



Winter Gardens Academy

Belonging • Compassion • Curiosity • Empowerment

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Headteacher: Katie Herbert

16th September 2026

Dear Parents/Carers

We are really excited to launch Children's University again this year and celebrated this with the children in assembly on Monday. Some of you may be familiar with this programme if you have had older children who previously attend our school a few years back. Children's university has re-launched itself and we are excited to be part of it. Please see the information below about what it is and the opportunities it will provide your child/children with. Miss Mynett will be leading on Children's University alongside a team of staff.

Children's University

The Children's University is a critically-acclaimed charity that encourages children to participate in new and challenging experiences via high quality 'Restricted Learning Destinations' in school e.g. school clubs and trips etc.

Children are also able to learn new skills by visiting 'Public Learning Destinations' such as museums, wildlife centres, castles, zoos, sports coaching, libraries, theatres etc.

Some learning experiences can also be carried out at home – look out for weekly Dojo posts for further information and activity ideas.

The aim of The Children's University is to provide children with additional skills, experiences, and opportunities which will enhance pupil's resilience, independence and personal development.

Children's University at Winter Gardens

Winter Gardens Academy is very proud to be joining the Children's University programme. All children (Reception – Year 6) have the opportunity to sign up to Children's University. All of our school clubs allow our pupils to gain credits (1 hour of learning = 1 credit). We are also looking at providing extra opportunities throughout the school year for pupils to earn credits. At the end of the academic year, usually June, all children who have gained 30 hours or more of learning will be invited to attend an official graduation ceremony where they will receive certificates for their achievements wearing caps and gowns. Details of the graduation ceremony will be communicated nearer the time.

Bronze = 30 hours

Silver = 65 hours

Gold = 100 hours

Please note, the purpose of Children's University is to take part, discover, get involved in different activities to develop a wide range of skills/knowledge. Therefore, if a child regularly swims for example, the hours will be capped.

Please note, hours are cumulative, and are carried forward each year so that students can continue to 'count learning hours' until they achieve 1000 hours and become 'Fellows' of the Children's University.

Passports to Learning:

As part of the Children's University, parents/carers are invited to buy a 'Passport for Learning' which will record the number of hours their child has acquired as part of their extra-curricular activities. This will allow them to gain additional credits from visiting Learning Destinations across Essex and further afield. The children can collect stamps which represent their hours of learning. These may be clubs at school or public destinations such as City Museums, Art Galleries, and local libraries.

All children will receive a temporary paper passport to start them off. Once they have accumulated 20 credits this will then be exchanged for an official passport purchasable from the office at a cost of £5.

Learning Destinations:

There are a number of venues across Essex that are registered with the Children's University and have Public Learning Destination status. These destinations are available to see on the following link –

<http://www.essexchildrensuniversity.co.uk/contact-us/essex-learning-destinations/>

However, anywhere you visit where your child takes part in a form of learning (not playcentres, parks, cinema, theme park) can contribute to their accumulated hours. Once they have been approved and added to CU website, your child can then gain credits with them.

We are looking forward to as many children graduating in the Summer as possible. The graduation dates are yet to be shared and I will let you know as soon as I know.

Thank you for your continued support



Your sincerely,

Katie Herbert and Chanelle Graham

Headteacher HLTA