

Drain defenders

Background

These activities work best when done after learning about the water cycle and how rainwater gets into our drain system. Many of our drains 'surface water drains' or 'storm drains' flow directly to a river, sea or beach and are designed to carry only clean rainwater. Putting other substances, such as, oils, paints, chemicals, dirty water or litter into surface water drains means it can enter our watercourses and affect our environment and our beaches.

Foul water drains or foul sewers carry dirty water from toilets, sinks, baths and household appliances to the waste water treatment works. This dirty water is called 'sewage' and is cleaned and treated before it is put back into our seas, lakes and rivers. Incorrect plumbing means that waste water from dishwashers, washing machines, sinks, baths and even toilets can end up in our seas, lakes and rivers. Who wants to swim or paddle in that! These 'misconnected' pipes are a common cause of pollution affecting our bathing waters, especially in towns and cities.

Some areas have a combined drainage system. This means that the sewage and the clean surface water all go to the sewage works for treatment. If this is the case, all the water from your house goes to the wastewater treatment works.

Aims

- Children are aware that the issue of putting things down drains that can affect our beaches, seas, lake and rivers. This is not good for us or wildlife.
- Children know what not to do when they see a yellow fish
- Children take the message home to family and friends to check their drains are connected right
- Children take action to help spread the drain defender message to the community

Curriculum links

- **Geography** how the drainage system works and how it carries water to seas, lakes, rivers and beaches and treatment works.
- **Science** untreated sewage effluent in the water causes bacterial contamination of water in seas, lakes and rivers that people swim or paddle in. Or that support fish, insects and animals that live in and around the water. How dirty water is treated to be clean enough for us to drink.
- **Citizenship** spread the message to nearby communities using yellow fish

Check your drains

Carry out yellow fish activity with the class. This can be done within the school grounds or in the local community (with permission from the local authority).

Yellow Fish is an awareness raising activity to highlight the damage caused by pouring oils, paints, solvents, chemicals or dirty water down highway gullies or surface drains, which should only be used for clean water. The activity involves children marking drains using a yellow fish to remind people what should and shouldn't be poured down drains. Awareness is raised by putting up posters and distributing leaflets about the damage caused by pouring things down drains that we would not want to swim or paddle in and can be harmful to fish.

You can download a pack from our website if you'd like to take part in the yellow fish project in your area. You should be fine to do yellow fish by drains on the school grounds but please seek permission from your local council before painting on a public highway.

We'd also love to see your photos to help inspire other groups to do yellow fish so please share your stories with us: enquiries@lovemybeach.org

Video it

Why not make a video of the school checking their drains which can be shown in an assembly?

Take it home

Children ask family and friends to check their drains are connected right at home by following guidance found on www.lovelymybeach.org/resources



More great stuff...

Yellow Fish pack – www.lovelymybeach.org/yellow-fish

ConnectRight website – www.connectright.org.uk

United Utilities interactive education resources link
<http://www.unitedutilities.com/primary-schools.aspx>

Contact United Utilities for information on guided tours of water treatment works in your area