



SCHOOL FORMAL PLANNING GUIDE

01

What To Do Before

Every great event requires a strong foundation. Establish your committee, determine the date, create a budget and choose a venue.

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ESTABLISH A COMMITTEE

1

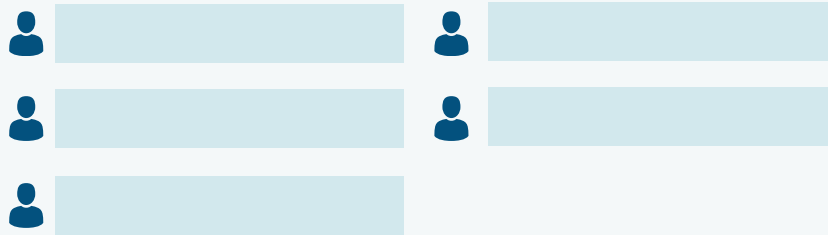
Identify a Trustworthy Adult

Seek out a dependable adult figure such as a parent, teacher, principal, or coach. This individual will be crucial for endorsing official documents, including contracts, terms and conditions, and venue forms. Ideally, this person should be the main point of contact with the school administration.

2

Assemble a Dynamic Team

Create a small group of proactive and capable individuals to form your committee. Opt for an odd number, to ensure smooth decision-making without the possibility of tie votes that can waste time. Ensure your trusted adult is apart of the committee and is available for meetings.



3

Appoint a Committee Leader

Choose a committee leader who will oversee documentation, task delegation, and coordination. The trusted adult you've selected often fits well into this role due to their involvement in official matters.

4

School Involvement

Consider involving the school in your committee. Their insights can be valuable in minimising risks and providing resources such as newsletter promotion, access to printers, and supplier connections. Collaborating with the school can significantly enhance the quality of your formal event.



Be mindful that schools may be cautious about extending substantial support due to potential legal issues that can arise.

Committee Meeting Agenda

DATE & TIME

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

DISCUSSION

CONCLUSIONS

ACTION PLANS

THINGS TO DO	PERSON IN CHARGE (PIC)	DUE
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DETERMINE THE DATE

Choose a suitable date for the formal, ensuring it doesn't clash with any major school events or public holidays.

01

Consider The School Calendar

Check the school calendar for any major events, exams, or holidays that could potentially clash with the desired date for the formal.

Avoid scheduling the formal too close to exams or during busy periods to ensure maximum attendance.

02

Consult With Key Stakeholders

Discuss potential dates with school administrators, teachers, and student representatives.

Gather input and ensure the chosen date doesn't conflict with other important school activities or commitments.

03

Survey Students

Conduct a survey among students to gather preferences regarding potential dates for the formal.

Consider the majority preference while also taking into account any conflicts or constraints raised by the school administration.

CREATE A BUDGET

Establish a budget for the formal, considering expenses such as venue, decorations, catering, entertainment, and photography.

01

Identify Funding Sources

Determine the available funding sources for the formal, such as ticket sales, fundraising activities, or contributions from the school, student or parent associations. Calculate the total amount that can be allocated to the event.

02

List All Potential Expenses

Make a comprehensive list of potential expenses, including venue rental fees, decorations, catering, entertainment, photography/videography, transportation, and any additional services or items required for the formal.

03

Research Costs

Research and gather cost estimates for each expense item. Reach out to vendors, service providers, and previous formal organisers to obtain accurate pricing information. Consider any discounts or special packages available.

04

Allocate Funds

Allocate a portion of the total budget to each expense category based on priority and importance. Be mindful of not overspending in one area, which may lead to compromising other aspects of the event.



Check out trybooking.com/info/school-formals to download a budget template to help you manage your formals budget.

CHOOSE THE VENUE

Select a venue that can accommodate the expected number of attendees, fits within the budget, and aligns with the desired atmosphere for the formal.

We recommend looking at local venues to help keeping your formal in budget, while supporting your community and being able to count on local support.

01

Capacity & Layout

Determine the expected number of attendees and choose a venue that can comfortably accommodate that capacity. Consider the venue's layout, dance floor space, seating arrangements, and any additional areas required for pre-dinner activities or photography.

02

Atmosphere & Theme

Ensure the chosen venue aligns with the desired atmosphere and theme for the formal. Consider factors such as the venue's ambiance, architecture, lighting options, and overall aesthetic appeal.

