific Plan (including relevant risk assessments)
- Critical Incident Procedures and individual risk assessments (risk assessments for high risk students)
- Summary list of all staff contact details & the emergency contact details.
- Detailed Itinerary.

6.1.1. The Expedition Leader & Expedition Deputy will carry in addition to the above:

- Medical Summary sheet (to include staff details).
- Emergency contact details including doctors' information for all participants & staff.

6.1.2. Documents can be held electronically provided a redundancy plan is in place to account for: failure of an electronic device, lack of mobile signal, access to chargers. This would for example include: carrying multiple devices, having a local copy of all the above documents, sufficient portable charging devices, staying on a site with WiFi or checking signal coverage on the relevant networks in advance.

7. Serious Incident & Near Miss (DOFE006)

Where a 'Serious Incident' or 'Near Miss' has occurred an Incident Report should be completed. This should be attached to EVOLVE and emailed to the relevant Operations Officer who will then investigate & liaise with the Incident Team. For severe incidents the events Emergency Contact is asked to keep both Buckinghamshire County Council and the

DofE Duty Officer up to date on the situation. Any serious incident or near miss must be logged with the Primary First Aider on returning to CHA, this will then be logged on the ANT system for the Principal to sign off.

Examples of a Serious Incident/Near Hit as defined by DofE Head Office are:

Serious Injury, Fatality, Emergency Services Call Out, Minor injuries (requiring GP or hospitalisation), Conflict with landowners or other members of the public, Near Miss

Centres are also expected to follow their own policies to conform to Health & Safety expectations such as internal investigations & RIDDOR forms.

8. Walking Expeditions At Gold Level – Additional Guidance (DOFE007)

Gold events are required to take place in Wild Country areas and a thorough training programme should be implemented to prepare participants for the challenges they will face. The practice expedition(s) should reflect the assessment process as much as possible with areas being identified that match the assessed location in terms of:

- Navigation
- Type of terrain, topography & steepness of terrain
- Remoteness
- Style of camping
- Weather (where possible)
- Journeying
- Duration

For direct entrants (those who have not completed the previous level of the DofE award) then a bridging expedition is a good opportunity to bring participants up to the same level as those who hold a Silver award. Normally a bridging expedition is a long weekend in wild country and would still be expected to go through the same EVOLVE notification as any other DofE event and follow the appropriate policies.

