

“Cooking Club enables young individuals to become more self-confident in their cooking, and teaches them to become more reliable on their instincts. It also gives them a sense of personal achievement knowing that they made this dish themselves, and that others can also enjoy it too.”

Quick facts for teachers

What is a STEM Club?

Although they complement the curriculum, they are not designed to be about writing, tests, or exams. Activities may involve practical experiments, investigation, discussion and reflection. Most of all, they should be fun.

They can motivate and build confidence in young people who struggle with STEM subjects, and provide an extra outlet for children who already show aptitude and are interested in furthering their learning.

The aims of STEM Clubs are to:

- enrich, enhance and extend the secondary school curriculum
- improve attainment in, interactions with, and experiences of, the STEM subjects among pupils
- improve collaboration between schools and also between schools and industry
- encourage pupils to continue their education in STEM beyond GCSE and Diploma (or equivalent qualification) level.

The Cooking Club

Eirias High School

Colwyn Bay

Introduction

Eirias High School (Ysgol Uwchradd Eirias) is a 11-18 grant maintained secondary school with over 1,500 pupils in the coastal town of Colwyn Bay, North Wales.

Brief Summary

Eirias High School’s Cooking Club provides opportunities for students to take part in cooking activities after school, whilst at the same time learning new practical and social skills, and developing their understanding of the importance of healthy eating. The after school STEM Club is open to students of all abilities in all year groups (7-13).



Links to Curriculum

Many aspects of activities at the Cooking Club are reflected in the Food Technology and Science Curricula at KS3 and KS4. Examples from National Curriculum in Wales (KS3) and WJEC GCSE Specifications (KS4):

- KS3 Technology: The study of making in food should include:
 - f. a broad range of practical skills, techniques, equipment and standard recipes, and how to use them to develop, plan and cook meals and single or multiple products
 - g. how to plan and carry out a broad range of practical cooking tasks safely and hygienically
 - h. healthy eating models relating to a balanced diet, the nutritional needs of different groups in society and the factors affecting food choice and how to take these into account when planning, preparing and cooking meals and products
 - i. the characteristics of a broad range of ingredients, including their nutritional, functional and sensory properties.
- KS3 Science: Why the components of a balanced diet are needed for good health.
- KS4 (GCSE Food technology): Be aware of the importance of healthy eating; candidates should experience tools, equipment and ingredients; know how raw materials/components can be cut, shaped and formed.
- KS4 (GCSE Science): Explore and discuss available data, e.g. from ICT searches and food labelling, about the sugar, fat and additives in foods and the implications, particularly for health.

“Students from other countries such as Romania and Nepal have shown the group how to prepare traditional dishes from their home country.”

What are STEM Ambassadors?

STEM Ambassadors are volunteers of all ages and from all backgrounds working in STEM related roles from apprentices to geologists and nuclear physicists to zoologists.

Have they received any training to work in schools?

All STEM Ambassadors are registered and have been checked by the CRB, and have each received an induction into working in the classroom.

What do they do?

STEM Ambassadors provide a wide variety of services such as careers talks, mentoring, helping with school events or clubs and facilitating workplace visits. Past activities have included: building rockets, farm walks, mock job interviews, rat dissection and speed dating!

How much does STEMNET charge?

Absolutely nothing.

Sounds great – how can I book my STEM Ambassador?

Simply log on to www.stemnet.org.uk to find your local contact.

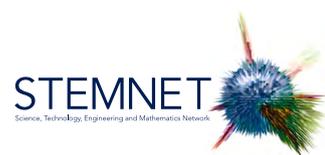
Inspire young people in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM)

Become a STEM Ambassador

For further information visit: www.stemnet.org.uk

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Details of Club activities



The Cooking Club gives students the opportunity to meet together after school, trying out new recipes each time, which they then take home to eat with their family. The membership is flexible, being open to all pupils at the school from Years 7 to 13. Students who wish to take part in a particular session go along to see the club leader Miss Owen (food technology teacher) to sign up and collect the recipe. They then bring in the required ingredients on the day and cook the dish after school. Examples of recipes cooked recently include chicken and leek stroganoff, roasted vegetable couscous, and banana muffins. Recipes are later posted on the schools website for future reference.

Some of the students who have taken part in the Cooking Club over a series of weeks have developed their skills to the extent that they are now taking the lead in choosing the recipe and teaching others how to cook a family favourite!

To celebrate the Chinese New Year, an exchange student from Hong Kong came to demonstrate how to make Chinese dumplings. It is hoped further visitors will be welcomed to the Club in the next school year, as the club leader has recently made a request for a STEM Ambassador with experience of the catering industry to come to share his or her expertise with the students.

A further development of the work of the Club has involved the students in catering for the school governors and also providing nutritious, light refreshments for a TeachMeet attended by teachers from several local schools which was held at Eirias High School in May 2013.

The school places a strong emphasis on the nutritional value of food available within the canteen and has an active SNAG (School Nutrition Action Group) composed of student representatives from each school year. As part of this initiative the school has completed the ten phases of the Healthy Schools Scheme in the county of Conwy and is now working towards the Scheme's National Quality Award. This has helped to focus the Cooking Club on the nutritional quality of what students should be eating and how this can be achieved in meals at home, packed lunches and snacks brought into school.

Benefits and impact for students

The benefits and impact of the Club are immediately evident, with students needing to organise themselves to sign up for the session, collect the recipe, source the required ingredients and bring them to school. Skills gained during the club sessions in food preparation and presentation, hygiene and knowledge of food groups and nutrition for maintaining a balanced diet are essential to contribute towards a healthy lifestyle, and will be with the students for life.

From September 2013 a new set of nutritional guidelines is being introduced across Wales to ensure healthy eating in schools. With their knowledge and expertise from Cooking Club, students at Eirias High School are well on their way to fulfilling these requirements.

In the future it is hoped that Eirias High School's Cooking Club will continue to be a popular opportunity to learn and develop skills, to meet and get to know other members of the school community and, of course, to have fun doing it!