



Students enjoy a prom session at the Fenon Events managed stage. PHOTOS/PATRICK SSENTONGO

Prom season is here: Teens Buzz gotchu y'all

From simple school dances to full-blown productions with red carpets, dome tents, TikTok reels, and themed fashion, today's school proms have become the biggest social moments for teenagers.

BY PATRICK SSENTONGO

There was a time when school prom was simple. Wake up, iron your suit, borrow a tie from your cousin, maybe pass by the salon and arrive for the red carpet in broad daylight. Dance a little, eat pilau and chicken, go back to the dormitory.

Yeah.... those days are long gone

Today's prom culture is a different league. Different pressures and different production.

We are talking about cinematic entrances, sunset red carpets, cocktail sessions, themed dress codes, outdoor dome tents, DJs, reels creators, drone cameras and enough TikTok content to keep your school trending for a whole week.

And honestly, prom season has quietly become the biggest social calendar moment for high school teens.

As *Teens Buzz* kicks off its special prom season coverage over the next couple of weeks, we shall be bringing you some of the biggest school proms, SOSH events, luncheons, leavers' parties and candidates' socials happening across the country.

However, beyond the glam, one thing is clear, school proms are evolving and this generation is taking things very seriously.

More than just a party

Beyond the aesthetics, trending videos and red carpet pressure, these events still hold emotional meaning.

For finalists, prom season represents one last big social memory together before the seriousness of third term and final exams fully takes over.

And maybe that is why this generation is going all out. Because years from now, long after the uniforms are packed away and the school groups go silent, these moments will remain frozen in pictures, videos and memories.

If this year's prom season has shown us anything, its: High school proms are no longer just school functions but culture.



An experiential montage view of the production set and set up of Seeta High.

From school hall vibes to full event productions

Back in the day, most school proms happened inside the same old school main hall. Same walls, curtains and stage. Maybe a few balloons and coloured ribbons here and there.

And now? Schools are stepping out of the halls completely. One of the biggest changes this year has been the shift to outdoor prom setups. Schools are now transforming gardens, football pitches and school compounds into luxurious event spaces with giant dome tents, LED screens, decorated walkways, premium lighting, classy backdrops and professional sound systems.

And the difference is very massive. The outdoor setting gives schools room to create a completely fresh atmosphere away from the "usual school look." It feels less like assembly and more like a celebrity awards night.

Most schools now work with established events management companies to handle décor, photography, sound,

lighting and theming, something that was barely common just a few years ago.

Even cocktail spaces now come with beach-style aesthetics, lounge seats, fruit stations, mocktail bars, mood lighting and full DJ setups playing chill amapiano and afrobeat vibes as candidates network and catch up before the main event.

Basically, prom is no longer just an event. It is an experience.

The rise of 'sessions'

Another thing that has changed is the structure of the day itself. Old-school prom schedules were straightforward. Prepare. Red carpet. Dance. Food. Done. Today's prom schedule looks almost like a festival lineup.

Most schools now divide the day into different sessions, each with its own vibe, dresscode and sometimes even a different venue inside school.

You'll find prayers happening in the chapel. Cocktail sessions by the swimming pool or school gardens. Dance re-

hearsals somewhere else. Then later, the actual red carpet and dinner affair in a fully transformed outdoor setup.

And each session now matters. The cocktail session especially has become a huge social moment. It is where people first show out their fits, take aesthetic pictures, network with friends and create those early "soft life" reels before the heavier evening glam arrives.

It is no longer just about dancing anymore. It is about moments and trending online.

The theme game

One thing this year's prom season has made very clear? Themes finally matter. For years, schools would announce themes but nobody really cared. Someone would show up in green when the theme was black and gold and life moved on. Not anymore. This generation came prepared.

One of the best examples this season came from Seeta High School Mbalala Campus, where candidates beautifully executed a brown-themed cocktail session. The boys blended brown with cream and white trousers while many girls went fully brown in elegant coordinated looks.

The result was Clean. Organised. Classy. It showed preparation, teamwork and a shared understanding that prom today is no longer random dressing, it is styling with intention. And honestly, when everyone understands the assignment, the entire event levels up. Themes today are influencing everything from outfits and décor to photography styles and even the editing tones used on TikTok recap videos. Prom aesthetics are now part of the competition too.

Sunset Red Carpets Are The New Normal

Forget the old broad daylight red carpet sessions. The real flex now is sunset timing. Schools today are deliberately saving the red carpet for evening hours, usually from around 6:30pm to 9pm, when the lighting hits differently and the atmosphere feels more cinematic. This is where the actual show begins.

Throughout the day, candidates dance, network and jazz, chill and move through the other sessions. But when sunset arrives, that's when everybody locks in to clock it. Every couple gets their moment. Every outfit gets its spotlight. Every pose matters.

Photography teams and reels creators literally become part of the experience because everyone wants that one clean transition video, that one slow-motion entrance, that one TikTok clip that makes other schools say, "Nah these guys cooked."

And for real, the red carpet is the real business. That is where schools trend or flop. It is where prom kings and queens begin building momentum before the final announcements later in the night. It is where speeches from class teachers, administrators and student committees happen before dinner officially begins.

And because of social media, the pressure is now higher than ever.

Holiday proms have changed the game completely

Holiday proms are becoming more popular as schools shift celebrations away from the academic term.

With more freedom and fewer restrictions, students fully embrace social media culture through fashion, décor, and content creation. Once videos hit TikTok and Instagram, school proms quickly turn into national conversations, with everyone comparing which school delivered the best experience.