

The Secret Success of the School Ball

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The Waihi College school ball happened not long ago, boasting a DJ, a delicious finger food buffet, a photobooth, and an amazing, chill atmosphere. We interviewed some of the ball organizers to ask how they think it went, and what they felt about the result of all their behind the scenes planning.

A group of Year 11s enjoying the school ball.

Wendy was the main coordinator of this year's school ball, while people like Ms Howell, Mrs Graveson, Mr Hallet, and Mr Cochrane supported her.

Everyone thought the ball went really well, especially with Wendy being the backbone behind the whole operation. As the project manager, she made sure the ball committee, mainly Year 13 students, had a say in what was going on.

She divides the ball committee into groups depending on what they're interested in, such as decorating, food, music, etc. Sarah was a big helping hand when it came to the sound and lighting. Originally the DJ was going to be an ex-student, but when that idea fell through, Sarah found someone through her dance class who could do the job.

"We usually never know how many people are coming, so we try to make the ticket prices just cover the costs (of the ball). The intention isn't to make a massive profit, just to break even." Wendy says.

But just what was the total cost of the ball? Luckily Mr Cochrane had the answer for us.

"The expected sale of tickets covers the costs. There is no ball budget or school contribution." He says the ball costs approximately \$5-6k each year.

"I think the ball went exceptionally well," says Wendy. The teachers were initially worried about the breathalyzer test but were relieved that there was no alcohol in anyone's systems that night.

Ms Howell was Wendy's main support, overseeing everything in regards to the ball. She was kind enough to show us two types of breathalyzers. The first type was a simple yes/no version, whereas the second breathalyzer showed exactly how much alcohol was in their system. Only the first type was used at the ball, as no one had alcohol in their system, which she says was a pleasant surprise for her!

Mr Cochrane informs us that the breathalyzer is designed to deter people from being under the influence upon arrival, but is happy that this year no one was under the influence at the ball.

Both Ms Howell and Mr Hallet agree that everyone was well behaved. “With mine and Ms Howell’s combined experience with the ball, we can both say that this ball had some of the best behavior that we’ve ever seen,” says Mr Hallet. He was in charge of making sure students behaved at the ball, but found his help was scarcely needed.

“Usually we (the teachers) are on edge, but this ball was, I think, one of the best ones I’ve been to,” Ms Howell adds.

Wendy thinks there’s nothing she would add to the ball for next year, as each year is different with new Year 13s and the ideas are up to them, but Ms Howell and Mr Hallet had other ideas.

Ms Howell thought there should be activities for the students to make the ball more fun. “The students, especially the little ones, were excited for the ball. Finding a nice outfit to wear, the hype of getting ready, all that good stuff, but when they got there, they were like ‘oh... is this it?’”

Ms Howell mentions how the students at the ball were all on their phones in their own little groups most of the night.

“The ball went great, the only bad thing was that some kids spent too much time on their phones, but that’s because there wasn’t enough to do,” Mr Hallet comments. It seems general consensus was that activities for students will make the ball funner next time around.

Ms Howell says ball planning starts in January. This year was the first time the ball was held in Term 1, whereas last year’s ball was held in Term 3. She liked that the ball was out of the way so early, as last year’s planning started in January and took a longer time for the same results.

Mr Cochrane says the ball went really well. “The staff and students did an amazing job.”

He was very happy the ball was so well organised despite it being put together rather last minute with the threat of Covid hanging overhead.

“The students looked magnificent, they got into the spirit of the evening,” Mr Cochrane comments. He says he’s always open to student suggestions for any future ideas for the ball.