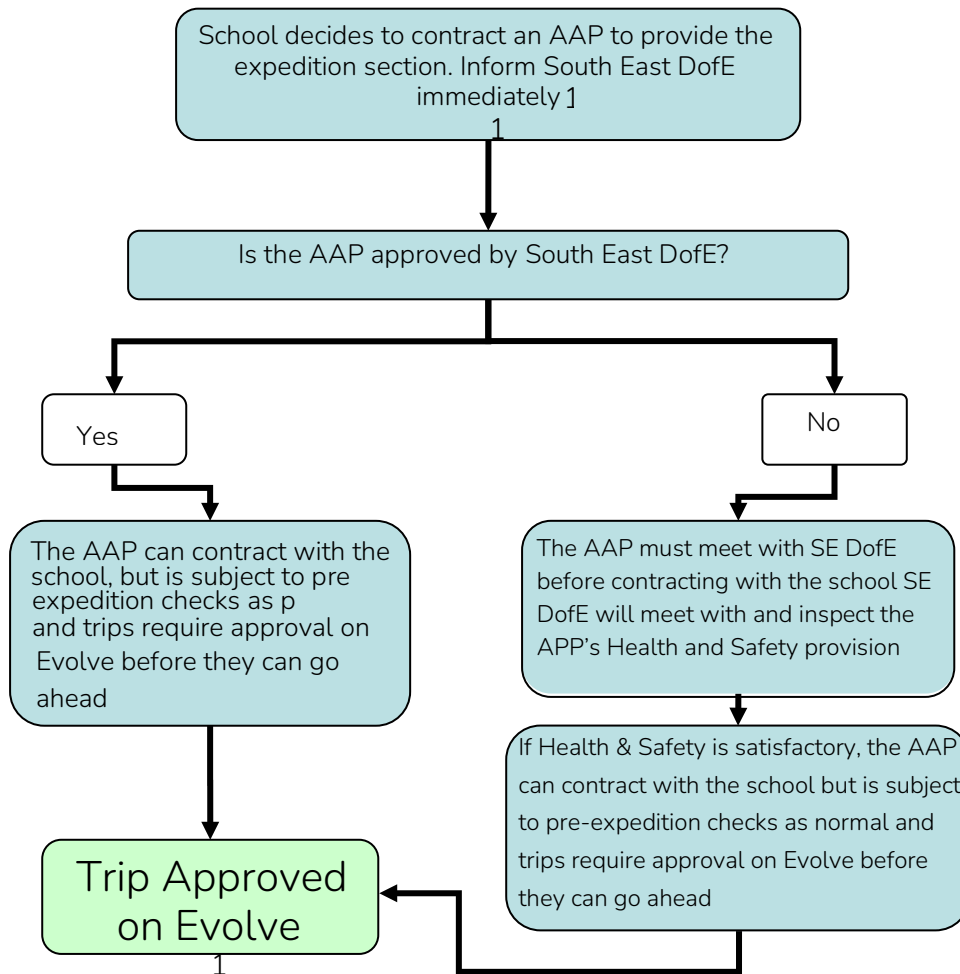
8.1.1 Overseas Expeditions

If you plan to run an overseas expedition this must be agreed by the relevant Operations Officer before participants are enrolled onto it. Please submit an over view of the plan including information on the training programme, practice and assessment.

9. Using Approved Activity Providers (AAPs) (DOFE008)

Approved Activity Providers are organisations that are licensed by the Duke of Edinburgh's Award to offer one or more sections of the Award to participants, usually the Expedition or

Residential sections. AAPs are still subject to the same requirements as Buckinghamshire centres – an Evolve form must be submitted and is subject to SE DofE approval and all ratios listed in this document must be met. **An establishment staff member is still required to be present at all times for pastoral support.** The AAP Process Map below will show the procedures:



10. The Variation Process (DOFE009)

Where participants have individual needs that mean one or more of the 20 Conditions cannot be met, they may apply for a variation to enable them to complete their DofE expedition.

The Expedition Variations application form must be submitted at least 12 weeks before the planned expedition, and after discussion with the relevant Operations Officer.

If the variation is for an overseas expedition, then advice should be sought as soon as possible.

