



Pyramid clubs in Ealing schools

Who Pyramid clubs are for

Pyramid clubs are therapeutic groups bringing together children or young people who seldom get noticed in school. They are the children who rarely get into trouble because of their behaviour but who school staff often worry about, perhaps because of a difficult situation at home, bullying inside or out of school, or general difficulties in making and keeping friends. They can be very quiet, even withdrawn, so often miss out on opportunities that are snapped up by more confident children. Children who come to Pyramid clubs may under-perform in school, but sometimes excel academically while struggling socially. Clubs are suitable for children in Years 3 through to Year 9, and normally run for a single year group at a time, for groups of up to 12 children. They can also run for groups of children with SEND.

The format of Pyramid clubs

Clubs generally take place immediately after school, for 90 minutes, once a week for 10 weeks. Sometimes they take place during the school day if after school is a difficult time for schools, children or parents. Pyramid clubs give children and young people an opportunity to have fun with their peers under the guidance of a trained group of leaders - usually four leaders for up to 12 children - through art and craft, games, food-based activities, and circle time. The club leaders plan the activities each week using the Pyramid materials but also taking into account their observations of the group in the previous session, the particular interests and requests from the children, and the facilities available to them.

How Pyramid clubs benefit children

Children flourish in the supportive environment, while being increasingly challenged to take ownership of the group and to develop their own support network for when the club ends. By experiencing the whole cycle of nervousness and uncertainty, followed by a growing sense of belonging and fitting in, the children who attend clubs generally leave them feeling enthusiastic about joining other groups. Children who do not normally speak up in class, or ask for help, are more involved in the classroom and learn more effectively as a result.

<p>Parents say:</p> <p>"C's teacher has also seen a difference in his attitude. Less shy and now chatty. Pyramid club really helps to build confidence."</p> <p>"M became more confident: when asked how the club helped him, he said "I feel more happy now!" He also broadened his circle of friends."</p>	<p>Children say:</p> <p><i>I think the club was ... fun and enjoyable ... Brilliant!! ... the Best club ever! ... superest out of all!!!! ... amazing!!!!</i></p> <p><i>I think the club leaders were ... kind, nice and helpful ... the best people I have ever met ... best of the best.</i></p> <p><i>The club has helped me to ... stay happy and be confident ... have courage.</i></p> <p>"I achieved what I'd hoped for, which is confidence in lessons."</p>	<p>Schools say:</p> <p>"The majority of the children are happy to take part and can't stop talking about it. Others who aren't in the club keep asking if they can join too."</p> <p>"It has been fantastic for the children. Children who wouldn't even ask for a drink at the start, by the end of the club need to have their enthusiasm reined in. Those who the school was anxious about moving to secondary (the school felt like a nervous parent) were helped enormously."</p>
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Evaluating the impact of clubs

Children are put forward for a Pyramid club following assessment using the Goodman's Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), which can be used again after the club to measure its impact. Parents, children, club leaders and school staff can contribute to the evaluation which can be used by the school's management and by Ofsted to assess the cost effectiveness of the clubs and to enable schools to identify children who may need ongoing support. The evidence can also be used to support Healthy Schools' projects. Pyramid clubs have been included by the Early Intervention Foundation (www.eif.org.uk) in its Guidebook of proven interventions to support children's social and emotional learning, and the clubs also feature on the Mentally Healthy Schools website (www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk).

How it works in Ealing schools

Primary and High schools can either:

- Purchase an entire club from UWL for a cost in 2023/24 of £900. The university will train, vet and support a group of students to run a club in the school, providing all the materials necessary. OR
- Have staff trained by UWL at a cost of £95 per person for a 6-hour virtual or in-person course delivered on one day or as three two-hour sessions on different days and set up their own clubs. There will be an annual licence and support fee of £75 per year and the school will need to buy in the key documentation to get started (£175). The school will then need to purchase their own materials (art and crafts, food etc.) to run the club. Updates to materials will be provided at no further charge while the licence fee continues to be paid. Students may be available to join school staff in running the club and the school will be expected to meet their travel expenses. School clubs should run with three trained leaders for every group of around 10 children.

In either case, the school will have access to:

- A Microsoft Excel version of the SDQ to use to assess children and evaluate the impact of the clubs, with support from university staff to interpret the results.
- Regional meetings to network with other schools running Pyramid clubs.
- Regular newsletters and updates to materials.



Student-run clubs: please contact pyramid@uwl.ac.uk to make the necessary arrangements. Schools running their own clubs can run as many as they can resource and run them at any time, once they have received the training: training dates will be advertised on the UWL website or can be arranged as schools buy in to the service. For more information about Pyramid clubs contact us on the email address above or visit our website, www.uwl.ac.uk/pyramid.