

# Children's University Start-up Guide for Schools

Inspiring children to discover  
their potential



“It’s very exciting  
and it gives me  
an opportunity  
to improve my  
education”



## What is the Children’s University?

Children’s University is a charity that works in partnership with schools to develop a love of learning in children. We do this by encouraging and celebrating participation in extra-curricular activities in and outside of school. The impact of these activities is proven to be positive which is why we’re committed to creating a level playing field of opportunity and opening up access to children of all backgrounds.

## The Need for Children’s University

Research shows that participation in extra-curricular activities can positively impact on attainment, increase a pupil’s positive identification with school, and build self-confidence and resilience. Research also shows that children that do not have access to these opportunities fall behind, lack confidence, and fail to develop career aspirations. The resulting attainment gap is so significant that 25% of children from the most disadvantaged backgrounds achieve below expected attainment levels

### Key outcomes we want for every child

For every child that takes part in Children’s University, we want the following outcomes:

- ▶ They feel they have grown in confidence and self-belief
- ▶ They have enjoyed new experiences, in new places and want to keep exploring
- ▶ They believe they have a broader range of essential skills
- ▶ They feel empowered to make positive choices about their future
- ▶ They see learning that is fun, aspirational and lifelong
- ▶ They feel their eyes have been opened to a multiplicity of learning activities and opportunities
- ▶ They feel celebrated for their commitment to learning by their family, school and community.

## The difference we make

To find out more about the difference we make to children and young people across the UK, please visit <https://childrensuniversity.co.uk/about-us> where you can find numerous impact reports and evaluations as well as our State of the Nation report.

## How does it work?

CU members take their Passport to Learning to validated Learning Destinations who will issue a stamp code to show attendance at their activities.

Children and parents will be given access to CU Online, a digital platform where Learning Hours and certificates can be tracked. Children are awarded certificates upon reaching a Bronze Award (30 hours), Silver Award (65 hours) and Gold Award (100 hours). On achievement of a Gold Award, children are invited to graduate at a formal ceremony wearing a cap and gown.

From there, children can progress to Certificate (130, 165 and 200 hours), Diploma (230, 265 and 300 hours) and Degree Level (330, 365, 400 hours) and even further!

## What are the benefits?

Key findings from a report by Tiller Research Ltd on behalf of the University of Wolverhampton (September 2018) recognised the following benefits of Children's University participation:

- ▶ An increased engagement with and enjoyment of learning, in particular amongst those with a lower level of engagement
- ▶ An increase in the number and breadth of extra-curricular activities undertaken
- ▶ An increase in the level of awareness of university, and the perceived relevance of university to participants
- ▶ A broadening of aspirations, with a greater awareness of possible future options





# CU Online

Children's University have introduced **Children's University Online** – a new digital platform that's a fun, safe and secure online space for participants to record what they're doing. Children will be able to use this alongside their Passport to Learning, collecting stamps in their passports that can then be posted online where they'll unlock additional information about their activities.

It's great for children and families, schools, and makes it easier for learning providers to get their activities validated.

## For children and families

Children will collect stamp codes in their Passport to Learning that they can then add online. By adding their codes to Children's University Online they'll unlock further information showing them the interests and skills they're developing through participation. All children will have their very own dashboard which will help them see how they're progressing towards the next award level; reflect on the skills they're building and help them find new activities. There are also online-only exclusive badges that can be collected between graduations.