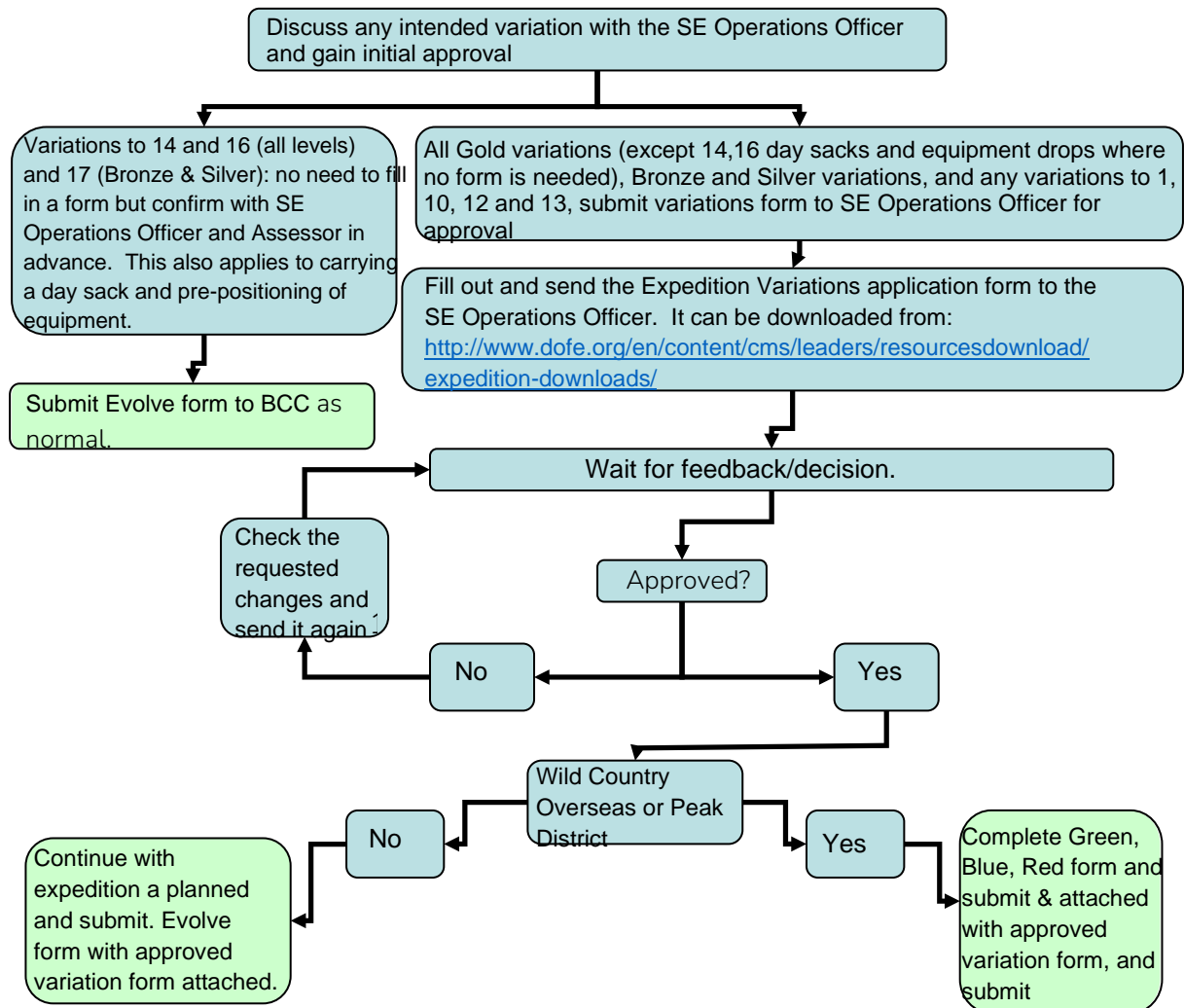
The process requests centres to provide:

- An explanation as to why one or more of the conditions cannot be met
- A suitable alternative plan that leads to minimal impact
- Additional risk management (where appropriate)

Some examples of reasons to apply for variation are:

- A participant who is unable to carry a full expedition rucksack for medical reasons
- A participant who requires a carer or worker to support for the duration
- Where a participant is unable to safely cook and requires a member of staff to support

Whatever the variation involves the following steps should be followed:



11. Evolve & Notification (DOFE010)

For expedition events to count towards a participant's DofE Award the expedition must be approved through EVOLVE.

Timeframes:

12. The event should be submitted by the Principal at least 4 weeks prior to it taking place.

13. Late submission of an expedition event may result in it not being approved. If an event is not approved then it will not count towards a participant's DofE Award.

Important Information:

- For centres undertaking expeditions abroad notification should go to the Academy's designated trips manager and the Local Authority as soon as the planning process is initiated.
- The 'Visit Leader' must be a school staff member, even when using an External Provider. The 'Visit Leader' is the school employee responsible for the pastoral duty of care the school owes its students. They should be present throughout the expedition.
- When naming the event include the level of the award, status of the event, centre name and note if it is an overseas expedition.
- If it is an assessed expedition the "accredited assessors" should be detailed in the staff documents with their assessor number.
- Variation forms should be attached onto the EVOLVE form as directed.

The Regional DofE team will be as supportive with this process as possible and advise that those who are unfamiliar with the system start the process as early as possible. The local Operations Officer should be contacted to check requirements.

