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Re: Children's University

Dear Parents

Your child has expressed an interest to join the Children's University. The Children's University is a national organisation that provides 7 to 14 year olds with access to exciting and innovative learning activities and experiences outside of the normal school day. These activities are known as Learning Destinations. By joining the Children's University, your child will gain credits (hours) for any learning they take part in outside of normal school lessons. It may be sports clubs, dance classes, visiting museums, the zoo or any other activities that are affiliated with the Children's University. All clubs run by North School staff will be affiliated and your child can gain hours if they attend any of these.

Children collect hours over the year in their passport or e-passport and if they gain 30 or more hours, they are invited to a graduation ceremony at Essex University. The hours are cumulative so if you gain 50 in the first year, you simply keep adding in the second year and so on. Once they move to secondary school they can continue to collect hours and this can go towards a passport to volunteering, which is the next stage. We have been running this initiative for the past three year's and currently have 74 children taking part. In June, 24 of those children graduated from Essex University for achieving at least 30 hours for learning in their own time. I have included a Parent's Guide with this letter and the website www.essexchildrensuniversity.co.uk gives you further information. From the website you can see all the learning destinations where your child can gain hours.

We really hope your child becomes part of this as it is a way of celebrating their out of school activities and achievements. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or speak to the office staff who will forward any questions and I will get back to you.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Lisa Eves



Free for All Patron
Danny Crates

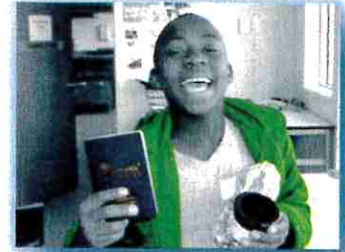
Name of child..... Class.....

I would like my child to be part of Essex Children's University.

Signed..... Date.....

What is the Children's University and how does it work?

We work within Essex to encourage all children aged 5 to 14 to participate in a range of learning activities beyond the normal school day. By collecting stamps in their Passport to Learning for voluntarily completing activities, children gain a sense of achievement and fulfilment.



Quality assured activities are offered by learning partners nationwide and range from after-school clubs and museum tours to visits to historical sites and wildlife centres. Our programme raises aspirations, self-esteem and confidence, whilst introducing new life experiences.

Celebrating achievement is important to us. By gaining stamps, members advance through our awards scheme, attending local graduation ceremonies based on adult graduations at places such as Anglia Ruskin University or University of Essex.



For more information:

Visit us: www.essexchildrensuniversity.co.uk

Contact us: admin@essexchildrensuniversity.co.uk

01206 216510

Follow us:

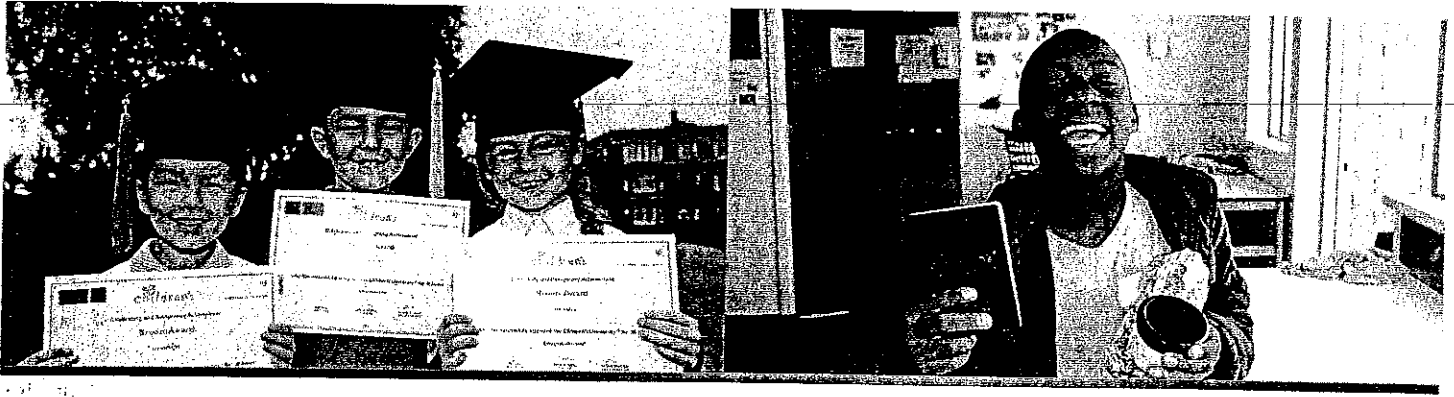


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Using the Passport to Learning – Guidance for parents and carers

Introduction

We are delighted your child has become a member of the Essex Children's University. The Children's University is an international extra-curricular learning programme which takes place outside of the classroom: we encourage 5 to 14 year olds to try new experiences; develop new interests and acquire new skills.