## For schools

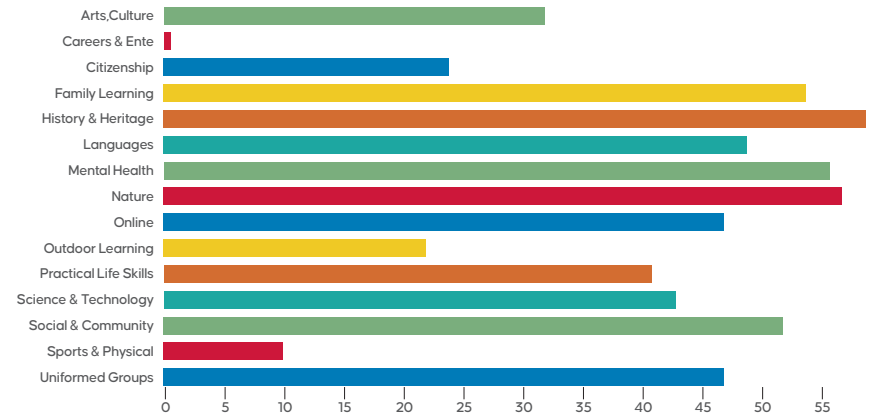
As soon as pupils are signed up, schools will be able to monitor the participation and report on the activities that they take part in, both inside and outside of school. Easy-to-use printable reports will show what extracurricular opportunities the school has to offer their pupils, what skills are being developed in line with the Skills Builder framework, and what categories of learning are popular and where there is opportunity for development. It will also provide an easy way to monitor the number of encounters their pupils have with employers and FE/HE environments in line with the Gatsby Benchmarks.



## What is Skills Builder?

The Skills Builder framework is a set of essential skills developed and used by over 500 schools, businesses and education partners. To find out more visit [www.skillsbuilder.org](http://www.skillsbuilder.org)

CU online training is available to schools and is provided by the Children's University. This session is useful and informative and helps staff to use the platform more effectively. It could also be used for your CPD hours.



If you have any other questions about CU Online, please do get in touch: [b.slater@wakefield.ac.uk](mailto:b.slater@wakefield.ac.uk) or call **01924 789746**



“There are a range of organisations including the larger family attractions such as The Hepworth, National Coal Mining Museum and Theatre Royal Wakefield”

# Learning Destinations

Learning Destinations play a big part in the Children’s University. They are where our members visit, whether in person or online, and take part in learning activities. Learning Destinations can be in one of three categories. **School Led, Wakefield CU Led and Public.**

## School Led

You are registered as a Learning Destination once your school is a member school with the Children’s University. Your school activities can be uploaded to CU Online where only your pupils can view them. Activities may include before and after school clubs, special projects or holiday activities, providing there is learning involved. You can upload activities yourself, or a member of our team can. If you are unsure if an activity can be included, please get in touch.



## Wakefield CU Led

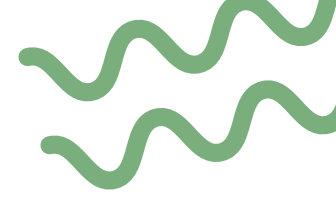
Any activities which are led by Wakefield CU and The Heart of Yorkshire Education Group, are validated and children will be awarded with a stamp code and Learning Hours for attending and taking part. Activities include yearly events such as May-Hem! as well as our half termly challenge sheets. Also included are any activities led by our college tutors and any other one off events. Details of these will be sent into school so please keep an eye out and let your pupils know so they can claim additional hours!

## Public

A public Learning Destination is any activity provider who is validated with the Children’s University. These can be local to Wakefield, or they may be nationally validated. There are also a number of online Learning Destinations who have been validated in response to the need for online learning in the past. Learning Destinations both local and national can be found at **[childrensuniversity.co.uk/activity-search](https://childrensuniversity.co.uk/activity-search)**. CU members can visit Learning Destinations anywhere in the country. We’ve had Passports which have been all the way up to Scotland and all the way down to Cornwall!

If your school or pupils visit somewhere they think would be a great Learning Destination, they can direct them to **<https://childrensuniversity.co.uk/get-involved/learning-providers>** to start the validation process.

All Learning Destinations have been validated by a trained member of our CU team to ensure high quality learning takes place. We have a variety of Learning Destinations across Wakefield with more being validated each year. There are a range of organisations including the larger family attractions such as The Hepworth, National Coal Mining Museum and Theatre Royal Wakefield. We also validate regular community run activities such as athletics clubs or dance schools. In addition to the locally validated activities, children may also take their Passport to Learning to attractions outside of Wakefield. Learning Destinations further afield can be found on the CU Trust website.





