

The Compass Award

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

GENERAL AWARD REQUIREMENTS:

- Q - Can I start the Award before I am 10 years old?
A - No. Students must be 10 years of age to be included in the insurance cover.
- Q - I am in Year 7 and I wish to commence the Award. Do I have to work through Levels 1 and 2 before I start Level 3?
A - No. You can go straight into Level 3, although you can do levels 1 and 2 if you have time.
- Q - Is there a special starting date?
A - No. You can commence the Award at any date, but obviously, if you wish to complete a level within the school year, the sooner you start, the better.
- Q - When do I have to finish?
A - You should aim to complete Level 4 by your 14th birthday.
- Q - Can I do two levels at the one time?
A - No. You must complete one level at a time. Generally you should aim to complete one level each year, so that by the time you are 14, you are old enough to start your Duke of Edinburgh's Award Bronze level
- Q - Does the time I've spent on Level 3 count towards the time I will have to spend on activities in Level 4?
A - No. Each level is separate.
- Q - I've lost my book. What should I do about getting a new one?
A - Ask your teacher to contact the Award office, so that a replacement can be sent to you.

ACTIVITIES – GENERAL:

- Q - Do the activities I choose have to be done via a club or outside school organisation?
A - NO, but you need to consult with your teacher about what is the best course of action. An adult with specific experience or skills may be able to help you.
- Q - What about school subjects and electives?
A - The aim of the Award is to challenge you and to extend your skills and build confidence. You will need to go outside your day to day 'comfort zone'. Therefore whilst you may use a school activity you should demonstrate that you have done something extra in your own time.
- Q - Can I do the same activities from year to year?
A - You can stay with the same activity, but you must show you are improving and building on skills. However, the spirit of the Award is to try new things and seek new challenges and you should always look on each new level as an opportunity to commence something new.
- Q - Can I change the activity half way through a level?
A - You are encouraged to stick at something as long as possible. However, if the activity is proving to be a disaster, you may change. We want you to have fun, but before you change, discuss the matter with your teacher and parents. There may be a way of modifying the first activity so that you can complete the requirements.



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Dec 2010

- Q - Can I count one activity for different parts of the Award?
 A - YES, but you need to ensure that each section has a different emphasis and that you don't double count any time you spend on the activity. However, you are strongly urged to try something new, which offers different challenges. Move out of that 'comfort zone'.
- Q - How do I tell if my activity is counted as Volunteering rather than a Hobbies/ Skill?
 A - The important element of Volunteering, is that you are helping someone else. The Hobbies/ Skill section is for you to improve something for yourself.
- Q - How do I tell if my activity is counted as Physical Activity or a Skill?
 A - Physical Activity should increase your heart rate or physical strength, whereas a Skill increases your knowledge and understanding. It is a more passive activity or hobby.

ACTIVITIES – SPECIFIC:

- Q - Is a first aid course counted as a Skill or Volunteering?
 A - Volunteering, because the purpose of the course is to enable you to help others.
- Q - Is ballet (or any type of dancing) counted as a Skill/ Hobbies or Physical Activity?
 A - The performance of dance is Physical Recreation, as you are moving around, getting fitter, and increasing your heart rate. To be included as a Skill your efforts would need to be more passive e.g. you could concentrate on the theory or history of ballet or choreography.
- Q - Is calisthenics counted as a Skill or Physical Activity?
 A - As for ballet/dance. You are becoming fitter through your involvement.
- Q - Is yoga a Skill or Activity?
 A - As for ballet and dance.
- Q - Can I count umpiring as Volunteering?
 A - Yes, as long as you are not being paid for your work.
- Q - Can I count umpiring as Physical Activity?
 A - Yes, if the purpose of doing it is to increase your fitness level and it is done without payment.
- Q - Can I count the LOTE subject I am learning at school as my Skill?
 A - Yes, but you would need to go beyond the classroom and homework activities set by your teacher. You could correspond with a pen-friend, meet a local group or do a project on the country. Discuss the requirements with your teacher first.

ASSESSMENT:

- Q - Who can assess me?
 A - You should work this through with your teacher. It should be someone who has special knowledge or experience of your activity and can report on your progress.
- Q - Can my parents be my assessors?
 A - It is recommended that you go beyond your family whenever possible. However, for some activities your parents may be the obvious choice because they have been with you as an escort on an excursion or walk, but you should still speak to a teacher about how they can .
- Q - Can my peers be my assessors?
 A - No, but they may be involved with your instruction.
- Q - Can my brother or sister be my assessor if they are doing the Gold level of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award?
 A - No, except in special circumstances. You should seek advice from your teacher.



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EXPLORATIONS (SPECIFIC TO LEVEL 4):

- Q - Can I count camping with my family?
A - Yes, provided that you take on a major role in leading and organising the activity and that your parents have a suitable level of experience.
- Q - Can I stay in a caravan park or Youth Hostel?
A - Yes, however it is recommended that you experience living in a tent.
- Q - Do school camps count?
A - Yes they can, provided they meet the Award requirements and you play a significant part in your planning, training and preparation. A school camp, which merely uses huts and prepared meals, would not qualify.
- Q - Is traveling from school to our camp destination counted in the time requirement?
A - No. The activity commences when you start walking with your pack, get into the kayak or hop on to your bike.
- Q - Do I need to tell anyone about my trip?
A - Yes, for your own safety and preparation you need to inform and discuss the plans with your parents and coordinator. Get parent permission forms signed, if your parents are not accompanying you. You should also inform park rangers and police if going into remote areas. If you inform them before you go, please let them know when you return.
- Q - Who is in charge of the expedition?
A - In the first instance, your leader, or Award coordinator has the overall responsibility. The Award office expects that the leader or instructor properly prepares you for the expedition by providing training beforehand. They, along with the school coordinator, have the ultimate responsibility for approving the trip and allowing it to go ahead. If there is concern about safety, they have the right to call off the trip until conditions or circumstances improve. On the trip you and your peers may decide to elect a participant leader, who makes consultative decisions on general matters e.g. where to set up tents, when to eat.
- Q - What do I need to do for my report?
A - Apart from writing brief details about the purpose and results of the trip in your Record Book, you should collect data and other information during your travels. Remember that your trip should not just be a journey, but a specific mission to learn something new. It may be that your special report (which can be oral, written or photographic) will research a special area of interest e.g. geology or history of the terrain.

CHANGING SCHOOLS:

- Q - What should I do if I change schools?
A - As you are the registered participant you can continue to complete the components in another school which is operating the Award. Please ask your teacher to contact the Award office so that your records can be amended. It may also be possible to complete the Award as an independent.

You will need to seek advice from the Award Office.



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