EVOLVE attachments:

The following documents should be attached to the form:

14. Event Specific Plans **including location specific risk assessments**

- DofE Expedition Staff Information Form (qualifications/experience)
- Variation Forms (as appropriate)
- Incident Reports (as appropriate)

- 14.1.1. *Daily report forms are not compulsory for any centre event but are a good way of summarising each day of the expedition and consolidating all the information to one location. This must be done by the Visit Leader if not completed by the AAP.
- 14.1.2. In addition to this Expedition Leaders should ensure they review their EVOLVE forms within 2 weeks of returning from the event.

Please see the 'Evolve Form DofE Guidance Notes' document for more information.

15. Abbreviations & Terminology

AALA – Adventurous Activity Licensing Authority: An organisation that is part of the Health & Safety Executive. AAPs must hold an AALA licence to offer expeditions in Wild Country.

Assessor Network – A panel covering each ‘Wild Country’ area within the UK. Centres must notify each area using Red, Green and Blue forms at least 6 weeks prior to the expedition. In addition, they can provide access to assessors if required (formerly – ‘Wild Country Panel’).

BEAL – Basic Expedition Assistant Leader: A nationally recognised qualification, NVQ Level 2. Governing Body is Sports Leader UK

BEL – Basic Expedition Leader: A nationally recognised qualification, NVQ Level 3. Governing body is Sports Leader UK.

Centre/Unit: Chiltern Hills Academy, Direct Licensed Organisation.

CHA – Chiltern Hills Academy (also referred to as the Establishment within this policy)

CLA – Countryside Leaders Award: A regionally recognised qualification. Governing body Strong Roots Training.

Close Supervision – where the Supervisor is close enough to intervene, if necessary, in order to offer support and guidance and/or to stop mistakes being made. (Ref: DofE Expedition Guide:13th Edition p.165).

Daily Report Form – A form used to note ‘clear days,’ minor incidents, notes of importance for expeditions (see appendix 3).

Direct Supervision – where the Supervisor is in direct contact with the team and is accompanying them.

(Ref: DofE Expedition Guide:13th Edition p.165).

DofE – Duke of Edinburgh’s Award

Expedition Team – Must be between 4-7 participants.

Expedition Variation – where participants have individual needs that mean one or more of the 20 conditions cannot be met (Ref: DofE Expedition Guide:13th Edition p.14 and *The 20 conditions of the Expedition Section* – www.dofe.org).

Incident Report Form – A form attached to the ‘Serious Incident Cards’ found on EVOLVE, used to note details of severe incidents/crises.

HML – Hill & Moorland Leader: A nationally recognised qualification. Governing body is the Mountain Leader Training Board. Replaces the Walking Group Leader award.

LLA – Lowland Leader Award. A nationally recognised qualification. Governing body is the Mountain Leader Training Board. This must include the Expedition Skills Module.

ML – Mountain Leader: A nationally recognised qualification. Governing body is the Mountain Leader Training Board.

MOD – Ministry of Defence.

NGB – National Governing Body. An organisation that administers an award such as the Mountain Leader Award.

Ratios

Please read ratios carefully and understand that at times ratios refer to the number of staff to participants and at other times refer to the number of staff to groups.

Staff to participants will always be written in this format **1 : 7**

Staff to groups will always be written in this format **one to four**

Remote Supervision – Where the Supervisor remains out of site and hearing of the team and allows them to get on with the expedition without any intervention. (Ref: DofE Expedition Guide: 13th Edition p.165).

SLT – The Senior Leadership Team at Chiltern Hills Academy

Supervision Plan – A form designed by the DofE for noting potential supervision options for groups, the form can be downloaded from the DofE website (www.dofe.org). This should be used in conjunction with the location specific risk assessment.

SE- South East Regional Office, Duke of Edinburgh

Unit Agreement (formerly SLA) – is an agreement between the South East Regional Office and Chiltern Hills Academy.

