

Everything you always
wanted to know about...



STEM clubs

...but were afraid to ask!

I'd **love** to run a STEM Club, but...

- ... I haven't got an after-school session free and I just haven't got the energy.
- ... we haven't got the resources and the kids don't come regularly.
- ... coming up with a new idea and preparing the activities each week is tough.

Sound familiar?

Here at MerseySTEM, we regularly speak with teachers from right across Merseyside, Cheshire and Warrington. We're well aware of the pressures that you experience, whether as a result of pupil progress targets, funding cuts or the constantly changing curriculum guidelines.

We're also well aware that, despite these pressures, there are lots of you who really want to excite and inspire your students about your subject and would love to run a STEM Club if only you could just find the time!

I'd **love** to run a STEM Club because...

- ... seeing the students getting hands-on with stuff is so exciting.
- ... the activities actually help the students with their curriculum learning.
- ... working with a group of kids in a club setting reminds me why I love this job!

Sound familiar?

Running a STEM Club *can* be hard work. But it can also be really good fun! So to help out those of you who'd love to get started but don't want to bite off more than you can chew, MerseySTEM has created the Six Week STEM Club Programme. Read on to find out more!

Some schools run clubs every week of term for the same group of students and they work brilliantly. However, in other schools, student attendance can be erratic so ongoing project work is difficult and the teacher needs to think of a new activity for each session, which can be really draining.

The Six-Week STEM Club Programme seeks to alleviate some of the difficulties associated with maintaining a STEM Club. Here's what we suggest:

1. Build Your Team

Running a club is best if you can share the load and share the fun. Speak to other members of your department or, better still, staff from across the STEM subjects and beyond. See if you can create a team of like-minded colleagues to help run the club with you.

2. Choose your club members.

Decide on a cohort you'd like to work with and think about working with a group of no more than 15. Ideally, start with Y7. (You can grow your club into other years as you go on). You might choose to work with a specific target group, maybe an all-girls or all-boys group, a more-able group or an SEN group. Perhaps if you offer something for students entitled to pupil premium you could approach your headteacher and request some funding to support the work you do?

3. Invite your club members

Get parents involved. Send a letter home, inviting the 'specially selected' students to the club and explaining to parents what the club is and the benefits it will offer their child.

4. Launch the club

Each club should begin at the start of a half term. Have a 'Club Launch' session where you introduce the club and give the students a taster of what they'll be doing during their time with you. Make sure it feels like a club and not just another lesson... juice and biscuits always help! Giving your club a name, making badges etc all help to make students feel like they 'belong' to something special.

5. Keep it simple

Don't feel you have to do really complicated activities. Simple ones work just as well, particularly when you're just starting off. You might choose to do six stand-alone activities or a project that you can draw out over six weeks. And don't feel like you have to give up loads of time; an hour after school is plenty. There's a [planning sheet](#), and some [example activities](#), available to download on the MerseySTEM website to help you to organise your programme.

6. Request a STEM Ambassador

STEM Ambassadors are volunteers who offer to give their time to go into schools to share their knowledge and expertise with teachers and their students. Why not see if you can book someone to come to visit your club to help out with one of your activities or to talk to students about their career in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths?

You can complete an Ambassador Request Form by visiting the STEMNET website: <http://networking.stemnet.org.uk/node/add/ambassador-request>

7. Celebrate

Six weeks is not much to expect students to commit to. Take a register each week and provide a certificate at the end of the six weeks to the students who attend every session. These should be awarded in year-group or whole-school assemblies to help raise the profile of the club across school. Perhaps you could have a central display board showing photographs of what goes on at the club? Maybe students could do a write-up about the club, or about an experiment they've done, for the school website, newsletter or magazine?

If you wish, you can ask club members to complete a [MerseySTEM STEM Club Diary](#) entry (available to download on the MerseySTEM website) after each session. The diary has been designed to help students reflect on what they have done in the club and to give you an idea of what worked well. If you send these completed diaries to the MerseySTEM office, we will issue a [MerseySTEM STEM Club Certificate](#) to each student.

8. Do it all again?

Once your six weeks is over, you can decide what to do next. If six weeks was enough for you, that's fine. But maybe you'd like to repeat it all over again with a new group of students? There's no need to get a whole new set of activities organised; you can just repeat what you did with the first group. You've got your Six Week STEM Club Programme all ready to go! Using this format, you could run a STEM club once each half-term, targeting six different groups of Y7 students each time.

Before you know it, you'll be ready to start the process all over again by creating a new Six-Week STEM Club Programme for Y8. Maybe you can talk another member of staff into running this group now you can show them how easy, how rewarding and how much fun it is?!



MerseySTEM has its own resident STEM Clubs expert so if there's absolutely anything else at all that you'd like help with, please just contact support@merseystem.co.uk and we'll be in touch.