

Homecoming Dance Checklist



How to Plan a Homecoming Dance: The Basic Do's and Don'ts

Do start early. Homecoming tends to fall in late September or early October, which means that you don't have a lot of time to get things rolling once the school year starts. Some schools complete the first few steps, like putting together a homecoming committee that can decide on things like a theme, at the end of the prior school year.

Don't expect ticket prices to cover the full cost of the dance. Most schools are working on tight budgets, and many non-academic events don't receive much discretionary funding. But you don't want the full cost of the homecoming dance to fall on your students, who are already paying an average of over \$100 to attend.

Do plan a week of homecoming activities leading up to the dance. Many of these activities, like themed days that students can participate in (pajama day, anyone?) don't have to eat up your budget. Plus, they'll increase excitement around the dance you've worked so hard to plan.

Don't forget to delegate. We'll discuss this in more detail below, but it's important to remember that faculty and parents are often more than willing to participate in the planning and execution of something the students will enjoy.



The Complete Homecoming Dance Planning Checklist

Below are steps, to follow in order, that will help you break up your homecoming planning timeline into individual steps, so you won't feel overwhelmed. We recommend getting started no later than the first week of the school year, especially if you want to host the homecoming dance as early as September.

Build Your Team of Volunteers

Most schools involve the elected student body government officers to take on the basic to-do list; however, you may also want to involve:



- ☐ Other students who are seeking leadership positions
- ☐ Other members of student body organizations, including members of the pep squad and other groups
- ☐ Several faculty members and parents to help with fundraising activities and act as chaperones for the dance

Create a Basic To-Do List

Once you have your volunteers, they can set meetings to start making decisions... with the approval of the school, of course. Have them decide on things like:

- ☐ Date
- ☐ Theme
- ☐ Location
- ☐ Decorations
- ☐ Refreshments



Delegate Duties to Appropriate Volunteers

Some tasks on the homecoming dance planning checklist may require more adult supervision than others. The volunteer faculty members and parents can help with tasks such as:

- ☐ Monitoring how the budget is used
- ☐ Securing contracts with vendors
- ☐ Advertising the dance and selling tickets
- ☐ Creating a check-in system for individual committees to communicate with each other

Find an Advisor for Your Homecoming Committee

All student groups, including your homecoming planning committee, require a faculty advisor to supervise meetings and provide support for the students as they work through different objectives.

The advisor should be prepared to take notes at the meetings and manage the homecoming committee.

Collect Quotes from Vendors

Before you can create a budget, you may want to request quotes from vendors to get a sense of how much money you'll need to cover expenses. Get quotes from three of each so you can secure competitive pricing options. Request quotes from:

- ☐ Venues
- ☐ Catering companies
- ☐ DJs
- ☐ Photographers
- ☐ Optional: professional decorators or florists



Create Your Budget

With the help of your student government treasurer, review the quotes you received from your potential vendors and establish a budget. You can also review receipts from previous years to round out your expectations, but keep in mind that it may cost more this year due to price increases.

Prioritize your must-haves, like a venue and a DJ, with your available funds. Create a separate budget for the nice-to-haves, like a photographer and florist, and build your fundraising plan around that separate budget. Reserve additional funds for expenses that aren't related to vendors, such as store-bought decorations.

Start Fundraising

Fundraising efforts should begin well before the week of homecoming because many vendors will require you to sign a contract at least a few weeks before the big day. Consider fundraising options like:

- ☐ Bake sales
- ☐ Car washes
- ☐ Partnerships with local restaurants
- ☐ Seasonally appropriate neighborhood outreach activities (e.g., lawn raking or lawn mowing)



Secure Your Vendors

Start with your venue, which will ultimately determine the date of your homecoming dance. When dealing with, adult supervision is required to ensure that:

- ☐ All contracts are reviewed, signed and returned
- ☐ Copies of contracts are preserved for reference
- ☐ All vendors are appropriately accommodated based on the specifications of their contracts

Have one volunteer manage all communications with vendors to make sure no email or phone call goes unanswered.

Choose Your Homecoming Theme

- ☐ A Night Under the Stars
- ☐ Disco Fever
- ☐ Carnival Chic
- ☐ Masquerade
- ☐ Etc.



Have a meeting to discuss what the possible themes entail, the vision your homecoming committee has in mind and make sure it all meets school guidelines. Some homecoming committees will want general student body input, so decide if you want to put the possible themes to a vote.

Purchase Homecoming Decorations

While you can hire a professional decorator, many homecoming dances are decorated by volunteers. If you are not hiring anyone to tackle decorations, it's time to start purchasing decorations or supplies to make decorations.

Take an inventory of supplies you already have on hand before contacting your local party or craft stores. Once you do, ask if they'll provide the school with a discount. If there are perishable or large items that you won't be able to store beforehand, see if the store will put those items on hold for you to pick up the day of the dance.

