**5. RUNNING ENRICHMENT CLUBS**

**This Best Practice Guide is designed to help you set up and lead an effective enrichment club.**

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| **INTRODUCTION** |
| As part of our Ethos Programme in schools, we offer four types of enrichment clubs, either before School, at lunchtime, or after school:1. **Breakfast Club –** A place for students to come before school to get breakfast and build relationships giving them a positive start to the day
2. **The Drop-In** - This is exactly what it sounds like: a group where students can come to hang out, play, chat, and usually eat. Each session, we try to include an "Ethos Moment," just a few minutes to get them thinking about an aspect of faith or values development.
3. **Thrive** - Our Understanding Christian Perspectives club, where the purpose is to explore faith in an engaging way. This is sometimes also called a Christian Union (CU).
4. **Special Interest Group** - You might also consider offering a special interest group, such as spoken word or cooking, that weaves in understanding Christian Perspectives or values-based themes around a common interest.
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| **PLAN** |
| **Know Why Students Come**Enrichment clubs are an opportunity to build stronger relationships with certain students and deepen the impact on their development of knowledge, values, and skills. Students come to enrichment clubs for a variety of reasons:* Some come because they are vulnerable and need a safe space—what a privilege it is to be able to provide that. Others might just find themselves there because they are bored and have nothing else to do. They may even need the food and drink due to vulnerable needs.
* Some connect with you as a member of the Ethos Team, so they want to build relationships with you and the other staff in the room as role models. They also want to meet their friends.
* Some come because they are Christians and have heard about the Christian group. For these students, it can be a safe place where they can come without fear of being judged. When you have a group predominantly comprised of Christians or highly engaged young people with good relational dynamics, it can serve as a training opportunity for growing young leaders who want to make a difference in their school.
* Another reason students come to an enrichment club is their interest in faith, possibly sparked by an assembly, lesson, or conversations with friends who have brought them along. The group provides them with a chance to explore more in a safe environment.

**Preparing for Action*** **Clearly Define Group Eligibility**: Ensure clarity on who is welcome to join the group, so students know if it’s the right fit for them. Is it for targeted students or open for all? How do people know this?
* **Clarify Group Purpose**: Be explicit about why the group exists and what you hope to achieve, giving students a clear sense of direction and purpose.
* **Ensure Inclusivity**: Make the group accessible to students of all faiths, including those exploring or uninterested in faith, to create a welcoming environment for everyone.
* **Thoughtful Preparation**: Take time to plan each session carefully, rather than relying on spontaneous ideas, to provide a meaningful experience. Develop a structured programme that reflects students' interests and needs, balancing guidance with flexibility.
* **Plan Resources and Food/Drink**: Make sure all resources are ready and in place before the session.

**Promoting your Enrichment Club**Actively promote the group so that students are aware of its existence. Highlight the benefits and reasons why they should attend. Do they know it exists?* **Tutor / Assembly Announcements**: Utilize daily or weekly school announcements to regularly mention the club, highlighting upcoming activities or special events to generate interest.
* **Posters and Flyers**: Create eye-catching posters and flyers to display in high-traffic areas like hallways, the cafeteria, and near the entrance. Include key details like the club’s purpose, meeting times, and a catchy tagline to draw attention.
* **Teacher and Staff Endorsements**: Ask teachers and staff to promote the club during their classes or in conversations with students, especially those who might benefit from or be interested in the club.
* **Social media and School Website**: Leverage the school’s social media platforms and website to promote the club. Post photos, updates, and testimonials from current members to attract more students.
* **Word of Mouth and Peer Invitations**: Encourage current club members to invite their friends. Personal invitations are often the most effective way to increase participation and create a sense of community. Could your Student Leaders help?
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| **DO** |
| **Being Ready for Action*** **Early Preparation**: Arrive early to set up the room, ensuring that the space is welcoming and ready for the session.
* **Warm Welcome**: Greet students warmly and let them know you appreciate their presence, fostering a positive and inviting atmosphere.
* **Encourage Peer Invitations**: Motivate students to invite their friends, as peer recommendations are the most effective form of promotion.
* **Leave the Room Tidy**: After the session, leave the room in good condition, just as you would like to find it. Make sure there is time in your schedule to sort this.
* **Allow Transition Time**: Ensure the session ends with enough time for students to comfortably move on to their next lesson, reducing stress and maintaining engagement.

**Make the most of Informal vs Formal interactions*** Be yourself.
* When talking with students informally - Listen to what they are saying and to what they’re not saying.
* Give them space to vent about their day, if necessary, but don’t let it get out of hand.
* Don’t be too heavy or intense with content… remember it’s often their break.
* Be well prepared and know your material well.
* Keep it interesting, do lots of smaller activities and games especially with the younger ones.
* Be inclusive, not exclusive.
* Be aware of group dynamics at all times

**Empower Students to lead**Here are five tips for encouraging students to take leadership and ownership in a club:1. **Assign Roles and Responsibilities**: Give students specific roles within the club, such as a session leader, event planner, or communications officer. This helps them feel invested and responsible for the club’s success.
2. **Involve Them in Decision-Making**: Regularly seek students' input on club activities, goals, and events. Allow them to lead discussions and make decisions, giving them a sense of control and ownership over the club’s direction.
3. **Create Leadership Opportunities**: Offer opportunities for students to lead projects, host sessions, or mentor new members. Recognize their contributions publicly to reinforce their leadership roles.
4. **Encourage Peer-Led Initiatives**: Encourage students to come up with their own ideas for activities, projects, or improvements. Support them in planning and executing these initiatives, which can boost their confidence and sense of ownership.
5. **Provide Training and Support**: Offer leadership training or workshops to equip students with the skills they need to succeed in their roles. Provide ongoing support and mentorship to help them grow into confident leaders within the club.
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| **REVIEW** |
| Measure impact through statistics, student voice and stories of impact. You could use our online survey system, post it notes, focus groups, and staff feedback for example. Creative ideas include:* **Student Voice Snapshot:** Ask students to share their feedback comments to you and write them down on the fly.
* **Feedback Wall**: Create a dedicated space in the club room where students can post sticky notes with their thoughts, experiences, or suggestions. Use prompts like “What did you enjoy most today?” or “Why does this club matter to you?” to guide their feedback.
* **Peer Interviews**: Pair up students and have them interview each other about their experiences in the club. This can be a fun way to gather honest feedback, as students may feel more comfortable sharing their thoughts with peers. Make notes and feedback.
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