**River Guardians School Sessions
Information Sheet**

**The Don Catchment Rivers Trust**

The Don Catchment Rivers Trust (DCRT) is a charitable organisation, which was established to help protect and restore the rivers in the River Don catchment area. This includes not just the River Don but also the River Dearne, River Rother and other rivers such as the Sheaf and Went. We believe that our rivers are a valuable asset which tell the story of our culture and heritage. They are important for people, wildlife and the local economy, and form an integral part of our landscape.

Our **‘River Guardian’** programme is part of our Heritage Lottery Fund supported ‘Living Heritage of the River Don’ project. The overall project is seeking to re-introduce Salmon to the River Don as far as Sheffield for the first time in 200 years. To support this, the project also received funding for schools education. During our project development phase we consulted with several primary schools and now we are delighted to be able to offer our **‘River Guardians’** programme.

You can find out more about DCRT and the Living Heritage of the River Don project on our website: www.dcrt.org.uk.

**Session costs and transport:**

**Sessions:**

This project is supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund and match funders, so we are able to offer the River Guardians programme to schools for free for the duration of the project [2016 – 2018], including a free **‘My River Guardian Pack’** awarded to each pupil.

The sessions are aimed at lower KS2 and we aim to teach classes of no more than 35 pupils.

**Locations:**

Suitable locations will be agreed between the school and Don Catchment Rivers Trust.

Session 1 can be delivered either in school or at a host venue.
Session 2 is designed to be delivered on site by the River Don (see P3 for a list of possible sites).

**Transport:**

Primary schools are asked to walk to the site, if nearby, or arrange their own coach transport if necessary. We have a limited budget to assist schools in our priority areas with the costs of transport, if this is a barrier to pupils visiting site (please ask for more details). If schools are in close proximity (walking distance) to a suitable access point to the river, then we can make arrangements to run the session there, rather than one of the suggested sites.

**Session timings:**

The **River Guardians** programme is designed to take a total time of 1 day, split into two sessions. The two sessions could be delivered on the same day if travel logistics allow, or on separate days.

**Staffing:**

Sessions will be led by a member of Don Catchment Rivers Trust, which may be a member of staff or a volunteer. Don Catchment Rivers Trust personnel will be DBS checked as appropriate, and will be fully trained in all activities needed to deliver the **River Guardians** sessions. Overall responsibility for supervision of pupils in the classroom and on site will remain with school staff. The sessions are designed to allow students to work independently of DCRT staff.

Staffing ratios for the site visit are to follow Local Authority guidance, we strongly advise 6 students to 1 teacher/teaching assistant. DCRT staff will maintain adequate contact with the group leader and ensure there is sufficient flexibility in activity programming to amend activity delivery as required to account for changes in circumstances, for example adverse weather.

**Health and Safety and Risk Assessments:**

We comply with all health and safety regulations including the Health and Safety at work Act (1974) and associated regulations and have a Health and Safety policy, accident and emergency procedure and a Risk assessment upon request, for inspection. However, all risk assessment is ultimately the responsibility of the school group leaders.

**Insurance:**

We have Public Liability Insurance to the value of £2 million.

**Contact:**

To discuss or arrange a visit please complete a visit request form or contact:

Sally Hyslop - Community Engagement Officer

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**Options for Session 2: Locations**

**Sheffield**
**Millhouses Park, Abbeydale Road South.**
The River Sheaf runs through this park, which used to be the site of an old water-mill. There are areas of safe, shallow water where pupils will be able to access the river and collect river-dipping samples themselves. The park also has a fish ladder for the children to observe and a water splash play area with an Archimedes screw and sluice gates that the children can operate themselves. The park has toilet facilities and a large parking area for coaches.

**Salmon Pastures Wildlife Reserve, Warren Street, Attercliffe**A Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust reserve on the Five Weirs Walk. Students can see Burton Weir on route to the site and see where salmon used to spawn in Sheffield. A DCRT staff member can access the river for a river dipping sample.

**Rotherham
Dalton Brook, Dalton.**
Pupils can follow a public foot-path along the River Don, leading through a wooded area and onto a playing field where Dalton Brook can be accessed by staff to collect river-dipping samples. The nearby Asda has toilet facilities and parking.

**Centenary Riverside Park, Rotherham town.**The River Don flows around this wetland site managed by Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust. There is a board walk through the wetlands where water-loving birds and insects can be spotted. A river-sample will need to be bought to this session due to limited access to the river.

**Coronation Park & Swinton Lock Activity Centre, Swinton.**Coronation park offers a small green space to run activities by the canal. A river-sample will need to be bought to this session due to limited access to the river. Nearby, Swinton Lock offers boat trips along the canal that we can organise (at an additional cost for each pupils) as part of the session. Swinton Lock Activity Centre has toilet facilities.

**Doncaster
Hexthorpe Dell and Flatts.**Pupils walk along a footpath that follows the River Don, then complete activities in the gated Dell. A river-sample will need to be bought to this session due to limited access to the river. There are toilet facilities at the entrance to the park.

***If your school is in close proximity (walking distance) to a suitable access point to the river, then we can arrange to run the session there, rather than one of the above sites.***