

**Pyramid clubs in Ealing schools: WER funded opportunity 2022**

**Wellbeing for Education Return (WER) – the Pyramid offer to Ealing schools**

In recognition of the impact on children’s mental health of the disruption of the Covid-19 lockdowns and the partial closure of schools, the Department for Education has allocated funding to local authorities to deliver a package of support to schools to meet local need. In 2022 some of this money will be used to deliver Pyramid clubs or Pyramid club leader training for primary and high schools.

Schools in Ealing can normally purchase either a complete club staffed by students from the University of West London (at a cost of £900 in 2022/3) or can buy in training for their own staff to run clubs (£95 per person, minimum two staff, plus £75pa licence fee and £175 for the initial resources package), through the Services to Schools site. Under the WER offer, a limited number of schools will be offered either a club or the training free of charge.

**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 They can be very quiet, even withdrawn, so often miss out on opportunities that are snapped up by more confident children.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, although they work particularly well at transition points, and normally run for a single year group at a time, for groups of up to 12 children.

**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 – in a ratio of one adult to every 3 or 4 children - through art and craft, games, food-based activities, and circle time. The club leaders plan the activities each week using the Pyramid materials, 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. If the University runs the clubs, all the volunteers will be vetted and trained and will receive supervision from the University.

**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. Pyramid clubs are an evidence-based intervention (Early Intervention Foundation [www.eif.org.uk](http://www.eif.org.uk) Guidebook, Mentally Healthy Schools [www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk](http://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk) website).

**Taking up the WER offer**

Schools need to register their interest by completing the information requested below. Email to Bronach.Hughes@uwl.ac.uk by midday Friday 21 January

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|  | **What the school needs to do** | **School details or tick to confirm compliance** |
| 1 | Provide the name of a contact in the school who will liaise with the University to set up the club, including identifying suitable children, obtaining parental consents, organising a suitable venue etc. | (Name of individual) |
| 2 | Complete a Goodman’s Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) at least two weeks before the required start date of the club on children proposed for the club. The questionnaire will be provided as an Excel spreadsheet. Note that guidance will be provided on how the spreadsheet works and how to interpret the results. | (Tick to confirm) |
| 3 | Provide a venue for the club – suitable for craft, games and food, and where the group will not be disturbed during the session. | (Venue proposed) |
| 4 | Indicate which term and, if possible which day of the week/time of the day, they would like the club to run. | (Term/day/time) |
| 5 | Indicate which year group they would like the club to run for. | (Year group) |
| 6 | Provide background information on the children proposed for the club and work with the Pyramid Project Co-ordinator to finalise the list of those to be invited to the club. Also, obtain parental consent. | (Tick to confirm) |
| 6 | Support the completion of post-club evaluation forms, including the SDQ by school staff, and Pyramid project parent and children evaluation forms. | (Tick to confirm) |
| 7 | Schools opting to have their staff trained to run clubs themselves will need to follow the Pyramid model and provide feedback to the University about clubs run and outcomes for children. At least two members of trained staff should run each club: the University may be able to provide a trained volunteer to work alongside school staff.  | (Tick to confirm) |