



Heathfield School Duke of Edinburgh Award



ADVICE SHEET

EXPEDITION CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT

This sheet aims to provide practical advice on what to wear and what not to wear during expeditions. It is based on practical experience and everything that is suggested has been tried and tested.

CLOTHING

Footwear. Footwear is critical and can mean the difference between success and failure on an expedition.

a. **Walking Socks.**

- Please do not use cotton sport socks or socks with a high nylon content, these will not provide cushioning and will generate hotspots, especially if there is a lot of ascent/descent.
- Walking socks are specially designed to provide cushioning and to wick moisture away from the foot. Badly worn or holed socks should not be worn as they will not provide the correct level of cushioning resulting in hotspots or blistering.
- Ideally pupils should carry enough for a clean pair on each day of the expedition but a minimum of 2 pairs.

b. **Walking Boots.** Boots are very much a personal item; the critical things are comfort and support. Remember you will be wearing them for 6-9 hours per day!

- Walking boots will have tough soles giving good grip on muddy or loose ground and ankle support. Ideal for more strenuous hill walking and rougher terrain. They are generally made from leather or a treated suede and fabric combination such as Goretex. Leather boots are tough and hard-wearing but can be heavy. Fabric boots are lightweight and breathable but sometimes don't last as long.
- When choosing a boot remember that it is possible to customise the fit of a boot that is too large but it is virtually impossible to do anything about a boot that is too small. I strongly recommend seeking advice and getting boots properly fitted. Always wear a pair of walking socks when trying walking boots. In the likely event that a perfect fit is not possible go for a boot slightly bigger than normal shoe size as boots are best worn with a pair of walking socks.
- When correctly fitted (always wear walking socks when trying on) boots should be snugly fitting at the heel and your toes should not push against the front of the boot when tested in a 'down hill' mode. Correct lacing is also essential so that the boot fits snugly, and to prevent 'forward slip' and reduce friction which will cause blisters.
- Insoles can also help a boot fit better, adding shock absorption and comfort.

- Even the best fitting boot will not give maximum performance unless it is correctly laced up. Correct lacing ensures that the boot fits snugly and will prevent 'forward slip' of the foot in the boot and will reduce friction that could otherwise lead to blisters:
 - When lacing the boot ensure that you start from the toe and gradually tension the lace between each set of hooks. Lace locks allow for the tension to be held over the fore foot whilst giving a separate level of adjustment and tension around the ankle of the boot.
 - Be prepared to adjust your lacing as you go. It is common to find that you need to re-tension the lacing after a short distance, even in boots that have been well broken-in. Also the foot shape will adjust during the day with temperature, terrain and load carried.
- Always 'break' boots in if you can. Modern boots will usually feel comfortable from new but it is important that the uppers soften and the boots mould to your foot. Wear them for short distances and progressively lengthen the walks. NEVER be tempted to take new boots and go out for a long trip in them. Break them in over time and always wear your usual sock combination with them.
- Note that trainers are not an acceptable alternative as they do not provide adequate ankle support when carrying weight on steep ground. You will not be allowed to come on an expedition wearing trainers.

Clothing.

- a. **What to Wear.** The most effective way to stay warm is to stay dry and to wear a number of thin layers rather than one or two thick layers.
- **Outer Jacket and Trousers.** An outer jacket and trousers are essential items and critical pieces of safety equipment.
 - The biggest threat when hill walking is from the wind and wet so both items should be both waterproof and windproof. Waterproofs should be put on **before** the base and/or mid layer are allowed to get wet.
 - The majority of jackets will be made of a breathable Gore-Tex type fabric, although heavy duty, impermeable waterproofs are still available.
 - Colour is not important, although bright colours will make you easier to spot in an emergency and in bad weather.
 - Shower proof sports tops provide neither the level of water or wind proofing required, and you will not be allowed to come on an expedition with this type of jacket.
 - Waterproof trousers should be able to be pulled on without having to take off boots. Long leg zips will aid this.
 - **Warm Clothing.** The most effective method is to use many thin layers rather than fewer thick layers.
 - A thermal vest which will wick moisture away from the skin is ideal, although not essential.
 - Other layers should include a shirt and a jumper or fleece top.
 - Regardless of the season always take a warm hat and pair of gloves. Even at the height of summer the combination of wind and rain can make it feel very cold.

- Remember that as you are walking you will generate heat. If it is a cold day set off wearing your layers, but as you warm up then take a 'sweat stop' to take off a layer. Remember to put away properly whatever you take off so it does not get wet if it starts to rain. Don't just tuck the items under the lid of your rucksack.
- **Trousers.**
 - Tracksuit trousers and jeans are often the less suitable types of trousers as they will become very heavy and uncomfortable when they get wet and will not easily dry.
 - Light cargo trousers can be good.

b. **How Much to Take.** The same rule applies throughout the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, regardless of level:

- Take at least 2 pairs of socks, one for each day of the expedition.
- Take one set of dry clothing to wear in your tent at the end of the day.
- Take one set of clothing to wear for walking.
- If the 'walking' set gets wet then when you have put your tent up and finished cooking in the evening change into your dry set and try and dry the wet set as best you can. Regardless of degrees of success wear your 'wet' set again the following day to walk in. Under no circumstances be tempted to wear your dry set; if the weather is good your wet set will dry quickly and you won't be carrying wet, heavy clothes, if the weather is bad you will avoid having 2 sets of heavy, wet clothing and nothing warm and dry to put on in the event of an emergency.

EQUIPMENT

Medical and Emergency Equipment. You will need the following items when things don't go according to plan:

First Aid Kit (waterproofed)
 Whistle – for attracting attention
 Emergency food rations (NOT to be eaten until the end!)
 Suncream (SPF 15+)
 Insect repellent

Eating Equipment. You will need to take the following items:

Spoon (and knife and fork)
 Plastic plate or bowl
 Plastic mug
 Brillo pad or scourer.

Water. The amount of water you carry will depend on the time of year and access to water. You should have at least one 1L water bottle.

Miscellaneous Items. The following items are easy to forget and difficult to live without:

Wash kit (minimal)
 Towel (small)
 Torch & spare battery (head torch is best)
 Notebook & pen/pencil
 Small pocket knife
 Box of matches/lighter (sealed in a dry container or bag)
 Plastic bags (for rubbish etc.)