Sell Homecoming Dance Tickets

We recommend starting to sell tickets at least two weeks in advance, if not before. Follow these steps to ensure that ticket sales go smoothly:

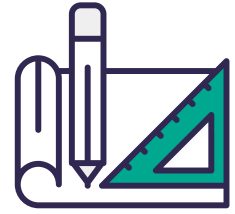
- ☐ Announce ticket sales in the school paper, during daily announcements and with fliers or posters placed around campus
- ☐ Set up a ticket sales table before school, after school and during lunch periods
- ☐ Create a schedule to ensure that there are always volunteers available to staff your sales table



Not many people carry cash these days, so we recommend using a system like [Vanco Payments](https://VancoPayments.com/education)

which makes it easy to sell homecoming dance tickets online by collecting credit card payments. This also makes it easy for students to buy tickets from home, rather than during school hours.

Create a Day-Of Plan



Your day-of dance plan should include:

- ☐ A floor plan of your venue with spaces marked off for the DJ booth, tables and refreshments
- ☐ A detailed description or floor plan showing where your decorations, including lights, banners, balloon arches and more should go
- ☐ A schedule for your chaperones detailing when they should arrive, what duties they will fulfill and when the dance will end
- ☐ Any additional plans for things like a coat-check system, homecoming court announcements and more
- ☐ Assign an adult volunteer as a coordinator to keep this checklist on-hand to make sure each step is completed successfully

Develop a Contingency Plan

Contingency plans should account for:

- ☐ Bad weather, especially if some or all of your event will be held outdoors
- ☐ Vendor errors
- ☐ A breach of school rules and how you'll handle students responsible for them
- ☐ Backup chaperones in case one or more of your volunteers is sick or unavailable

Must-Haves for Any Event

Make event management easy with Vanco Events' ticket-scanning app:

- ☐ Not only will you have a record of attendance and times, but it's also super easy for volunteers to learn.

Boost attendance with QR codes:

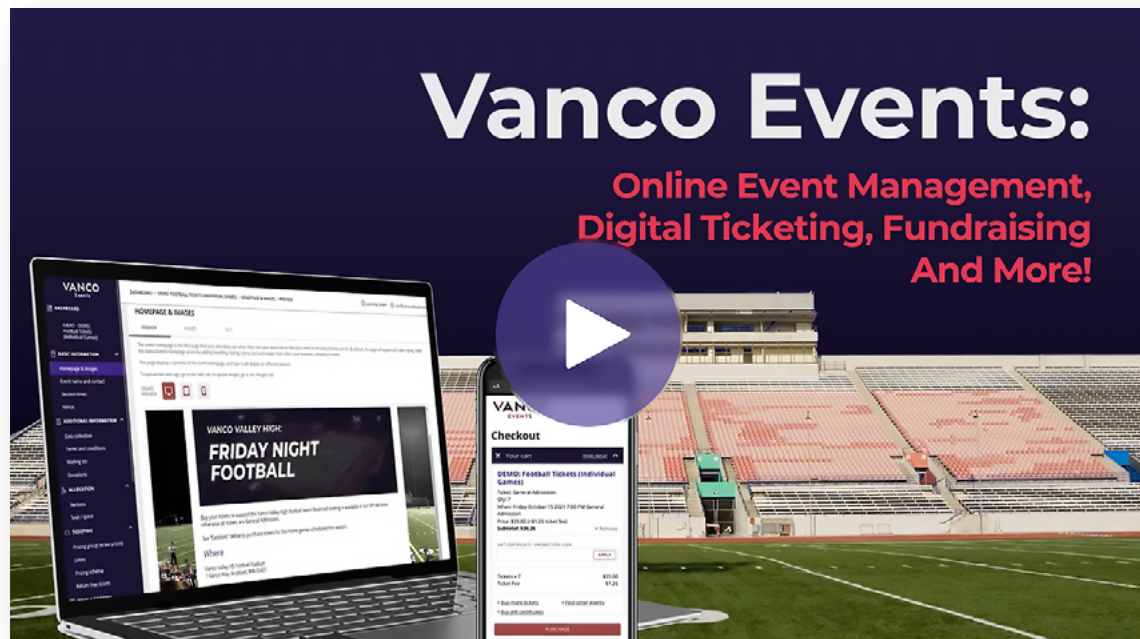
- ☐ Add a QR code with a link to your event information to flyers, posters and share it on your social media - plus with our 'share to Facebook', it's an easy option for ticket purchasing.

Be prepared for changes:

- ☐ You need a communication plan in place, and with Vanco Events, it's simple to contact everyone who has purchased a ticket.

See How Schools Nationwide Are Saving Hours on Event Ticketing.

Take just a handful of minutes to see how Vanco's event ticketing software streamlines the ticketing process while boosting revenue for K-12 schools.



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