Technician newsletter

Autumn 2022

In case you haven't received a copy – here's this term's Technician newsletter.

We are delighted that our technician networks in Cheshire & in Wirral will be returning – And we are currently sorting dates for the autumn meetings.

The cost of the network will be £225 per year or £75 per session per school AND we are delighted to offer a Technician Release Payment of £50 per meeting or £150 per year.

Do get in touch if you would like to be sent the booking links when they are released.

Hello and welcome to a new term and a new academic year. Hopefully you all had a pleasant, if at times, very hot, break.

The autumn term is always a busy one, with new students and often new staff and it's an ideal time to get routines embedded – if you don't have this regularly already, why not ask for a slot at an early department meeting to revisit and remind teachers about requisition deadlines, routines for putting out and clearing up equipment and so on. Experienced technician, Sandrine Bouchelkia, shares her top tips for making a smooth and safe return to practical work in this piece from Education in Chemistry.

This is also the term when many schools welcome prospective students to open evenings – which we know always generates lots of discussion around possible activities. Be sure to refer to CLEAPSS PS058 as part of your planning, to make sure that you are following the latest Health & Safety guidance. The Royal Society of Chemistry has some cracking demos (here) if you are looking for new ideas.

I am sure that many experienced technicians are aware of the multiple online resources available for technicians – but those new to the profession might be less so. Here are a few – but please do feel free to email us with any of your favourites: What email address should we use?

CLEAPSS

Preproom

STEM Learning

Philip Harris – useful Blog section

Timstar – Resource hub

If any of you are working with trainees or early career teachers, this introductory video to CLEAPSS support could be helpful. SAPS have produced some videos to support key practicals that use plants – the detail – such as the different types of pond weed that could be used, may also be helpful.

We believe that technicians are essential to a successful science department and we'd encourage you all to celebrate your role and apply for recognition through the various awards that exist – such as the Salters' Technician Awards. Candidates should complete an application form (and you can apply individually or as a technician team) which needs a supporting reference from the Head of Department or a member of the school's leadership team. Closing date for applications is October 28th. Schools and colleges can also apply for a new Technical Champions quality mark – which assesses how well settings support their technical staff. Details here.

If any of you are involved in running science clubs, you probably already know about this page on the STEM Learning website, dedicated to all things related. There's also lots of useful information and discussion on the STEM Community in the careers, clubs and cross-curricular group. And don't forget the technician group – one of the most active groups on the Community.

There are lots of sources of advice for running STEM Clubs and activities to include so here's a selection:

https://www.allaboutstem.co.uk/stem-ambassador-hub/clubs/

CREST Awards Library Discovery

https://spark.iop.org/collections/marvin-and-milo (easy activities with minimal equipment requirements).

https://edu.rsc.org/resources/collections/global-experiments (don't forget the experiments from previous years too).

https://www.britishscienceweek.org/plan-your-activities/activity-packs/ The British Science Association produces themed activity packs for science week – many of which would work for clubs too.

http://resources.schoolscience.co.uk/Salters/

I also came across this resource – which I really like – the Paper Circuits Cubes are simple enough to create and not too expensive.

Have a great first term 😊