03

Budget Considerations

Review the budget allocated for the venue and shortlist options that fall within the designated range. Consider any additional costs associated with the venue, such as staff, or technical equipment.

04

Amenities & Facilities

Assess the amenities and facilities provided by each potential venue. Consider aspects such as parking availability, restrooms, accessibility, audio-visual equipment, and any additional services required (e.g., coat check, cloakrooms).

05

Venue Negotiations

Arrange site visits to the shortlisted venues to assess them in person. Discuss terms, pricing, and any specific requirements with the venue management. Negotiate contracts or agreements to secure the chosen venue.

06

Confirm Availability

Once a decision is made, confirm the availability of the chosen venue for the desired date. Sign any necessary contracts or agreements and make the required deposit or payment to secure the booking. Make sure you look at the venue early to ensure you find availability that works.

BRAINSTORMING

Let's brainstorm the ideal venue for your school formal to help you find exactly the right venue for you.

MY BUDGET:

DATE:

**CAPACITY
& LAYOUT**

THEME

**FACILITIES
NEEDED**

**HOW FAR
AWAY**

OTHER

THEMES FOR YOUR FORMAL

Decide on a theme for the formal and plan the decorations accordingly. Consider props, lighting, table settings, and backdrops to create the desired ambiance.

01

Brainstorm Theme Options

Consider input from the student body through surveys or voting. Make sure that the theme aligns with the desired atmosphere and school values.



Here are some theme ideas for your formal

Enchanted Garden

Hollywood Glamour

Masquerade Ball

Great Gatsby Roaring Twenties

Winter Wonderland

Tropical Paradise

Around the World

Fairytale Fantasy

Starry Night

Under the Sea

Casino Royal

Black and White Gala

Alice in Wonderland

Mardi Gras

Secret Garden

Parisian Chic

80s Retro

Enchanted Forest

Timeless Elegance

Candyland

Fairytale Fantasy

Starry Night

DECORATIONS FOR YOUR FORMAL

01

Research & Gather Inspiration

Look through magazines, websites, or social media platforms, to visualise the desired decorations and overall look for your theme.

02

Determine The Design

Colour scheme, motifs, and key elements that will be incorporated into the decorations.

03

Explore Many Options

Look at different types of decorative elements to suit your theme like props, centrepieces, floral arrangements.

04

Consider Lighting Effects

Lighting can enhance the ambiance of the venue so think about little things such as fairy lights, spotlights, or themed projections.

05

Focus On To Table Settings

Make sure everything is on theme especially tablecloths, napkins, place cards, and table centrepieces.

06

Coordinate With The Venue Staff & School

To ensure that your decoration isn't breaking any restrictions or guidelines.

07

Delegate Tasks

If you have a formal committee ensure you delegate tasks related to sourcing or creating decorations to committee members or volunteers, ensuring everything is prepared in advance.

CATERING FOR YOUR FORMAL

Decide on a theme for the formal and plan the decorations accordingly. Consider props, lighting, table settings, and backdrops to create the desired ambiance.

01

Consult With The School

Your school has a wealth of knowledge and experience running events. They most likely have a few caterers on file, check with the school to determine if there are any preferred or approved caterers to work with.

02

Consider Dietary Restrictions

Make sure you gather information about preferences of the attendees, such as vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free, or halal options. This can easily be done online during the booking phase for your formal with TryBooking using the custom forms feature.

03

Sample Caterers Before Selecting

Request sample menus from potential caterers and arrange taste tests, if possible, to ensure the quality and taste meet expectations. You don't want the bad food at your formal.

04

Coordinate With The Caterer

Never forget to work with the expert when it comes to logistical details, such as setup and breakdown times, serving areas, dietary information, and any specific requests.

05

Communicate To Attendees

Let the students attending know about the chosen menu and any dietary accommodations to the attendees, allowing them to make informed choices during the event.

06

Finalise the catering contract

Make sure you clearly outlining the agreed-upon services, menu choices, serving style, staffing requirements, and payment terms.

ENTERTAINMENT

Arrange for entertainment options like a DJ, live band, or other performers. Consider music preferences and ensure they align with the chosen theme

01

Research & Contact Local Entertainers

Start doing research into DJs, live bands, or performers who specialise in formal events. Maybe check with the committee who did last years formal.

