



Guide to Starting a Club



Clubs are wonderful ways to boost your social well-being while participating in a hobby, activity, or challenge! While some clubs require physical commitment, there are also many ways to spend time with others that focus on other elements of well-being.

Almost any interest can become a club as long as multiple employees get together to participate. Below you'll find some steps to guide you through starting and leading a club. Remember, any participation is a success and will improve well-being!

- 1. Establish a Coordinator!** Finding a fearless leader will bring enthusiasm and passion to the club. You may find co-coordinators to be helpful at first as long as they communicate effectively and collaborate in a timely way.

Tip: Build on the strengths of your colleagues.

- Would PE teachers be willing to host a boot camp or yoga class?
- Would Nutrition Services be willing to hold a cooking demonstration?
- Would an art teacher or art enthusiast be willing to teach or host a painting session with Bob Ross on Netflix?
- Are there any avid hikers on staff that could lead a monthly hike?
- Who are the passionate runners? Could they host a once a month run? Would they be willing to mentor a Couch to 5K challenge group?
- Is there a photography enthusiast on staff?
- Would an English teacher be willing to lead a Journaling Group?

Tip: An e-mail or free Survey Monkey survey could help you determine what employees are interested in doing together. New ideas, such as learning self-defense, might come to light!



Coordinator (or co-coordinators) found!

2. **Gather participants.** Help the Coordinator spread the word via e-mail, word of mouth, and flyers in the lunch room, copy room, or other common areas. Be sure to include the Coordinator’s contact information.

Tip: Give a set date you want them to e-mail you regarding their interest.

Tip: Personally invite colleagues to attend the first meeting with a buddy. (Bonus points if their buddy is from a different building or department.)

Participants found!

3. **Gather materials.** Depending on your type of club, you may or may not need materials. These may be things readily available at a school (paint and paper) or need to be accounted for in advance (foods for a cooking demonstration). Work with the appropriate employees and the Coordinator to make sure materials are ready to go for the first meeting.

Tip: Give yourself a little “wiggle room” by preparing for a few more participants than have RSVP-ed.

Materials are ready to go!

4. Set and publicize your first meeting!

Tip: Try to establish a structure for the meeting.

- How much can you fit into the time you have?
- Will healthy snacks be provided?
 - If so, is it the job of the Coordinator to provide them, or will the Wellness Team or club members help supply those?

Time and location have been arranged!

Announcement was made about time and place!

A structure has been developed for how the meeting will go!



5. Hold your first meeting and have fun! Remember that having your first meeting is a success in itself.

Tip: The first meeting might be a good time to discuss how the club activity contributes to well-being. You can reference OEA Choice Trust *School Employee Health and Well-being Model*.



Tip: Before jumping into the activity, the Coordinator can facilitate a discussion about how to make meetings meaningful for all members. What do participants hope to gain from the club meeting? How can they support each other to meet those expectations?

Tip: Take photos of participants having fun! With permission, share these with other employees to spread enthusiasm about the club.

Fun was had!

6. Be sure to plan your next meeting before participants leave! Participants can help the Coordinator decide specifics for the next activity – for example, they can suggest a new place to hike or a new medium of art to try.

Food for thought: While you can plan your meetings one-by-one, it may be helpful to find a consistent date – the first Thursday each month or every other Tuesday – so you can easily plan ahead for future meetings.

Tip: Meeting at a central location or switching up where you meet can ensure that everyone takes turns commuting to meetings!



Tip: Be courteous and conscious of everyone's work-life balance. Since members have dinner to prepare, additional work to do, family responsibilities, etc., you might need to keep meetings to 45-60 minutes.

Time and location of next meeting is set!

7. Spread the word! (Again!) Ask participants to invite other colleagues. Also, if you have a photo of participants doing the activity, it may be worth using to generate interest.

The word has been spread!

8. Send out reminders a week before your meetings! Be sure to encourage everyone to come, even if they can't make every meeting or don't feel particularly skilled at the activity.

A friendly reminder has been sent!

9. At the last meeting, have a celebration! Before the celebration, ask participants to think about how the club impacted their well-being. Ask if they have any suggestions, improvements, or changes for next time.

Tip: Invite employees that haven't been in the club to your celebration; this could spread enthusiasm for renewing the club.

Tip: Provide healthy snacks for the celebration!

Celebration Suggestions

- **Art, Photography, Coloring or Crafting Group**

- Host an art gallery show – have artists display their favorite works in a common location. Invite friends, family members, colleges, administrators, and have artists there to talk about their work.



- **Silent reading group**

- Break the silence and discuss favorite authors over healthy snacks
- Host a “speed dating” style discussion with a short set of book related questions (*Which classic do you think everyone should read?*)
- Hold a book swap – everyone brings a book and takes one home
- Hold a “blind date” book swap – everyone brings a brown-bagged book with short description on the bag

- Example: *Fantasy – a grown man revisits his childhood home, remembering disturbing events caused by him “hosting” a chaotic force from another world. Quirky, dark, and heartfelt, this story is full of suspense and friendship.*



(*Ocean at the End of the Lane*, Neil Gaiman)

- **Hiking club**
 - On the final hike, pack a healthy picnic lunch to eat together before finishing the hike
 - Create a one page collage of photos and selfies from the hikes and share copies with club members

- **Boot camp**
 - Create an “obstacle course” fitness event for everyone to try
 - Host a “bring a buddy” challenge; team members bring one additional member and play with other team members and their buddies (dodgeball, capture the flag, kickball, soccer, tug of war, etc.)

- **Compassion club**
 - Have participants write and decorate “Self-compassion pledge” using fun paper, markers and colored pencils, stickers, etc.
 - Host a compassion event where the club works together to show compassion, appreciation, and gratitude to other employees

Tip: No matter what type of activity they did, lead participants in a discussion about the benefits of the activity and meetings on their well-being. Even if their results are too personal to share (they are self-conscious about their crafting skills, they want privacy regarding their journal entries), their perspective and experiences are valuable things to share with others.

Tip: A short, anonymous survey at the last meeting (or sent via Survey Monkey) could give the Coordinator and Wellness Team important feedback.

10. Pass the baton if necessary. If you anticipate having more on your plate next year or prefer to be a participant instead of the coordinator, encourage others to step up and coordinate.

A club Coordinator has been selected for next time!