16. Safeguarding and Staff-Student interactions on Duke of Edinburgh's Award expeditions

16.1.1. For the safety and safeguarding of staff and students there will be a minimum of one member of Chiltern Hills Academy staff available during expeditions this staff member is referred to as the Visit Leader and will typically be the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Coordinator or Manager. However, the role can be fulfilled by any Experienced Adult (see definition in document DOFE002 above) who is employed by CHA. In the case where the Visit Leader is unable to attend or is required to leave the expedition, then a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will attend the expedition or appoint an alternative Visit Leader to fulfil the role.

16.1.2. Should there be a safeguarding concern, or an allegation be made against a member of CHA staff, disclosure or any other safeguarding related issue, then the CHA safeguarding procedures should be followed as outlined in the Safeguarding policy document. Evolve emergency procedures should also be followed if the situation requires immediate action or changes the risk assessments for the visit. The Visit Leader or a delegated CHA staff member should contact the DSL using the number in the Incident Response card being carried by all members of the expedition staff team. The DSL will then liaise with SLT, the Expedition Leader, Visit Leader and the student's parents as appropriate. The member of staff or the student(s) may be required to leave the expedition and a member of SLT will attend on behalf of the staff member, or an alternative delegated. If the Visit Leader is required to leave the expedition then SLT will delegate a suitably qualified member of CHA staff to be put into the position of Visit Leader for the remaining duration of the expedition or as otherwise directed by SLT.

Staff involved in a safeguarding incident are not to discuss the matter with anyone unless directed to do so by the DSL. In the event of the DSL being unavailable, then the Principal must be contacted and they will implement the safeguarding procedure.

16.1.3. If a student is unwell overnight during the expedition, then a minimum of two expedition staff members (which can include AAP staff) will wake to assist with the student's needs. This should include the CHA Visit Leader where possible, to support the Expedition Leader or other AAP staff with the overnight issue.

All adults attending the expedition must, as a minimum have received training in line with the latest Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) document and be appropriately DBS checked. All CHA staff must have received and read part one of KCSIE.

During DofE Expeditions, there is the potential for situations to arise which could lead to staff being in a one-to-one situation with a student. Wherever possible, this should be avoided or minimised through other students or staff being present. If an unavoidable situation arises that leads to staff and students being in a one-to-one situation, the staff member must, at the earliest opportunity, inform the Expedition Leader of the situation. The staff member should stay in regular and frequent contact with the Expedition Leader and/or another staff member present on the expedition. Any situation should then be recorded on the daily record sheet and SLT informed via the agreed communication channel at the first available opportunity.

16.1.4. At no time should a student be alone in a tent overnight or other form of accommodation overnight as part of a DofE expedition without prior agreement with the parents/guardians and written approval by the Principal or DSL. This is to prevent any allegation being made of overnight incidents where there would be no other student present to refute an allegation.

Adults present during DofE expeditions must at all times act in an appropriate manner in line with the CHA policies for adults working with students. Adults present in a position of responsibility on DofE expeditions must not drink alcohol at any point during the expedition. CHA staff members should report any concerns about inappropriate behaviour to the Expedition Leader. If the concern involves the Expedition Leader, then the AAP manager should be contacted and SLT informed immediately to seek guidance as to whether the expedition can continue.

16.1.5. Keeping SLT Updated During Expeditions

The Visit Leader will maintain, as a minimum, the following contact with SLT or other relevant CHA staff members through an appropriate means (e.g. CHA email addresses or a dedicated trip WhatsApp group):

- Daily confirmation that all groups have departed safely from their daily start point
- Daily confirmation that all groups have arrived safely at the destination (typically a campsite)
- End of expedition confirmation that all students have been safely handed over to adults with parental responsibility (or are no longer in CHA *loco parentis* as per an agreed alternative such as a parent confirming that they can walk home from the pick-up point).
- Any and all concerns throughout the expedition which may lead to an emergency situation.
- Any other relevant communication deemed necessary by the Visit Leader to ensure the expedition runs safely.

16.1.6. Emergency Contact for Parents/Guardians

The Visit Leader will be available 24/7 (or will delegate another CHA member of staff) during the expedition through a CHA owned emergency trip phone. The trip phone should be carried at all times and remain charged throughout the expedition. The number should be communicated to parents/guardians prior to the commencement of the expedition.