

Guidelines for High School Graduation Ceremonies

May 2021



The following guidelines apply to 2021 high school graduation activities. Graduation activities permitted will depend on the Alert level and the Public Health measures in place.

Directives

- Every graduation ceremony or activity will have an operational plan regardless of the Alert Level in place. Where applicable, the plan will allow for appropriate cleaning and disinfection procedures between ceremonies.
- Proms will not be permitted.
- Graduation ceremonies or activities will follow the **Mandatory Order**. All participants will respect health and safety measures such as the number of people permitted and screening. Mask use and physical distancing of two (2) metres between participants who are not members of the same household or part of the same “steady 15” (yellow alert level) or part of the same “steady 10” (orange alert level) are required during indoor and outdoor graduation ceremonies and activities. When outdoors, masks may be removed for pictures with people who are not in the bubble if a (2) metre distance can be maintained.
- The school will keep a record documenting the date, time and contact information of all participants. This is to facilitate contact tracing. This collected information must be stored in a secure location for 30 days following the activity and made available if requested by Regional Public Health.
- If at any time, the school or the area where the school is located is closed or restricted due to COVID-19, there will be no in-person graduation ceremony or activity.
- Graduation ceremonies or activities will be done virtually in the event that the province or zone moves to a red or more restrictive Alert Level.

Additional Measures

- While the province or zone remains in the yellow phase, schools are permitted to hold high school graduation ceremonies or activities inside the school building. This is a modification of the Return to School Plan. Occupancy limits will be no more than 50% capacity of the space up to a maximum of 200 individuals in order to maintain physical distancing. Schools may need to hold multiple ceremonies to accommodate a larger graduating class. It is recommended that the number of guests per student be limited to two (2) to limit the possibility of transmission and to accommodate a larger number of graduates.
- The operational plan for high school graduation ceremonies will include entrance, exiting and movement within the building to ensure physical distance.
- It is recommended that schools prepare contingency plans in case the province or a zone goes to more restrictive Alert Level.

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Below are examples of graduation ceremonies that schools can do, depending on the Alert Level:

Ideas and examples of graduation ceremonies		
Yellow	Orange	Red/Lockdown
<p>Indoor ceremonies</p> <p>School may organize indoor ceremonies. Occupancy levels will be limited to 50% capacity of the space up to a maximum of 200 individuals to accommodate participants at a time with all health and safety measures (physical distancing, mask use, etc.) in place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> school may organize multiple ceremonies in gymnasium or theatre to accommodate a reduced capacity and support physical distancing. <p>Outdoor ceremonies</p> <p>School may organize outdoor graduation ceremonies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outdoor ceremonies will respect the Mandatory order with all health and safety measures (number of people, physical distancing, mask use, etc.) in place. Outdoor activities such as red carpet with masks and physical distance. 	<p>Indoor ceremonies</p> <p>Indoor ceremonies are not allowed under the Mandatory Order.</p> <p>Drive-in ceremony</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A large parking lot could be used to allow families the opportunity to attend a drive-in graduation ceremony from their vehicles. No restriction on the number of vehicles in the parking lot. All public health directives will be respected. The drive-in event may be filmed and projected on a large screen and viewed by the families from their vehicles. <p>Drive-up ceremony</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Graduates will have a designated time to drive up to the school and receive their diploma, yearbook, awards, certificates etc. Families may have the opportunity to take pictures with the Principal, by maintaining the two (2) metres physical distancing. A photographer may also be hired to simplify this process. Speeches will be done virtually and shared by video, along with pictures of each graduate and awards received. <p>Administration travels to each graduates' home and delivers their diploma, yearbook, awards etc., while respecting all health and safety measures (such as staying outdoors, wearing a mask and respecting physical distance).</p>	<p>Virtual Graduation Ceremony</p> <p>Virtual graduation ceremonies may include a video of the speeches, pictures of the graduates and a listing of any awards and if possible, a picture of the diploma presentation.</p>