



DECK THE HALLS

2026 School Hall Decorating Challenge

Friends of Portsmouth & Young Friends of Portsmouth | Winterfest 2026

School Information & Guidelines

It's time to **Deck the Halls!** We're inviting public, private, and parochial schools throughout Scioto County to transform their hallways into festive Christmas wonderlands!

Gather your students, teachers, clubs, PTOs, families, and community supporters to bring your vision to life. Whether it's a classic Christmas, winter wonderland, Candy Cane Lane, Santa's Workshop, or a hometown holiday celebration, we can't wait to see your creativity!

Participation is completely FREE!

IMPORTANT DATES

Friday, November 13 | Registration Deadline

Each participating school or eligible school level must complete its own registration.

November 13 – December 3 | Decorating Period

Time to bring your school's Christmas vision to life!

Friday, December 4, by 5 PM | Photo Submission Deadline

All photos, optional videos, and theme descriptions must be submitted.

December 5–11 | Free Online Voting

Community voting opens! Voting is unlimited and completely free.

Saturday, December 12 | Winners Announced

The top three schools will be recognized, and our first-place winner will receive the traveling trophy!

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

- **All Scioto County Schools:** Open to public, private, and parochial schools throughout Scioto County.
 - **Separate School Entries:** Preschools, elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools may register separately, even if they are within the same district or share a campus. Each entry must decorate its own designated hallway or common area.
 - **Adult Coordinator:** Each participating school must designate one responsible adult to serve as its primary contact.
 - **Free Participation:** There is no cost to enter! Each school is responsible for planning, fundraising, decorations, supplies, installation, and removal. Schools are welcome to seek donations or sponsorships from PTOs, families, and local businesses.
 - **Enter Both Competitions:** Schools may participate in Deck the Halls, the Merry & Bright Christmas Tree Fight, or both, subject to each competition's eligibility requirements.
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DECORATING RULES & GUIDELINES

1. Choose Your Space

Decorate one designated hallway or comparable school common area, with approval from school administration. The goal is to transform a shared space into a Christmas wonderland, rather than decorating just one classroom door.

2. Let Your Creativity Shine!

Choose any school-appropriate Christmas theme! We encourage original ideas, handmade decorations, student artwork, school spirit, and thoughtful use of your space.

3. Safety Comes First

All displays must comply with school policies and applicable fire-safety requirements. Hallways, exits, emergency equipment, and accessible pathways must remain clear. Open flames, unsecured overhead decorations, and materials that damage school property are prohibited.

4. Get Everyone Involved!

Students, teachers, clubs, PTOs, and families are encouraged to participate. All decorating activities must be approved and supervised by school administration.

5. Plan for Removal

Each school is responsible for safely removing its decorations according to its own school schedule and policies.

PHOTO & THEME SUBMISSIONS

Ready to show off your masterpiece? Each participating school may submit:

- **Up to 10 high-quality photos** of its completed hallway, including wide-angle views and close-up details.
- **One optional walkthrough video** of up to 60 seconds.
- **A theme description of 100 words or less** explaining the inspiration behind the display and highlighting special student contributions.
- **School name, display title, and coordinator contact information.**

Submission Deadline: Friday, December 4, at 5 PM

A separate photo submission link and instructions will be emailed to registered school coordinators closer to the deadline.

All submitted photographs and videos must be approved for public use. Identifiable students should not appear without appropriate school and parent/guardian permissions.

By submitting approved materials, schools authorize Friends of Portsmouth to use them for Winterfest voting, promotion, and winner announcements.

ONLINE VOTING

The community decides! Deck the Halls is a 100% People's Choice competition!

Voting is completely **FREE**, and everyone is encouraged to support their favorite school.

Here's how voting works:

- **Unlimited Voting:** There is no limit to how many times an individual may vote.
- **Online Only:** All votes must be submitted through the official Friends of Portsmouth voting link.
- **People's Choice:** First, second, and third place will be determined entirely by the total number of valid votes received.
- **No Judges:** There will be no judging panels, scoring rubrics, or enrollment-based weighting.
- **Spread the Word:** Schools are encouraged to share their entries and the voting link with families, alumni, and community supporters.
- **Fair Participation:** Genuine repeat voting is welcome. Automated, bot-generated, or fraudulent voting is prohibited. Friends of Portsmouth reserves the right to review and remove invalid votes.

In the event of a tie affecting an award, a publicly announced tie-breaker voting round will determine the final placement.

Online Voting: December 5–11, 2026

PRIZES & RECOGNITION

1ST PLACE | DECK THE HALLS CHAMPION

The winning school will receive the official **Deck the Halls Traveling Trophy!**

The school's name will be engraved on the trophy, and the school will proudly display it for one full year. The trophy will then be returned ahead of the following year's competition, allowing a new champion to carry on the tradition!

2ND PLACE | SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Recognition certificate and feature on Friends of Portsmouth's social media.

3RD PLACE | SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Recognition certificate and feature on Friends of Portsmouth's social media.

ALL PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

Schools may receive a certificate of participation celebrating their creativity, effort, and Christmas spirit.

There are no cash prizes. Friends of Portsmouth will coordinate trophy engraving, presentation, and return arrangements.

OFFICIAL REGISTRATION & QUESTIONS

Ready to Deck the Halls? Scan the QR code below to register your school!

Participation is FREE! Each participating school must complete the official registration form to be entered into the competition. Please designate one responsible adult to serve as your school's primary contact.

Once registered, you'll receive additional information about photo submissions, important deadlines, and online voting.

Registration Deadline: Friday, November 13, 2026

Questions? Contact Friends of Portsmouth: hello@friendsofportsmouth.com

Let's fill the halls with Christmas cheer and show off the creativity of our Scioto County schools! 🎄

