

1. What is Children's University?

Rotherham Children's University (CU) is part of an exciting national initiative that encourages and celebrates children and young people's participation in a wide range of inspiring learning opportunities outside school hours.

Activities take place at schools that are subscribed to Rotherham CU, such as breakfast clubs, lunchtime clubs, after-school and holiday activities.

Children and young people's commitment to learning is celebrated by recording participation in all aspects of voluntary learning through an awards system. One credit is awarded for each hour of learning that takes place. These are then converted into awards:

- Bronze (30 hours)
- Silver (65 hours)
- Gold (100 hours)

...and these continue right up to 1000 hours!

2. What are the benefits of being part of Rotherham Children's University?

Children and young people receive up to 30 different certificates which they love! Gold awards (100 hours) are presented at special ceremonies at exciting venues to which parents/carers are also invited.

In order to track their hours, and motivate them to take part in learning activities, every child who is part of Rotherham CU will need to access **CU online**. This web platform provides a fun, safe and secure online space for children to record and monitor their own CU participation. Each child has their own personalised CU dashboard to help them see how they're progressing towards the next award level, as well reflect on the skills they're building and help them find new activities.

When receiving awards from Rotherham CU, children and young people are also building a learning profile on this system which outlines their activities and accounts for each hour they have spent learning out of school. These details can become part of their record of achievement and provide evidence of the learning they have taken part in out of school hours, which can be important when they begin to apply to further education or seek employment.

National research completed by The University of Cambridge shows a clear link between participation in CU activities and academic progress due to increased self-esteem and confidence. In December 2017, the Education Endowment Foundation Children's University Evaluation Report concluded that children in CU schools made two additional months progress in reading and maths compared to children in other schools. Also, children eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) in CU schools made an additional month's progress in maths and small gains in 'teamwork' and 'social responsibility' compared to those eligible in other schools. CU participants were also more likely to select professional occupations as their future aspiration.

Local impact analysis also takes place annually in Sheffield, which is the largest CU in the country. This compares Y6 and Y11 CU participation data with academic performance in KS2 SATS and GCSEs using raw attainment and progress data. Results of the local analysis in Sheffield consistently show that children and young people who take part in out of school CU activities achieve better at both primary and secondary and exceed their estimated results, whereas non CU pupils do not meet their estimates. More

recent analysis also suggests that students from vulnerable groups in particular benefit from taking part in CU activities.

3. How old do you have to be to collect Children's University credits?

In Rotherham, children can start collecting credits through school (if they are signed up to Rotherham CU) as soon as they reach school age, i.e. Reception Year. They can keep collecting CU credits until they reach 18.

4. I don't know if my child's school is signed up to Rotherham Children's University. How can I find out?

If you are not sure if your school is involved or how it works, just ask them! We launched Rotherham CU in the summer term 2019 with a small group of schools so could test our processes and gather feedback. As of September 2019, we opened up to more schools. We're keen for as many Rotherham schools as possible to get involved in time, and we'll be providing updates as we develop. If your school aren't involved, please do let them know about Rotherham CU and tell them to contact us!

5. What is CU online and how does my child get access?

CU Online is a fun, safe and secure online space for your child to record what they're doing as part of Children's University. Children and young people will collect activity stamp codes from their school that are then added online. These stamp codes are easy to remember and write down – just a colour and four numbers, like **Red 2468**. These codes are unique to each CU eligible activity they do! By then logging into CU online and adding the code, ensuring that their CU hours are logged. It also will unlock further information showing them the interests and skills they're developing by taking part. All children 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.

Your child will receive a username and temporary password from their school, which allows them to log in to the system for the first time and create their own memorable password. At this time, you can add your email address which is not shared with anyone, but can be used to reset your child's password if they forget it or get locked out. If you don't add your email address to the system, your password can still be reset, but only by contacting your school, or Rotherham CU.

6. When and how will my child get their certificate and badge?

At certain points throughout the year, the Rotherham CU team will take a snapshot of all participating children's hours, and issue them with awards based on the number of hours they have achieved at that point. This will generally be on a termly basis but dates and times will be shared with your school.

Your child's Bronze and Silver awards will be sent into school at this time to be presented in an assembly etc. When a pupil reaches a Gold (100, 200, 300, etc. hours) award, they will be invited to attend an awards ceremony in the summer term with a parent/carer to be presented with their awards.

7. How do you know what activities my child takes part in and when they are due awards?

Your child will receive an activity stamp code from each CU eligible activity they attend. When they input this into the CU online system, your child's participation and number of hours will automatically be recorded. We at Rotherham CU also have access to this system and can generate reports which help us identify which awards your child has previously received, and which ones they are due to receive at any point.

If your school is not yet signed up to Children's University, your child will not be able to collect credits at the moment. However, we are hoping to expand Rotherham CU across the borough and will provide updates as we grow.

8. My son/daughter goes to a Scout group/football club/dancing classes etc. Can they get credits from there?

Yes! This is part of the **Passport to Learning** scheme. Children and young people can collect CU credits away from school. Further information about this is available from your school.

9. How do I find out about CU activities?

You can find out about activities by asking in school, or looking on CU online, on the school's website or noticeboards. Most schools will have activities that happen after school and maybe even in the holidays, but some schools also have activities happening at breakfast and lunchtimes where your child can also collect credits. All school based activities are added to the CU online system by school staff and children will be able to see these when they log into their dashboard.

10. Where do I find more information about Rotherham Children's University?

You can find information online on Children's University nationally, visit www.childrensuniversity.co.uk.