

10 September 2025

Dear families

We're excited about the upcoming bronze Duke of Edinburgh assessed expedition, which will take place on **27 and 28 September 2025**. Participants will paddle **from Adventure Cave to Hollinwood Scout Campsite in Boothstown** for this expedition.

After reaching the canal's end point, it will be a **20-minute walk to the campsite**. To protect belongings from the rain, **everything must be packed inside the rucksack and properly waterproofed**, with the **exception of the foam sleeping mat**, which can be carried externally. We have spare expedition rucksacks available, which can be taken home the night before the expedition.

Here is an update about the weather forecast for our assessed expedition. The weather is looking very mixed for both days, with a high of 21°C and some rain during the day (make sure you have sunscreen) and a low of 11°C. Please can you support your child with choosing the appropriate clothing for this weather forecast. However, please check the BBC weather forecast for the 'Altrincham' and 'Boothstown' area as we approach the assessment weekend, as the weather is likely to change.

In addition to walking boots, trainers can only be worn for walking around the campsite. Your child will need a personal first aid kit for the expedition.

Due to the **nature of the assessment**, your child will need a **good water supply with them** on the route, we have planned for water stations from which your child can refill. Please check your child has at least one bottle with a wide neck so that water refilling is easier. I suggest at least two one-litre bottles as these fit more easily into the rucksack.

Please check before the expedition trips that your child is sufficiently prepared. They must pack their own equipment, but you must ensure that they have included the essential kit list, sufficient food and any personal medication. Anyone arriving without the minimum kit will not be allowed to participate for safety reasons, and parents will be expected to collect participants if such a situation arises. **The weight of your child's rucksack should be a maximum of 25% of your child's body weight.**

Grip Expedition will be supplying group equipment for your child to use which includes: tents, stoves & gas, emergency equipment and maps.

Please see below for a summary of essential information, expectations, and equipment:

Expedition Overview

The first day will involve journeying towards camp with an instructor and during which, your child will be guided through various paddling techniques. On the second day, they will each have a turn at navigating either with direct support from their instructor, or under supervision via a series of checkpoints.

This expedition also gives them the opportunity to practise using essential kit such as a Trangia stove and to evaluate the contents of their rucksack. Mistakes are expected and embraced —they are an important part of the learning journey. Staff will be there throughout to offer support, guidance and encouragement. With their best effort and willingness to learn, your child will be well-placed for success during their expedition.

Expedition location

For the assessed expedition we will be camping at Hollinwood Scout campsite located in Boothstown, Worsley.

For the assessment

We are going to **meet at 10am on Saturday 27 September** at the Adventure Cave, Britannia Road, Sale, M33 2AA. **Collection is on Sunday 28 September** from Adventure Cave for **approximately 16:00**, Britannia Road, Sale, M33 2AA.

For a smoother drop-off and pick-up process, we suggest parking in a safe location nearby and walking to the collection area. To help minimize traffic congestion, car sharing is encouraged where possible.

Food

We have a **nut-free food policy**, we would like to remind you that your **child should not bring any food products that contain nuts**. Please ensure that you check all products, in particular breakfast and protein bars.

Your child will need to have two lunches, one breakfast and one evening meal (this meal will need to be a cooked meal). Please discuss with your child their experiences from the training day and support them with planning their meal options as required.

Food should be:

- Easy to cook
- Light to carry
- High in energy

When putting together a menu, please consider the following:

- **Weight:** Avoid bringing multiple packets of ingredients. Keep it simple and compact.
- **Durability & Suitability:** Choose food that will last throughout the trip and is appropriate for outdoor cooking.
- **Caloric Intake:** Participants will be active all day for two days. Meals should provide sustained energy—balance quick sugars with slow-release carbohydrates. (Tip: Haribo alone won't fuel an expedition!)
- **Emergency Rations:** Each participant must reserve a small amount of food in case of emergencies. This could be a small packet of sweets and a breakfast bar. Supervisors/assessors may ask to see these rations at the end of the expedition.

Your child has at least one bottle with a wide neck so that refilling water is easier. I would suggest a wide-neck bottle that holds about two litres of water (or two one litre bottles) as these fit easier into the rucksack.

Cooking and Camp Setup

Efficient cooking and camp setup help make the experience smoother, especially in wet conditions. For example, one person can cook while others pitch the tent—ensuring everyone gets warm and dry quickly.

We highly recommend cooking in small groups. Preparing a shared evening meal is far simpler and more efficient than cooking individually.

Personal Kit – each participant should have the following for the expedition:

- Food
- Personal clothing
- Approach shoes or suitable footwear for canoeing each day
- Expedition rucksack
- Sleeping bag
- Waterproof coat and trousers
- Personal first aid kits which should include blister plasters
- Personal kit e.g. clothing, head torch and cutlery

Personal Clothing Guidance

There is no need to invest in specialist or expensive gear, but thoughtful clothing choices can make a big difference. We advise checking the weather forecast before departure and packing accordingly. We encourage your child to bring one main outfit and at least one spare to ensure comfort throughout the expedition.

- Warm hat or sun cap – Depending on weather conditions
- Mid-layer such as a fleece – Helps retain warmth after exertion
- Lightweight tops – thin long-sleeved tops, sports t-shirts or polo shirts are ideal, the latter offering neck protection
- Good quality leggings or light tracksuit bottoms – Comfortable and practical for paddling and walking
- Optional shorts – Suitable in warmer weather. Please keep in mind countryside paths may include nettles
- Socks – One pair per day; lightweight walking socks are preferable

Group Kit (Between the team members)

- Washing up - pan scourer & washing up liquid — small bottle of washing up liquid in a ziplock bag.
- Tea towel – a small microfibre cloth is best.
- Food – team meals all packed in ziplock bags labelled for each day / meal. Remove excess packaging. Ensure nothing needs refrigeration.
- Plastic bags – to hold rubbish or wet clothes.

Please discuss with your child the following questions to support them with preparing for the expedition.

What are they planning for their meal options for lunch?

We recommend packed lunches during the day for ease.

What are they planning to cook for their evening meal?

We recommend a pasta-based meal.

Whether their packed rucksack is too heavy?

Try packing items that distribute the weight heavier at the bottom and evenly across both shoulders.

Observations from previous years

For the evening meal - we would suggest choosing a meal option that has a good balance of nutrition which is high in carbohydrates. If your child is choosing to fry items for cooking, they will need to bring oil with them to avoid the food catching to the pan.

We would like to recommend that you check your child has the following:

- Something warm for breakfast like instant porridge or a cold breakfast item like brioche
- Camping roll mat - The low-cost option is a foam roll mat which offers a layer of comfort and insulation between you and the cold floor that will help your child get a better night sleep.
- Stuff sacks / rucksack liner / large bin bag – sleeping bags and spare clothes MUST be waterproofed. High quality bin bags, a selection of rubble bags, nylon 'dry' bags or a combination of all of these are the best ways of keeping their kit dry.
- Sunscreen and mosquito repellent.
- Plastic bags - for rubbish or wet clothes.
- Food items are nut-free – we have people who have nut allergies, please check food products and labels.
- Wide-neck water bottle – 2 litre bottles are best, wide neck for ease of refilling.
- To remember to pack personal hygiene products.
- To pack a couple of tea towels – small microfibre cloths are best.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me on AMartin@dixonsbk.com.

Yours faithfully

Mr A Martin
Duke of Edinburgh Manager