02

Look Within Your School

There is already heaps of upcoming talent at every school see if there is a anyone at your school is an aspiring DJ or rockstar. Plus recruiting from within may help with keeping your formal on budget.

03

Inquire & Sample

Check with them on their availability, pricing, and their ability to cater to specific music preferences, genres, or themes. Make sure they all have working with children checks before going further.

If it all looks good, request a playlists or videos of their performances to assess their style and suitability for the formal.

04

Coordinate With Them

Open up a clear channel of communication and understanding of the event schedule and specific announcements.

Discuss any additional requirements: whether they require any equipment that they may need, such as sound systems or lighting.

PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEOGRAPHY

Book a professional photographer or arrange for a student photographer to capture the memorable moments of the formal.

01

Research & Check Within

Again, decide whether to hire a professional or utilise talented student photographers and videographers.

Always check with your school if they have one on retainer and the photographer has the required working with children check.

02

Check Their Portfolio

Get a sample work to assess the quality and style of their photography. Make sure you review pictures that have been taken in a similar situation to your formal.

03

Inquire & Be Prepared

Arrange a meeting or consultation to discuss specific shots, desired poses, and any additional requests.

If you're planning to have a corner section of your formal to take professional standard pictures, make sure they have all the equipment needed.

04

Communication is Key

Lighting can enhance the ambiance of the venue so think about little things such as fairy lights, spotlights, or themed projections.

TICKETING & GUEST LIST

Create an event on an event ticketing platform, such as TryBooking, to help manage ticket sales, track attendance, and compile a guest list.

We've compiled some tips and tricks to help your formal streamline receiving it's funds for deposits, while handy tips to collect dietary requirements to setting up an event where students book their tables.



Setting Up Your Account

When setting up your TryBooking account, it's essential to streamline the process of receiving funds, particularly for your venue deposit.



Creating Your Event

TryBooking offers many ways to build your event and accept bookings. Everything from letting students select their table to seating plans to showcase the layout of the venue.



Set Up When To Go Live

Before going live, it's essential to follow a few tips they we've prepared to help you avoid the rush and any other complaints from students trying to book a ticket to their formal.



Branding & Promoting Your Event

It's important to encourage the student body to make timely payments and bookings. Use our tips to tricks to make it convenient for students to book and promote your formal effectively.



Ongoing & On The Day Tips

Make your on the day experience for your event smooth as possible with these tips and features. To help reduce your stress and your fellow students.



A Pre-Sale Checklist

Before going live with your formal, we have created a checklist to help you review your event to ensure you have no bumps.

Setting Up Your Account

When setting up your TryBooking account, it's essential to streamline the process of receiving funds, particularly for your venue deposit. Here's how you can ensure a smooth financial setup.



1 SELECT A RESPONSIBLE ADULT

Identify a trustworthy adult within your school community, such as a parent, teacher, or coach, who can assist in the financial aspects of the event.

1

2

ACCOUNT CREATION

Create your TryBooking account but use the details of the responsible adult.

This is due to legal regulations that prohibit the transfer of funds to individuals under the age of 18.



3 INCORPORATE YOURSELF

3

After setting up the account under the responsible adult's details, make sure to add yourself as a team member. Grant yourself the role of a Power User, which allows you to effectively manage the formal event.



FACILITATE PAYMENT COLLECTION

5



4

Encourage the student body to make timely payments for tickets. Set a deadline to encourage people to stick to it.

This will aid in quicker fund collection, making the financial process more efficient.



COLLABORATE WITH TRYBOOKING

Work collaboratively with the TryBooking accounts team. They're dedicated to helping your formal succeed. By maintaining open communication, you can resolve any financial matters promptly.

Creating Your Event

Choose an Event Setup: When creating your event, you can choose to create a tabled event, which will require the number of tables and seats per table. Otherwise, if you don't require designated tables use open space and input the capacity.

Venue Floor Plan: Check with the venue or create an image of the floor plan for your event to give students better understand of where everything is

Input Your Formal Details: Create an event page on the platform, include event details, ticket types, pricing, and any additional information or FAQs.

Terms & Conditions: Don't forget to add terms and conditions, in case there is any issues of cancellation, refunds or more.

Collect Information: Make sure you use custom forms to collect key information from your attendees like dietary requirements and other useful information.

