

Step-by-step: music festival

Great for: Everyone **Fun factor:** ★★★★★ **Effort:** ★★★★★ **£ potential:** ★★★★★

Music festivals on the school field are becoming an increasingly popular PTA fundraiser – we can see why!

Step-by-step

1. **Six months before:** Agree use of the school grounds/facilities with the headteacher and check any stipulations. Form a committee and agree a date and a budget, draw up a diary of subsequent meetings and a rota of volunteer responsibilities. These might include: securing acts, organising food and refreshments, managing health and safety, obtaining licences, securing sponsorship, hiring equipment, etc. Check your PTA and school insurance policies. If your event will have an audience of 500 or more, contact your local licensing officer for a Premises Licence.
2. **Five months before:** Research local bands. Use social media to find contact details for bigger bands, and ask local venues to put you in touch with smaller acts. Ask parents whether they're part of a band and would like to perform. Similarly nearby secondary schools may have students keen to attend. Agree terms when booking your acts, such as what happens in the event of poor weather.
3. **Four months before:** Hire any equipment you need such as marquees, lighting, generators, staging, PA system, etc. If you're using external caterers, get quotes and start booking. Ask to see copies of public liability cover from any external contractors.
4. **Two months before:** Create a floorplan. Music festivals feature multiple areas, which makes a school the perfect venue. How about one stage in the main hall with another outdoors? Have a dedicated pathway between them with plenty of fundraising stalls en route; guests will be with you for a while, so provide plenty of refreshments and things to amuse all ages, making sure you have the equipment you need and enough people to run them safely. Prepare a risk assessment.
5. **One month before:** Draw up a rota of volunteers and start to fill in time slots. It's always good to have some extra people on standby. The sort of roles you might need to fill include: set up/take down, cooking and serving food, serving on the bar, running stalls, gate security, first aiders. Finalise your schedule and let attendees know what sort of stalls and entertainment to expect. Order catering supplies if you are doing your own cooking.
6. **Two weeks before:** Confirm details with any external suppliers, contractors, performers, etc, making sure that they know where and when they are expected. Depending on the scale of your event, you may want to inform the local police and fire service, giving them a contact number in case of any queries.

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7. **The week before:** If you have lots of infrastructure like marquees and staging then stagger the build so that it's not all happening last minute. A few people may need to camp on site the night before the event to keep an eye on equipment.
8. **On the day:** Check that the site and all equipment is safe and that you're ready to allow people in. If necessary revise your planned activities based on the weather. Have some large noticeboards detailing the schedule of activities and entertainment if appropriate. Organise your cash floats.

Tips & advice

Wet weather: What will you do if it rains? Can you move the event indoors or can you provide sufficient cover? When selling space to stallholders, selling tickets or booking bands, make your wet weather policy clear. If you plan to go ahead outdoors whatever the weather, then use wording along the lines of, 'The festival goes ahead no matter what the weather, so come prepared with rain or sun protection. There will be no refunds made in the event of inclement weather.'

Boost profits: Compile a programme and sell advertising space to increase revenue. Seek sponsorship from local businesses that would benefit from the diverse audience a music festival attracts. Charge a pitch fee to outside providers (they will need their own public liability insurance). Offer side stalls including face painting, temporary tattoos, and a tuck shop.

Food: Depending on the number of people attending your event (and the number of volunteers you have at your disposal), you may decide to run your own food stalls, BBQ and bar. Think about the length of time people will be there for - inviting external catering companies in for a pitch fee may be easier, if not as profitable.

Safety and security: Carry out a risk assessment. Consider how stewards will communicate with one another, and appoint first aiders. Think about any parking issues that may arise and write to local residents to inform them about the potential noise.

Tickets: How much you charge involves balancing your need to raise money with how much the everyday family can afford. Offer promotions such as under eights go free and early bird discounts. As a reference, one PTA charged £25 for an early bird family ticket before escalating to the full price of £20 per adult on the gate.

Marketing: Put up posters in local shops, supermarkets, GP surgeries, etc. Display roadside banners a few weeks before the event - contact your local authority to seek permissions. Prepare a media release and issue this to local papers and radio stations.

Licensing: A Premises Licence is required for live amplified music with an audience of 500 or more - contact your local licensing officer as early as possible, allowing at least two months. The cost depends on the non-domestic rateable value (NDRR) of your venue. A condition of obtaining a Premises Licence is that a newspaper advert be placed - budget around £250 for this. Suitable music licences are also required.



The above is intended as guidance only. We recommend that you contact the relevant organisations with specific reference to insurance, legal, health and safety and child protection requirements. Community Inspired Ltd cannot be held responsible for any decisions or actions taken by a PTA, based on the guidance provided.