



# Supporting Award Participants – For Parents and Guardians

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Supporting Award Participants – For Parents and Guardians is designed to inform parents and guardians of behavioral expectations as they support their young person’s Award experience and when interacting with Award volunteers and staff.

The Duke of Edinburgh’s International Award - Canada is committed to providing its participants with the very best experiential learning experience possible. Fundamental to this is a clear understanding of the roles adults play.

The Award is a self-directed, personal journey for young people ages 14-24. Participants are encouraged to examine themselves, their interests, abilities, and ambitions, then set challenging SMART goals in the different areas of personal development. Through persistence and determination, they work at their own pace to overcome challenges and achieve their goals, without any element of competition.

Parents and Guardians can be integral supporters for young people working towards their Award. So much so that we have developed these engagement guidelines for the parents and guardians of Award participants.

More information on how to best support young people in achieving their Award can be found on our [Parent and Guardian webpage](#).

## Contacting Award Leaders and the Support Centre for assistance:

Award participants are supported by trained adult volunteers known as Award Leaders. It is the role of an Award Leader to mentor young people through their personal development journey. Their Award Leader will help them navigate resources, organize, set, and achieve goals; research, analyze, think critically, question and challenge, make decisions and evaluate risks.

The Award framework is based on the principals of self-development and personal achievement for young people. As such, in keeping with the spirit of the Award, it is our hope that young people will contact their Award Leaders, or the Support Centre themselves when they require guidance in carrying out their Award activities.

Ideally, when young people need to reach out, parents and guardians **can support by coaching them in communicating** via phone, email, online, or in person. The Award is a phenomenal opportunity for young people to learn how to take responsibility, seek help, and find solutions. Award Leaders and the Support Centre Award Specialists are friendly, open, and trained in supporting young people navigating the Award.

Participants can always find their Award Leader’s contact information by logging into their Online Record Book and clicking on “My Award Leader”.

## Award requirements:

The Award is an internationally recognized standard of leadership excellence for young people and its framework reflects this. As such, we expect adults to support participants by upholding these standards and complete their activities in the spirit of the Award. Award Centres, Leaders, and staff are duty-bound to uphold the standards and requirements of The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award.

## Overcoming adversities and challenges while doing the Award:

In some cases, a young person who sets out to achieve the Award may decide to stop for a while, and that is ok. There are many unexpected occurrences that happen in life which result in activities being put on hold. In many cases participants do pick the Award back up and continue where they left off, often learning how to overcome adversity and problem solve when life surprises them.

\*Remember, the Award is a marathon, not a sprint, and they have until their 25th birthday to complete their activities.

An integral part of the Award is setting SMART goals, and sometimes participants may find them to be overwhelming, or even unachievable, in the moment. Encourage them to work with their Award Leader or Assessors, discuss these goals, and even reset them so they feel attainable.

The role of Award Leaders, and other adult mentors in the Award, is to facilitate each participant to make their own decisions. Their Award Leader will discuss when to meet and how to stay in communication, but ultimately, participants are responsible for taking initiative to communicate regularly with their Award Leader and their section Assessors.

**Your support, guidance, encouragement, and understanding are some of the elements that help equip young people for the life ahead of them. While no other person can understand a young person's strengths and weaknesses better than their parent or guardian, remember, the Award journey belongs to them.**

## Interaction with Award Leaders:

A young person's Award experience is considerably influenced by the adult involved in it, of which an Award Leader plays a significant role. We are committed to ensuring high quality training is in place for Award Leaders who deliver our framework. It is the competence and confidence of our Award Leaders that provides inspirational, quality experiences for the thousands of young people who aim to achieve the Award.

We are deeply grateful for the adults involved in delivering the Award, as without their hard work and dedication, there is no Award. For many of these individuals, the role is voluntary and often goes above and beyond other priorities such as a full-time job or family life. It takes time for an Award Leader to support and mentor participants. Balancing one's time with multiple priorities can be a challenge for anyone, and your patience and understanding is greatly appreciated.

As a parent or guardian, your role is to assist the Award Leader in nurturing the following qualities: self-reliance, self-esteem, self-efficacy, capacity to act in one's own interest and need, self-belief and the ability to shape their own life and the world around them.

All persons involved with The Award, including parents and guardians, in Canada are expected to abide by the [General Standards of Behaviour], whether engaged in online, in-person or remote activities.

Breaches of these standards may result in internal or external investigation and may lead to disciplinary or administrative action. By reading our [Parent and Guardian webpage](#) and this [Supporting Award Participants – For Parents and Guardians](#) you are ensuring a wholesome, well-rounded and fun Award Experience for everyone.

Below is a list of behaviors which have previously been found to be detrimental to effective mentor/participant relationships and which also disrupt the experiential learning process. The behaviors listed below are just a few examples and are not an exhaustive list.

- Abusive, threatening, profane or harassing communication, either in person or online, by e-mail, chat, voicemail, phone, or other written or verbal communication.
- Disruptive behaviour that interferes or threatens to interfere with the participants Award experience, such as seeking access to, accessing and/or completing your young person's Online Record Book, or undermining the Award Leader/participant mentorship relationship.
- Excessive e-mails, chat, voicemails, phone messages, or other written or oral communication with unsubstantiated complaints about Award volunteers and staff, and unrealistic expectations or demands by parents and guardians.
- Excessive e-mails, chat, voicemails, phone messages, or other written or oral communication to Award volunteers and staff in disagreement of Award standards and requirements.
- Differences of opinion and personality clashes within your young person's Award Center or Award Leader are not resolved by Award staff. You are expected to resolve issues through calm dialogue between the parties directly involved while, at all times, respecting the dignity of others.

If you have a concern about an Award Leader, we encourage you to speak with the Award Centre to try and rectify the situation. Please make sure to read our [Parent and Guardian webpage](#) to ensure a wholesome, well rounded, and fun Award Experience for everyone.

As always, we appreciate your support of our experiential learning framework, specifically developed to ensure young people see their infinite potential and are #WorldReady.