Keep Your Event Private: Make sure your event is set to private, since you don't want to have anyone not invited to attend your formal, especially when you will be facilitating a group of students under the age of 18.

Set Up When To Go Live

Set A Go Live Date: Set a go live date via the booking date when setting up your event, this can be changed at any time.

Avoid The Rush: Open ticket sales early in the morning. Publish the opening date, but not a specific time. Consider opening sales between 2am - 6am so that enthusiastic students can book early, reducing a 'rush' later on.

Have A Goal In Mind: Determine the maximum number of tickets available and set a deadline for ticket sales.

Branding & Promoting Your Event

Design Your Tickets: Customise the ticket design and branding to align with the formal theme or school colours.

Promote Your Formal: Promote the formal and ticket sales through various channels, including social media, school announcements, and posters.

Make It Easy For Students To Book: Publish your event URL on your email invites, school announcements or social media. Use the QR code to allow students to scan & book in a matter of seconds for posters and other print promotions. Don't tell them to search for the event on TryBooking.

Report & Monitor: Regularly monitor ticket sales and attendee information through the TryBooking reports section.

Ongoing & On The Day Tips

Create A Guest List: Export all students that have booked their place at your formal to help compile a guest list with the names and contact details of attendees. You can export extra information like dietary requirements, tables booked and more using custom reports matched with custom forms to collect the data. Ensure the accuracy of the information provided.

Communicate: Keep track of RSVPs and communicate any changes or updates to attendees promptly. You can use email buyers to send emails to students who have booked straight from the system.

Get Guests To Check-in: To keep your event secure you can setup a check in using the TryBooking Scanning App to scan tickets of students and guests coming into the venue.



If you are ever in need of any assistance when creating and managing your formal on TryBooking, our expert Australian support team are here for you. Email: info@trybooking.com or Call: **039 0123 460**

Pre Sale Checklist



Now that you have completed your event, make sure you check the following to ensure you are ready to promote your formal and go live!

- Ensure that your event is set to private
- Checked your emails and other communications to see if the Event URL link is working properly.
- Branded your booking page with school logo, which helps assure students that they are booking for the right event.
- The correct event date(s) and time(s) listed.
- Listed the correct ticket prices.
- Checked that your group tickets have the right quantity on them.
- Checked to see if you have the correct floor plan of the venue (if you have a tabled event)
- Ensure you have set up the account owner with a responsible adults name and email.
- Reserved your VIP seats.



After you've created your event, test out booking for your event by clicking on **Make a Booking** from your account dashboard. Click through your event all the way to the shopping cart.



PROMOTING YOUR FORMAL



Market the formal using various channels, including social media, posters, and announcements during school assemblies. Create a buzz and generate interest among the students.

SOCIAL MEDIA PROMOTION

Create dedicated social media accounts/groups or use existing school accounts to promote the formal event. Regularly post updates, announcements, and engaging content related to the event. Encourage students to share posts, use event-specific hashtags, and tag their friends to increase visibility.



POSTERS AND FLYERS

Design eye-catching posters and flyers to display around the school. Include essential details such as the date, venue, theme, ticketing information, and any special features of the event. You can use QR codes to allow students to purchase the tickets easier. Make sure you place them in prominent areas like notice boards, common areas, and classrooms.



SCHOOL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Coordinate with school administrators to make announcements during assemblies or class meetings to inform students about the upcoming formal event. Emphasise key details, ticket sales information, and any important deadlines.



FORMAL ATTIRE

Arrange for entertainment options like a DJ, live band, or other performers. Consider music preferences and ensure they align with the chosen theme

01

Dress Code Communication

Clearly outline the dress code expectations for the formal event. Specify whether it is a formal or semi-formal dress code, and if there are any specific requirements or themes to consider. Provide examples or visual references to help students understand the desired attire.

02

Appropriate Attire Guidelines

Offer guidelines on what is considered appropriate and suitable for the formal event. Emphasise modesty, avoiding overly revealing or offensive outfits. Include suggestions for appropriate hairstyles, accessories, and footwear.

03

Dress Code Reminders

Regularly remind students about the dress code in the weeks leading up to the formal event. Use school announcements, social media posts, and dedicated information sessions to ensure everyone is aware of the expectations.

TRANSPORT

Arrange transportation options, such as buses or limousines, for students to travel to and from the venue safely.

