

## **The Children's University Network**

The Children's University is a national organisation offering children aged 7-14 an exciting and innovative programme of high quality learning opportunities outside school hours, with a focus on rewarding participation, raising aspirations and encouraging engagement with learning.

The strength of the Children's University is its flexibility to meet local needs through local centres, underpinned by a rigorous quality assurance procedure and the support of a national organisation, the Children's University (CU) Trust.

Children's University provision is delivered after school, at weekends and in the holidays. Children's University centres are diverse in shape and size: some may be quite small clusters of schools while others may involve much wider local partnerships of schools, universities and local authorities, as well as business partnerships, museums, galleries, theatres and other organisations. The Children's University supports whichever approach will work best locally to bring benefits to children.

Our different centres offer high quality learning in many forms. While this may be in 'traditional' academic subjects, the Children's University also seeks to complement the work of schools by offering diverse opportunities and supporting innovative approaches to learning. A centre might offer art, astronomy or drama, music or maths, science or sport, philosophy, poetry or photography, or any combination of these and other subjects according to the expertise available locally. The Children's University also commissions curriculum initiatives that may bring benefits across a range of centres.

### **Key principles**

While embracing flexibility and diversity, the national Children's University and its local centres share a commitment to:

- providing engaging learning opportunities for the 7-14 age range, beyond school hours
- creating an excitement about learning and encouraging young people to explore subjects in breadth and depth
- supporting young people to become confident, independent learners
- voluntary attendance that meets and fosters the desire to learn
- enabling young people to explore interests at their own pace, by repeating and consolidating learning where they feel it is appropriate or by engaging in advanced learning, irrespective of their age
- promoting a variety of intelligences in the teaching and learning process
- promoting the personal, social and emotional development and mental health of young people and safeguarding their well-being
- accrediting, monitoring and recording learners' achievements within the national Children's University framework

## **Quality assurance**

The Children's University is committed to high quality provision and in order to secure this nationwide, the national organisation expects local Children's University centres to:

- satisfy the Children's University's expectations regarding the provision of high quality learning experiences for children in the 7-14 age range
- celebrate and recognise children's achievements by participating in a national system of certification and holding award ceremonies, usually in a local university or higher education institution
- participate in the national evaluation of Children's University provision
- contribute to the national development of the Children's University, through attending national Children's University meetings and contributing to a central database of resources
- fulfil all statutory requirements and comply with all relevant regulations with regard to child protection and safeguarding children's welfare
- ensure that where there is a charge for provision no child is prevented from attending for financial reasons
- pay any reasonable membership fee that may be introduced

By agreeing to the key principles of the Children's University and its quality assurance framework, local centres will be able to:

- use the Children's University logo and trademarks
- access project funding, subject to other criteria
- access the Children's University support network and library of shared resources
- have their work validated and recognised within a national framework
- benefit from the Children's University's dissemination of good practice
- become part of a national community of providers
- contribute to the voice that the Children's University gives nationally to out of school learning

## **Declaration by local CU centres**

We agree with the principles and quality assurance process outlined in this document and look forward to being part of the national Children's University network.

Signed (CU Manager)

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Date

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