

School Dance Planning Checklist

A practical planning guide for middle school dances, high school dances, homecoming events, student socials, and other school celebrations.

School: _____	Date: _____
Event: _____	Grades: _____
Venue: _____	Expected Students: ____
Event Lead: _____	Dance Time: _____

6-10 Weeks Before

- Set the date, start time, end time, and approximate attendance.
- Confirm the event space, capacity, restrooms, accessibility, parking, and pickup/drop-off areas.
- Set the event budget and determine whether tickets will be sold.
- Book the DJ or entertainment and confirm school-appropriate music requirements.
- Choose a theme, dress guidance, and decoration plan if desired.
- Identify the staff member or committee with final event-day authority.
- Determine the number of adult chaperones required by school policy.
- Review school rules for guests, bags, re-entry, behavior, prohibited items, and dismissal.

4-6 Weeks Before

- Begin student promotion using announcements, posters, social media, or school communications.
- Set ticket price, sales dates, refund policy, and guest-ticket rules.
- Create permission forms or guest approval forms if required.
- Plan concessions, snacks, beverages, or water stations.
- Confirm tables, chairs, decorations, lighting, photo area, and any rentals.
- Create an initial event timeline.
- Assign chaperone zones: entrance, dance floor, hallways, restrooms, concessions, and pickup.
- Confirm first-aid procedures and who will contact administration or emergency services if needed.

2-3 Weeks Before

- Review ticket sales and expected attendance.
- Give the DJ the student age range, event theme, and music expectations.
- Provide a must-play and do-not-play list if the school uses one.
- Confirm whether student song requests will be accepted.
- Decide how clean edits, questionable lyrics, and inappropriate requests will be handled.
- Confirm announcements, contests, special dances, court recognition, or other planned moments.
- Finalize chaperone assignments and arrival times.
- Confirm entrances, exits, check-in, coat storage, and student pickup procedures.

1 Week Before

- Confirm the final timeline with administrators, chaperones, DJ, and venue staff.
- Confirm final attendance or ticket count.
- Prepare ticket lists, wristbands, stamps, name lists, or check-in materials.
- Review student guest forms and approval status.
- Prepare signs for entrance, coat area, concessions, restrooms, and pickup.
- Confirm extension cords, power access, tables, and equipment placement with the DJ or AV provider.
- Prepare an emergency contact sheet for staff and vendors.
- Review dismissal and parent pickup procedures with the event team.

Music & Entertainment Planning

- Use radio-clean or school-appropriate versions of songs.
- Tell the DJ the age range and the school's expectations for lyrical content.
- Decide whether line dances, slow dances, games, or contests are appropriate.
- Keep participation optional and avoid activities that embarrass students.
- Share school traditions, special songs, or announcements in advance.
- Decide whether requests may come directly from students or only through staff.
- Plan music volume so it is energetic but does not interfere with safety announcements.
- Keep the final 10-15 minutes organized so the dance can end smoothly.

Chaperone & Student Flow Checklist

- Assign adults to the main entrance and check-in area.
- Monitor exits and follow school re-entry policy.
- Assign visible adult coverage around the dance floor.
- Monitor hallways, restrooms, stairways, and less-visible areas.
- Keep concession and beverage areas supervised.
- Maintain clear walkways and emergency exits.
- Have a plan for students who need to leave early.
- Coordinate dismissal so students are not gathering unsupervised outside.

Event Day - Setup

- Open the venue early enough for decorations and vendor setup.
- Check tables, chairs, lighting, decorations, and signs.
- Confirm the DJ has a safe setup area and appropriate power.
- Tape down or cover cords that cross walking areas.
- Set up ticketing, check-in, coat area, and concessions.
- Confirm water is readily available.
- Walk exits, restrooms, hallways, and pickup areas with the chaperone team.
- Test microphones and make sure staff can make emergency announcements.

30 Minutes Before Students Arrive

- Remove setup clutter, ladders, boxes, and tools from student areas.
- Confirm all chaperones are present and know their zones.
- Review emergency contacts and procedures.
- Confirm ticket lists, guest lists, and check-in supplies are ready.
- Check lighting levels in entrances, hallways, and pickup areas.
- Confirm the dance floor and exits are clear.
- Review opening and closing announcements with the DJ/MC.
- Have one administrator or event lead ready to make final decisions.

During the Dance

- Keep student entrances and exits supervised.
- Watch crowd density on the dance floor and redirect students if needed.
- Address spills, blocked walkways, or other hazards immediately.
- Keep chaperones visible without crowding students unnecessarily.
- Coordinate announcements through the DJ/MC rather than shouting over the music.
- Keep activities and contests optional.
- Watch the timeline so the dance ends at the scheduled time.
- Begin pickup reminders early enough to avoid a chaotic ending.

End of Dance & Dismissal

- Make a clear final announcement before the last song.
- Turn up room lighting gradually when the dance ends.
- Direct students toward the approved pickup or exit area.
- Keep chaperones in position until students have safely departed.
- Do not begin major teardown while students are still moving through the room.
- Check for phones, coats, bags, and personal belongings.
- Confirm the venue is cleared according to school policy.
- Complete a brief staff review of any issues to improve next time.

Quick School Dance Timeline

Time	Activity / Moment	Person Responsible
_____	Vendor / DJ arrival	_____
_____	Setup / sound check	_____
_____	Chaperone meeting	_____
_____	Doors open / check-in	_____
_____	Dance / activities	_____
_____	Special announcement / activity	_____
_____	Pickup reminder	_____
_____	Last song / lights up	_____
_____	Dismissal / cleanup begins	_____

Planning Tip: A successful school dance is organized enough to be safe but relaxed enough to feel fun. Clear supervision, clean music, simple rules, good communication, and a smooth dismissal plan usually matter more than packing the night with activities.