

Step-by-step: Campover

Great for: **EVERYONE!**

Fun factor: ★★★★★

Effort: ★★★★★

£ potential: £££££

For an event that offers family fun and fresh air by the bucket-load, look no further than a campover!

1 Find a suitable site and check what permissions may be required. If you're not using the school grounds, then identify an alternative site and approach the landowner, agreeing with them exactly what you will be doing. Think about the scope of your event. How many people do you expect to attend? What will you do for food? What kind of activities will you run? Do you want to put on live music? If you do host a live music event, start checking out any local acts before you book to make sure that they're suitable for all the family!

2 Order any equipment you need such as marquees, toilets, bins, lighting, generators, staging, PA system, etc. If your event is held in the summer, then bear in mind that this is the busiest time of year for outdoor events suppliers so the earlier you order the better. If you're using external caterers, get quotes and start booking. If you're planning to have live music then book the bands and performers that you are interested in. Start promoting your event – posters are available at ptaprintshop.co.uk. Start pushing ticket sales.

3 Confirm with your local authority which licences you need – the sale of alcohol will require a TEN, although if your numbers exceed 500, a premises licence may be required for your site. PRS for Music licences are also a consideration, as is compliance with environmental health requirements for caterers. Check whether your PTA insurance covers your event. Get copies of public liability cover from any external contractors. Plan any activities that you're hoping to run, making sure you have the equipment you need and enough people to run them safely. Prepare a risk assessment.

4 Draw up a rota of volunteers and start to fill in time slots. It's always good to have some extra people on standby for emergencies. The sort of roles you might need to fill include: set up/take down, cooking and serving food, serving on the bar, running activities, parking stewards, gate security, first aiders, campfire stewards. Finalise your schedule and let attendees know what sort of activities and entertainment to expect.

Tips and advice

Find a site: A safe and secure site where children can play with minimal supervision allows adults to relax. Check the site after heavy rain – has it turned into a quagmire? You will also need to consider: access to a water supply for drinking, cooking and washing; electricity – you may be able to cook on open fires or BBQs, asking people to bring torches, but if you have catering units and a PA system you will need some form of power; enough toilets (or portaloos) and loo roll!

Safety and security: Choose a site where access in and out can be easily monitored. Issue all attendees with a wristband and ensure that they are worn. Anyone on site without a wristband can then be legitimately challenged. Keep cars out of your campsite if possible – have some stewards to help people park and transfer luggage to the site. Carry out a risk assessment, noting anything that lies within the site that could compromise safety. Consider how stewards will communicate with one another, and appoint first aiders.

Activities: The following things work well: treasure hunt, obstacle course, a slippery slope (a big plastic sheet covered in water for kids to slide down), family games of rounders and football. Don't feel the need to overschedule things. The children will love roaming around and making up their own games. You might want to offer something for adults such as pamper treatments or craft workshops.

For more ideas and advice, visit pta.co.uk

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Step-by-step: Campover cont'd.

5 Order catering supplies if you are doing your own cooking. 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. 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.

6 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. Don't forget your cash floats. Try to relax and go with the flow. Although you will have done lots of planning, be prepared for people to make up their own spontaneous forms of entertainment!

» For more advice on licensing, running a family BBQ and catering at events, go to pta.co.uk.

Wet weather: Work on the assumption that the weather will be wet! Hopefully, it will be great, but if it's not then you can still have a great time if you have already arranged access to indoor facilities such as a school hall or a farmer's barn. Or you may want to erect some marquees to provide covered communal areas and think about some wet weather games such as bingo. Make sure people pre-pay as far in advance as possible so that if the weather turns bad at the last minute they won't pull out – or at least if they do you already have the money.

Boost profits: Sell glowsticks, offer face painting and temporary tattoos, run a tuck shop and sell mocktails. Most of these can be run by the children themselves with a little help. Consider negotiating a discount with a local camping shop (with some commission for you), for parents who need to buy a tent or other equipment.

Food: You may decide that it's easier for people to bring and cook their own food and drinks or you may want to put on a grand communal feast and provide a full bar. This decision may depend on how many people you have to feed and over what time period; what cooking facilities you have available; what expertise you have; and how you are hoping to make your profits. Pre-sell an all-inclusive food package if possible.

Marketing: Market your event with reluctant campers in mind, pointing out that it's just one or two nights, held somewhere close to home and you are providing a good variety of food and fun activities!

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