

Wessex Rivers Trust

Education Programme Information

Education within Wessex Rivers Trust

Wessex Rivers Trust is passionate about looking after the local chalk streams and rivers. They are a beautiful, natural resource full of potential for fun and learning. Within the catchment we are lucky to support rare chalk streams which require a huge conservation and education effort. One of the aims of the Trust is to educate school children about the history, national importance and wildlife of chalk streams. We offer low cost education programmes to match our aims and improve knowledge throughout the Wessex area.

Education Programmes

There are four main education programmes for schools to choose from. All four programmes complement each other and can be delivered as a package, for maximum impact, or can be standalone sessions.

Programme	Length	Why choose this programme?	Years	When	Cost
Introduction Assembly	30 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educates large numbers of pupils Gives introduction before other sessions 	All	All year	£30
River Session	2 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fun, interactive and engaging Sense of ownership of local river Best way to learn about rivers! 	All	All year	£60
Classroom Session	2 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If transport is not available If local river is not accessible In addition to the outdoor river session 	All	All year	£60
Mayfly in the Classroom	1 day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hands on experience caring for wildlife Sense of ownerships of rivers Longer experience for pupils 	KS2	May and June	£75

1. Introduction Assembly

This interactive assembly introduces pupils to their local river. They will be taken on a journey from source to mouth to discover what creatures can be found along the way! The assembly lasts half an hour. It is suitable for any primary school age group, and can be delivered to the whole school, targeted year groups or split across key stages. If booking more than one assembly, please book them so that they run consecutively but allow 20 minutes between assemblies to reset resources. They can be run any time of the day, just tell us your preferred times on the booking form.

Areas of the curriculum covered:

- English
- Science
- Geography
- History

2. River Session

Our outdoor river sessions take place in or by a river close to your school. The session teaches the children about the history of their river, the importance of the river and what wildlife lurks under the surface. They will get experience handling and identifying freshwater invertebrates within a kick sample taken from the river. If access to the river is good the children could be offered the chance to paddle in the river themselves and take their own kick sample.

Areas of the curriculum covered:

- English
- Maths
- Science
- Geography
- History
- Physical Education

Session times: 9.45am – 11.45am **and/or** 12.45 – 2.45pm

We will usually be able to adapt the timings of the sessions to suit your school day, just let us know on the booking form. This session has capacity for a whole class of 30 children but will be more suited to half classes of 15 where possible.

Please let us know if, you know the name of your local river, a suitable/accessible site or even, if possible, the landowners contact details. Any information is useful but if you are unsure, we can help with finding an appropriate site for you.

3. Classroom Session

If you do not have access to a local river, cannot travel to site, extreme weather disrupts an outdoor session or want a follow up session we can offer a classroom-based session.

The classroom session can look at the history of the local river, the importance of them and what wildlife lurks under the surface. A live sample can be brought into the classroom where pupils can study freshwater invertebrates first-hand. If an extension to the outdoor river session, pupils can take a closer look at the sample, create pieces of art or make presentations to teach other children within the school.

Areas of the curriculum covered:

- English
- Maths
- Science
- Geography
- History
- Art and design

Session times: 9.45am – 11.45am **and/or** 12.45 – 2.45pm

We will usually be able to adapt the timings of the sessions to suit your school day, just let us know on the booking form. This session has capacity for a whole class of 30 children.

4. Mayfly in the Classroom

This education programme offers a fantastic way of learning about and caring for our chalk stream wildlife. Mayfly are indicator species of a healthy river system and children will get the opportunity to raise them in their own classroom before releasing them back into the river. This in turn will provide the children with a sense of ownership of their local river, leading to them caring more about the ecosystem as a whole.

How it works:

- Initial meeting and mini training session for class teachers with WCSRT staff (1 hour)
- Introduction to the project: In classroom with Wessex RT (30 mins)
- Build basic aquarium system: In classroom with Wessex RT (1 hour)
- Mayfly sample gathered: At local river site with Wessex RT (45 mins on site)
- Mayfly put into tanks and care instructions given: In classroom with Wessex RT (30 mins)
- Mayfly cared for by pupils: In classroom with class teacher leading
- Emerged mayfly adults released: At local river site with class teacher leading

Timings:

- The initial meeting will need to take place at least a week before the session is delivered.
- The sessions with the children can take place over a full school day or in two parts.

Areas of the curriculum covered:

- English
- Maths
- Science
- Design and technology
- Physical education

Please let us know if, you know the name of your local river, a suitable/accessible site or even, if possible, the landowners contact details. Any information is useful but if you are unsure, we can help with finding an appropriate site for you.

Payment & Cancellations

An invoice will be submitted to the school office after the session date. Cancellations should be made no less than one week before the booked date. If the session is cancelled less than one week before the booking the charge will still apply.

Sessions will go ahead in light rain and cold conditions. If the weather forecast does not look safe for the booking date the session will be cancelled at least one day before and rearranged for another time or may be brought into the classroom.

Safeguarding

Although Wessex Rivers Trust staff will lead the sessions they are unable to be responsible for the supervision of the children. We recommend at least 1:6 ratio for all outdoor sessions. If a Wessex Rivers Trust staff member is concerned about the welfare of a child they will report this to the teacher in charge as well as a member of WCSRT management team. However, it is the school's responsibility to follow this concern up where necessary.

Photo permission

Wessex Rivers Trust likes to take photos of some of the sessions for promotional purposes to be used on:

- Website and social networking sites
- Printed materials e.g. Wessex Rivers Trust's annual report, leaflets, posters, newsletters
- Media and press materials

The session leader will check with the class teacher on the day as to which children have permission to be included in photos.

What to wear for outdoor sessions?

Adults and children should dress for the weather. Sessions will go ahead except for extreme weather conditions. Please ensure everyone comes prepared for the expected weather conditions and brings spare clothing in case of an unlikely fall in the river!

<i>What to wear when cold or wet:</i>	<i>What to wear when hot:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wellies • Waterproof jacket & trousers • Hat & gloves • Warm Socks • Lots of layers • Full set of spare clothes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wellies • Sun hat • Sun cream • Insect repellent • T-shirts with capped sleeves

Health and Safety

When learning in nature we need to be aware of natural risks such as:

- Weil's disease – a serious water born disease that can kill if not treated. Presents as flu like symptoms up to 2 weeks after being near water. Wash hands thoroughly before eating or leaving the site. Go to doctors immediately if you become unwell after being around water.
- Deep water – risk of drowning can occur in shallow water as well as deep water. Adult supervision at all times, and a throw rope available will reduce any risk of this.
- Stings and bites – wear long trousers and be vigilant when walking around on site.
- Slips and trips – take care when moving around the site and wear sturdy footwear.
- Strangers – adult supervision at all time and keep together as a group.
- Dogs – if dogs approach, keep together as a group and adults will move the dog away.

Contact details

For any queries or to return your booking form please contact Amy Ellis (Education and Engagement Officer) amy@wessexrt.org.uk or 07464471257.