## Passport to Learning

Children use the Passport to Learning to collect stamp codes which are then entered online and checked on a termly basis. Each Passport to Learning costs £3.50 and can be ordered through Wakefield Children's University by member schools. Each Passport to Learning is individually numbered which makes each child or young person a member of the wider Children's University community.

The Passport gives children access to the validated activities in Wakefield and across the UK. The staff at each Learning Destination will stamp the Passport to Learning to confirm the number of hours of activity.

## Celebrating Achievements

Celebrating learning is at the heart of the Children's University. Initially, children are rewarded for participation in Children's University activities with Bronze, Silver and Gold certificates. As they progress through the different levels we expect children to play a more active part in their learning, producing evidence and displays of their learning to achieve these certificates.

Each year we hold a graduation ceremony for those members who have achieved a Gold award level (100, 200, 300, etc).

The event is facilitated by Wakefield College and parents are encouraged to attend. Wearing a mortar board and gown, children will be presented with their award – just like a real graduation.

## How can schools get involved?

Becoming a CU member school means we would be able to validate your after school clubs which would then be available as accredited learning to your own pupils.

Some schools choose to buy the Passport to Learning for their pupils whereas other schools may ask parents/carers to buy the Passports, or to make a contribution. We feel that if parent/carers are able to make a contribution, the children feel more ownership



over the Passport and their learning, as well as a commitment on the parents' behalf. We know that this may not be possible in all cases and will depend on the circumstances of your school.

Wakefield Children's University is subsidised by Wakefield College. This means that costs to schools can be kept to a minimum. Participating schools pay an annual membership fee which covers:

- ▶ Pre-printed Children's University certificates
- ▶ Use of the Children's University logo
- ▶ Validation of your out of hours activities
- ▶ Graduation ceremonies including the loan of caps and gowns
- ▶ Regular assemblies as required
- ▶ Access to validated activity providers, both locally and nationally
- ▶ The opportunity to take part in activities provided by Wakefield College, with the aim to give an insight into FE subjects.
- ▶ Admin support from the CU team at Wakefield College
- ▶ Access to the new digital platform for school staff and pupils





# Getting started

- 1** Complete and return the Membership Application Form overleaf. Each membership lasts for 12 months and renewal documents will be sent each July.
- 2** A member of the Wakefield CU team will then visit you in school to discuss the day to day running of the CU in your school and provide you with your welcome pack.
- 3** Once your pupils' Passports have been ordered and distributed, you're ready to start!

**"I can earn lots of stamps in my Passport just by having fun!"**



**“Being a CU member has given my daughter opportunities to explore new places that she wouldn’t have been aware of had they not been Learning Destinations. It’s given her an excellent breadth of learning experiences within them, her education outside of school has certainly been enhanced by this.”**

To find out more about the benefits of the Children’s University and how it works, please visit us at:  
[www.wakefield.ac.uk/about-us/childrens-university](http://www.wakefield.ac.uk/about-us/childrens-university)

## Membership Application for Wakefield Children’s University

Please complete this form in full and return to:

Wakefield Children’s University  
 Castleford College  
 Thunderhead Ridge  
 Castleford  
 WF10 4UA

Email: [childrensuniversity@wakefield.ac.uk](mailto:childrensuniversity@wakefield.ac.uk)  
 Tel: 01924 789746

School Information	
School name	
CU contact in school	
Contact email	
Contact phone number	

Membership Type and Fee		
Number of pupils on roll	Annual membership fee	Tick
1 to 99	£160	
100 to 199	£265	
200 to 299	£420	
300 to 499	£650	
500 +	£750	

Authorisation	
Purchase Order No. (if required)	
Authorised signature	
Please print name	
Date	

**Please do not send any payment with this membership application – we will invoice you for the annual fee on receipt of your renewal information.**





t: 01924 789789  
www.castleford.ac.uk



t: 01757 211000  
www.selby.ac.uk



t: 01924 789789  
www.wakefield.ac.uk



e: [info@heartofyorkshire.ac.uk](mailto:info@heartofyorkshire.ac.uk) w: [www.heartofyorkshire.ac.uk](http://www.heartofyorkshire.ac.uk)