

Halloween Disco

Date, Venue & Time

We try to hold the disco on the Thursday evening nearest to Halloween or on the 31st if possible (but always before Halloween). The original idea for a Halloween Disco stemmed from a real desire to keep the juniors off the streets on Halloween night. The disco takes place in the Junior Hall on the West site. The food and games take place in the Infant Hall on the West site with food and drink being served from the Infant Hall food hatch.

Tickets

The disco is for junior pupils only. Tickets are limited to 200. There are more junior pupils than tickets available so they are sold on a first come first served basis, in the playground a few days before the disco (quite a few of the younger juniors do not come along because they find it scary). We charge £ 2.50 per ticket. The tickets are numbered. We normally run the disco from 6.30pm to 8.30pm – parents leave their children.

Disco

We use Mario who is a class room assistant - He charges £ 100.00.

Decoration

We have a supply of some decorations but they do take a beating and probably need replenishing each year. A group of volunteers decorates the hall after school on the day. We need to take the decorations down that night and make a note of where they are stored so that they can be found next year

Publicity

We need do posters to put up around the school, year 6 sometimes help with this, ask Luisa Munroe. Make sure they have the essential information which must appear on the posters. A note should go home to all juniors telling parents about the disco and asking for volunteers. (

Volunteers

You need lots of people; we had 50 people volunteering on our rota which made organising the evening much smoother. Texting or emailing people personally helps to engage people. Whilst selling the tickets we also made a list of parents buying tickets who were willing to help. On the night having a floater with the rota makes it easier to see where more help is required and move people around as needed. Bouncers overseeing the disco hall and no go areas stopped the children going outside or into the infants area was essential.

Other tips

- Somewhere to leave coats and bags is required. Maybe only use the teacher's toilets as we let them use the disabled toilet as well.
- Don't leave anything lying about – we left spare sweets in the toilet and they all disappeared!!
- Keep someone at the entrance with parent contact lists means the children have a point of contact.
- The volunteers who decorated the hall were asked to bring their own cello tape, string, wall staplers if they had so it helped quicken the decorating process not just having to rely on the schools. Also the majority of the games were set up in that time, whereas the year before we started doing it just before the disco started and it was a bit manic.
- Another thing to have done, if there is time when decorating the infant hall is to set up tables and chairs for the food.

- Clear up crew helpful if they have their own scissors or staple removers again makes it quicker than waiting to borrow schools limited supply.

Food

We serve simple food, hummus, grapes, crisps, satsumas, juice and water.

What was bought for 2008 was: (numbers are approx)

- 6 melons
- 12 mangos
- 6 boxes strawberries
- 6 big punnets of seedless grapes
- 40 seedless satsumas
- 10 bags of pitta bread
- 10 big bags ready salted crisps (much better than flavoured ones which have chemicals and monosodium glutamate...and not terrible if kids are sweating for them to have a bit of salt)
- 3 packets rice cakes
- 3 packets of smoked salmon (a bit mad I know but it all got gobbled up and we could have afforded a bit more)
 - We could have done with a bit more of all of the above

- 2 big bag carrots
- 8 punnets cherry tomatoes (didn't all go this year but did last year)
- 6 cucumbers
- 5 red peppers
 - These numbers about right

- 6 mega enormous tubs of hummus (a bit too much - probably about 8 of the normally large would have done)
- 2 very big bags of raisins (one would have done)
- 4 Christmas-style boxes of dates (2 would have done)

We chopped melons into crescent pieces with rind on (so they could chomp along them); mangoes into hedgehogs (cut a slice with rind still on, then cross-hatch it) plus cubes. We peeled and separated the satsumas (previous year we put some out unpeeled and they didn't go, but went immediately when we peeled them). Strawberries were washed and de-stalked; grapes taken off stems. Fruit was served nicely arranged on platters, with variety of things on each platter. The fruit was all gobbled up.

Hummus was served with strips of pita bread, batons of carrots, cucumbers and red peppers. We also put out rice-cakes for the gluten-free kids, but lots of others liked them so we could have done with more. Smoked salmon sounds a bit of an indulgence but its light, healthy and easy and you can serve in small strips. It was very popular!

As we served only cold tap water we saved a lot on drinks. Also, the advantages of the food was that it was not sugary or high in chemicals (so kids were less hyped) and fruit/veg was refreshing, so they could cool down a bit even if they didn't drink much.

Tables were arranged cafe-style for kids to group around them and a variety of different foods put on each. At one time I saw 10 boys all sitting and chatting round a table and eating carrots and hummus, which was a nice sight. We started out putting paper plates out for kids to use but they didn't bother - they seemed to graze for a few minutes, go away and then come back later.

