

PTA+ Summer fair checklist

Take the stress out of planning the big day by crossing tasks off our handy checklist to make sure you have everything covered

12 weeks to go

- Only you know how it rolls with your school. Approach them once you have enough information to get their buy-in and a date in the diary. If they need more than the basics, the committee may need to meet first. In any case, get your team together as soon as possible.
- Locate and read through any handover documents from previous years. These will be vital if you're new to big events and should contain essential information about purchases and profits.
- Find out which areas of the school are available to use, both inside and outside, as well as what's off limits.
- Share a 'save the date' with your school community to generate a buzz of excitement and help ensure good attendance.

11 weeks to go

- [Choose a theme to give you a starting point](#) and help the ideas flow. Create a draft plan that includes high-cost attractions, food and drink, arena events, raffle suggestions and stall ideas. If there's feedback from last year's event, decide how you will act on it.
- Put together sponsorship packages and [start approaching business partners](#) for raffle prizes and sponsorship. Be clear about what you're offering in return.
- Ask if the school will support Year 6 enterprise stalls and young volunteers.
- Ask if there are any groups who could perform as part of the event eg, the school choir or a dance club.
- Book main attractions such as inflatables, laser tag and fairground rides.
- Take steps to make your event fun for families facing economic hardship.
- Decide which food and drink stalls will be run by the PTA and what will be outsourced to third-party vendors. Include snacks and offer a range of drinks for all ages and preferences.
- Book external food stalls. Give them a contract detailing payment. Either ask for a flat fee or agree to share profits.

- If you are inviting external stallholders, share the date on social media and prepare a stallholder booking form or information pack for anyone who enquires.

Ten weeks to go

- Divide up the jobs and start recruiting volunteers to fill any skills gaps.
- Look at what the PTA already owns and make a list of what you'll need on the day. Check gazebos and marquees are fit for use. Work out how you'll source items that you don't own and can't borrow from the school
- Identify ways to [make your event more eco-friendly](#).
- Make sure the fair is accessible to visitors with special needs and disabilities.

Eight weeks to go

- Get your paperwork in order. The PTA has a legal responsibility to protect visitors and children and must comply with event licensing regulations. Public liability insurance covers you in case of injury to a member of the public – check yours is up to date. Third-party stallholders will need to have their own public liability insurance.
- Register with the local authority if you want to sell raffle tickets before the event.
- If you plan to play recorded music, you will need [TheMusicLicence](#). Check with the school as you may be covered by theirs
- Be clear about the school's policy on DBS checks. Ask who needs one and what kind.
- Liaise with the school about staff involvement. Staff can be involved in lots of creative ways such as putting on a performance for visitors, running story time sessions for children, being sponged in the stocks or volunteering on a stall.
- Make a plan for emergencies and first aid.

Six weeks to go

- Select a mix of stalls and games to appeal to all ages and budgets. Be creative about how things can be made cheaply or for free.
- Based on previous experience, put together running notes for each stall, with details of costs per go, rules, instructions and advice.
- Finalise your PTA food and drink stalls. Decide who will purchase what, from where and when. Make sure you have somewhere to store it all.
- [Start publicising the event](#). Put up posters and send a media release to local newspapers and radio stations. If using street banners, seek permission from the local authority. Plan your digital marketing – a strong social media campaign can help attract more visitors.

- Let supporters know how they can get involved. For example, by buying raffle tickets, volunteering, baking cakes, booking ticketed activities or donating a raffle prize.
- Find a master of ceremonies. Give them a running order along with details of anything they should promote, such as raffle tickets, bake-off judging or pony rides. They should also thank any businesses who have provided sponsorship.
- Decide how visitors will be able to identify PTA members if they have questions.

Four weeks to go

- If you plan to sell alcohol, apply for a Temporary Event Notice (TEN) at least ten working days before the day.
- Create a site plan outlining where each activity will go, bearing in mind the need for power and water. Put high-profit stalls and games somewhere prominent. Nominate a contact for emergency services and decide how you'll clear the site in an emergency.
- Prepare your programme. Include the running order and details about the PTA and what it does. Sell advertising slots and thank key supporters.
- Work out what you'll do with rubbish and recycling.
- Choose prizes to award. Decide where to source them and how many you'll need. Hold a non-uniform day and request donations of good quality unused items in return. Award some experience-based prizes such as a free turn on the bouncy castle or a voucher for a different game.
- Review the [risk assessment](#) from last year or use one from a similar event as a starting point. Update it to reflect this year's plans.
- Check in with the school's leadership team and/or site manager to run through your detailed plans, including requirements for access, power, water, cooking facilities, cleaning and locking up and securing the school at the end of the event.
- Ask the PTA treasurer to determine how much float each stall requires and order it from the bank.

Two weeks to go

- Finalise the [volunteer list and rotas](#). Distribute a spreadsheet listing each stall with names, and time slots. Identify any gaps and initiate a final recruitment drive.
- Ask volunteers to check if their employers offer match funding to help boost profits.
- Make signs for the basics, such as toilets, first aid and refreshments, as well as for each stall. Include QR codes for easier online payments or to direct visitors to information.

- Develop a bad weather contingency plan. Leave enough time to let everyone know if you move to this plan B.

The week before

- Finalise the risk assessment and give everyone a copy.
- Locate your card readers. Make sure they are working and charged and that any apps needed are downloaded on the devices you plan to use. Set up items and prices on the app's checkout to make selling easier and quicker.

On the day

- Do one last publicity push on social media.
- [Create an event survival kit](#) containing items such as marker pens, tape, scissors, string, drawing pins and paper. Charge your phone.
- Position the site plan so everyone can see the layout.
- Prepare a list of jobs ready for keen volunteers.
- Look after your set-up crew by providing a snack and drink for those who arrive early.
- Light barbecues well in advance and ensure coals have reached the right temperature before cooking begins.
- Attach the information sheets to each stall.
- Check stallholders have everything they need. Offer refreshments and toilet breaks to those doing longer shifts.
- Appoint at least two people to be responsible for floats, collecting and counting cash, and storing it securely during the event. Write down details of the float on each stall at the start and note when cash is collected.
- Hold a safety briefing half an hour before the start.

After the event

- Set down and tidy up. Recycle as much as possible.
- Return any borrowed items to their owners, checking they are in good condition.
- Distribute any unclaimed raffle prizes.
- Return to school to clean and tidy away barbecues once they have cooled.
- Thank volunteers and any businesses who supported your event. Tell them how much was raised and how it will be spent.
- Ask for feedback using our ['Knowledge Capsule' template](#).
- Hold a quick evaluation meeting while everything is still fresh in your mind.
- Create handover documents ready for next year.