Children can, and do, learn anywhere, when doing all sorts of activities, and children often learn best when *they* decide what they want to learn, when and where, and most importantly, have FUN whilst learning.

Any child (through our school membership arrangement) can join us and, when issued with their Passport to Learning, they can take part in learning activities and experiences.

Celebrating effort and achievement is important to us and central to the programme. Each time your child participates in a Children's University Learning Activity they receive a stamp in their Passport to Learning. In participating in Learning Activities they are working towards National Children's University Awards, which are presented at a local CU Graduation Ceremony, neatly modelled on the 'grown up' version.

We have provided the following information to help you and your child get the most from their involvement.

We have compiled our most frequently asked questions to help you, but if in doubt, please contact your child's school (if they are a Children's University school) in the first instance, or the Essex Children's University Manager. We have included our contact details below for your information.

It is important to remember that participation in Learning Activities must be voluntary, take place outside the normal school day and at a Learning Destination.

All Children's Universities operate within these broad guidelines, but with some scope for locally agreed flexibility.

1. What is a Learning Destination?

Learning Destinations are places and organisations that provide high quality learning activities, validated by the Children's University. We are able to validate any learning activity that will enable children to develop skills and knowledge and relates to a subject that can be studied in Higher Education. There are two types of Learning Destination:

Public Learning Destination: Places which provide Children's University Learning Activities which are publicly accessible, places which offer access to learning activities in sport & leisure, theatre & arts, museums, heritage & culture and libraries, as examples.

Restricted Learning Destinations: These places are not publicly accessible, such as schools and clubs that require membership.

2. Which Learning Activities count?

Learning Activities must take place outside the normal school day, this includes before school, lunchtime and after school clubs, as well as weekend and holiday activities. Only activities at Learning Destinations which have been quality assured (validated) by us can be included.

Schools will ensure children know which of their after school clubs are included. Public Learning Destinations across the UK (including those in Essex) can be found by visiting the Children's University website www.childrensuniversity.co.uk

2. Who stamps the Passport to Learning?

The school co-ordinator will oversee this for all school led *Learning Activities*, and we encourage all children to take responsibility for handing their Passport to Learning in when asked. Activities need not be added separately each week – most schools update the Passport to Learning half termly or termly.

For activities at *Public Learning Destinations* children should normally have their *Passport to Learning* stamped by the learning provider. If this is not possible, the school co-ordinator can add the hours if provided with proof of participation.

3. How do I recommend an activity?

We welcome suggestions for new *Public Learning Destinations*. Essex Children's University has a simple Nomination form for parents and children to make recommendations.

The validation of *Public Learning Destinations* is managed through the local Essex Children's University Manager, and depending on their capacity this may take a little time.

4. Who decides how much time to include for each activity?

A recommended range or set number of hours is attached to each validated *Learning Activity*.

Our key principle is that the hours included relate to **Learning** within an activity, and will not necessarily include the whole session. As an example a Youth Club meeting lasting 2 hours may only be eligible for 1 hour of *Learning Activity* to be recorded in the *Passport To Learning* as some of the session will be given over to socialising, an equally important part of the evening but not a formal learning experience.

5. How do I support my child to include a range of activities?

Encouraging children to try **new activities** and **unfamiliar experiences**, and promoting independence in learners is a key principle of Children's University learning. Within any award there should be a mix of activities, ideally no more than a third of any award spent on a single activity.

6. What about regular clubs and activities outside of school?

As well as signposting new activities, we also want to encourage children to become **resilient** and **persevere** with an activity they are good at.

Regular participation in **validated uniformed organisations, sports clubs, teams, music practice and performance** can all be included in the Passport to Learning.

To maintain the breadth of learning, individual clubs or groups should account for, approximately, no more than *30 hours in any one school year, or ten hours per school term*.

7. Individualised and on-line learning programmes

Children's University learning encourages children to explore learning beyond the confines of a classroom and the normal school day.

Primarily, we want to promote opportunities for children to learn together and we also recognise the benefits that children take from learning as individuals. As with the examples above, these activities are limited to *30 hours in any one school year, or ten hours per school term*.

8. What about activities with faith organisations?

Children's University Learning Activities must be open to all, and we do not include in the *Passport to Learning* instructional classes based on adherence to a single faith.

Where activities are voluntary, open to those of all faiths and none, and encourage children to explore faith and beliefs more broadly, they may be considered for validation.

9. How does Children's University work with Supplementary Schools?

Activities offered through Supplementary Schools, provided they are open to children of all cultures, can also be considered for inclusion in the Passport to Learning.

10. Where can I find further information?

Your local Children's University Manager is the best person to answer any other questions on the Passport to Learning which you may have.

Contact Us: www.essexchildrensuniversity.co.uk
01206 216510
admin@essexchildrensuniversity.co.uk

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