As we had more helpers this year we were able to clean up around tables as we went, so there was not so much to do at the end.

The children get very hot and need to come into the Infant Hall for frequent refills. They also get an apple if they do the apple bobbing and a donut from the donuts on a string game

Games

Donuts on a string

In 2008 we ordered 200 ring donuts about a week before the disco from Dunns. Make sure that you specify ring donuts as one year we had jam donuts – these are very much messier and are much harder to string, as each one had to be holed first! We checked with the school kitchen staff that it would be ok to store them in the kitchen that afternoon and it was agreed that we could bring them from about 2pm, as the lunches would be finished and cleared by then. Two people collected the donuts – one to drive the car and wait in the road behind Dunns (next to the library) and the other to pay and collect (Dunns charged £60 for the 200 donuts). We delivered the donuts straight to the school kitchen via the teachers' car park.

The donut game needs to be set up in the Infants Hall before the disco starts. We suspended the donuts from the school gym equipment (an overhead ladder (clean it first!) attached between the climbing wall and an A frame). To avoid having to tie each donut in advance, we found it worked very well using crocodile clips (£4.90 for 14 from W D Bishop & Son, 9 Park Road) – check the Coleridge Family storage cupboard before buying more. A length of string (just over a meter long) was passed through a donut and then through the side rail and rung of the ladder and the two ends were clipped together with a crocodile clip. We suspended 4 donuts from each side of the ladder so that 8 children could play at any one time.

The children lined up and, when a donut was ready for them, their right hand was stamped and they were then able to try to eat the suspended donut without using their hands. We had one donut per child and so it was important to stamp clearly and check each arm carefully as quite a few children try to scrub the stamp off and come back time and time again! They were only allowed to return for a second one 15 minutes before the disco was due to end.

It's recommended that two helpers, or even 3, are working together on this game at any one time. One helper polices the queue, checks arms for stamps, stamps arms, passes strings through the and then swaps a strung donut for a used string donuts (this can be split between 2 – one for stamping and the other for stringing). The other helper exchanges the used strings for ones with donuts and hangs them on the ladder with the crocodile clips. Remember to cover the floor with Tarpaulin or sheeting.

Yucky Lucky Dip

Children take it in turns to put their hand into a bowl full of unpleasant things - peeled grapes as eyeballs, cooked spaghetti as intestines, cold rice pudding as vomit etc... It takes ages to peel the grapes so this should be done well in advance (or feel free to decide on something a little easier, e.g. ping-pong balls greased in olive oil?). Remember to cover the floor with Tarpaulin or sheeting.

Apple Bobbing

This one is self-explanatory. Once the child gets a bite of the apple s/he keeps it. Last year's notes say it was very wet and suggests doing it on a mat of towels - this year we are asking reception class if we can borrow their sand trays for the apple bobbing – buy apples from one of the local greengrocer or ask for a donation. Remember to cover the floor with Tarpaulin or sheeting.

SUPPLIES

You will need to make sure that someone takes responsibility for buying all the food. Food can be bought from local supermarkets or Costco.

You will need to ensure that there are paper plates, cups and napkins in the store

SAFETY ISSUES

- The disco can be chaotic and therefore risky.
- In the note home to parents we ask that children don't bring "offensive weapons" such as devil's forks, brooms. If they do bring them we remove them at the door and hand them back on the night - perhaps we should think about identifying who owns the confiscated item so that we can return it at the end of the night.
- In the past, food and drink have been brought from the Infant Hall to the Junior Hall - this makes the dance floor very slippery and dangerous. We need to ensure that food and drink are not brought through to the Junior Hall.
- We need to ask the disco man not to use the smoke machine - this may affect some asthma sufferers. We also need to make sure the dance hall is not too dark because it makes it hard to supervise the children.
- We need to encourage the children to drink plenty as they do get overheated.
- We should consider inviting parents leaving children at the disco to note down their phone number on the door in case we have to call home.
- We must ensure that we have a qualified first aider in attendance - if we don't get a first aid volunteer we should invite the red cross to attend (they do attend our Summer Fair)
- Doors from both halls to the outside are to be unlocked for fire safety reasons so we need adults at each unlocked door to ensure children do not leave the building

ADULT HELPERS

We need plenty of adult helpers on the night to help with the door, food, games and safety – at least 10 adults in the halls at any time and 2 on the door. Set a rota so everyone knows where they are meant to be at what time, you can rotate helpers around the events.