01

Transportation Coordination

Determine the number of students attending the formal and arrange appropriate transportation. Consider booking buses to transport students from the school to the venue and back.

Coordinate with your school and transportation providers to ensure reliable service and proper scheduling.

You can use TryBooking to get students to book their spot on buses.

02

Safety & Supervision

Prioritise student safety during transportation. Ensure responsible adults or school staff are present on the buses to supervise and maintain order.

Communicate guidelines and expectations for student behaviour during the transportation to promote a safe and enjoyable experience.

03

Alternative Transport Options

For students who may prefer alternative transport arrangements, provide guidelines on organising carpooling or arranging private transportation like taxis or ridesharing services.

Encourage students to plan their transportation in advance to avoid any last-minute issues and use TryBooking to organise group funds for limos and other forms of transportation.



To avoid any issues with transportation, best to keep the venue close by the school. In order to stop students getting lost on the way there.

PRE-FORMAL PREPARATIONS

Coordinate with the venue staff to set up decorations, tables, and any additional requirements in advance. Conduct a rehearsal for any performances, speeches, or special activities planned for the formal.

01

Schedule Meetings & Rehearsals

Meet with the venue staff to discuss the setup details, including the placement of decorations, tables, and seating arrangements. Schedule rehearsals to allow participants from performers, speakers, technicians and others have night to practice and become familiar with the venue and equipment setup.

02

Coordinate & Communicate

Ensure everyone is aware of their roles and the formal setup. Check that your decorators have access to the venue to setup, venue staff have detailed floor plan of your formal layout and technicians have the equipment ready.

03

Confirm Equipment

Confirm the availability of necessary equipment such as audiovisual systems, microphones, and projectors, and ensure they are in working order.

04

Requirements & Restrictions

Communicate any specific requirements or restrictions to the venue staff, such as electrical outlets, hanging decorations, or any limitations on the use of certain areas.

05

Receive Feedback & Refine

Encourage participants to ask questions, address any concerns, and make any necessary adjustments to ensure a polished performance on the formal night

DAY OF THE FORMAL

Event Night Logistics

Schedule: Create a detailed event schedule and share it with all relevant stakeholders, including venue staff, caterers, entertainers, committee members and volunteers.



Delegate: Arrange for designated event coordinators or committee members to oversee different areas, such as entry, seating, and entertainment, to ensure smooth coordination.



Venue Setup: Coordinate with the venue staff to ensure that all necessary areas, such as the check-in desk, cloakroom, and restrooms, are properly set up and easily accessible.



Check With Catering: Liaise with caterers to ensure that food and beverages are served according to the agreed-upon schedule and that dietary restrictions or special requests are accommodated.



Keep On The Ball: Maintain open lines of communication with the venue staff throughout the formal night to address any unforeseen issues promptly and efficiently.



Security and Safety

Prioritise the safety of attendees: Consider hiring security personnel or arranging for school staff members and parents to oversee the event.



Check Risks: Conduct a risk assessment of the venue and identify any potential hazards or security concerns.



Communicate The Need For Safety: Clearly communicate safety guidelines to attendees, including rules regarding behavior, alcohol, and drugs.





Be Prepped For The Worst: Establish a communication plan for emergencies and ensure that responsible individuals have access to emergency contact numbers.





POST FORMAL


After-Event Clean Up

Build The Team: Arrange for a team of volunteers or a designated clean-up crew to be present after the formal. 


Be Clear: Provide clear instructions and assign specific tasks to ensure all areas of the venue are cleaned and restored to their original condition. 


Coordinate Waste Removal: Arrange for the disposal of waste including proper recycling and removal of any decorations or materials used during the formal. 


Check With The Venue: Coordinate with the venue management to determine any specific requirements or guidelines for post-event clean-up. 


Thank The Team: Express gratitude to the volunteers or clean-up crew for their assistance in making sure the venue is left in a clean and orderly state. 

Thank You Notes

Create Thank You Notes & Cards: Express appreciation to all those involved in the organisation and execution of the formal event. 

Appreciate The Support: Show appreciation to teachers, parents, staff members, and administrators who provided support and guidance. 

Personalise Your Thank You: Consider personalising the thank-you notes to make them more meaningful and heartfelt. 

Pat Yourself On The Back: Thank the fellow members of the formal committee for their hard work, dedication, and contributions to the event. 



Get in touch today



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With TryBooking**

