

COVID-19

Planning resource: *Graduation*

While graduation ceremonies will look different due to current provincial restrictions, they remain a meaningful opportunity for students, families and staff to celebrate this important milestone and to reflect on their different experiences over the past year. Graduation ceremonies qualify as “educational activities” and are therefore allowed to continue in alignment with the [PHO Gathering and Events Order](#) and the [K-12 Health & Safety Guidelines](#).

Key parameters

- Group size must be limited to individual learning groups plus the fewest number of additional people (e.g. organizer, photographer, officiant) required to run the ceremony. Although maximum learning group size is 120 for secondary schools, organizers should aim to limit the gathering size where possible.
- Spectators (e.g. family members) can only participate in-person in accordance with the Gathering and Events Order (see options below).
- Staff and participants must follow all other required safety measures in the K-12 Health & Safety Guidelines (e.g. stay at home when sick, physical distancing, frequent hand hygiene, masks, etc) during ceremony planning and day-of activities.
- No additional social activities beyond the ceremony itself are allowed (e.g. no dinners, dances, parties, etc).
Ceremony organizers should emphasize the risks of informal social gatherings in their communications, in addition to promoting adherence to public health measures.
- If indoors, students may temporarily remove their mask while receiving their diploma (e.g. crossing the stage) and while being photographed, provided they maintain physical distance from those outside their household.
No handshakes, high-fives, etc.
- Outdoor ceremonies are encouraged, wherever possible.

Ceremony options



DRIVE-THRU CEREMONY



LEARNING GROUP CEREMONY



INDIVIDUAL CEREMONIES



TRAVELLING “ROADSHOW” CEREMONIES

Drive-Thru Ceremony

INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS PLUS IN-PERSON SPECTATORS

- Students and spectators only attend in a vehicle.
Vehicle drives up to ceremony location, student steps out of vehicle to join the officiant and be recognized (all spectators remain in the vehicle), then student returns to the vehicle and drives away.
- Entrance and exit are clearly marked and controlled; traffic moves in one direction.
- See Part K of the Gathering and Events Order for more information.

Learning Group Ceremony

LEARNING GROUP ONLY, NO IN-PERSON SPECTATORS

- Consider live streaming the event to students’ families and friends¹, and posting a program schedule so people know when they need to login.

Travelling “Road Show” Ceremonies

INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS PLUS IN-PERSON SPECTATORS

- School staff travel around the community to students’ homes to hold individual outdoor ceremonies in appropriate locations (e.g. student’s front yard, park across the street).

Individual Ceremonies

INDIVIDUAL STUDENT PLUS IN-PERSON SPECTATORS

- Only the individual student, their guests, and staff running the ceremony are present.
Max. 4 guests (plus additional children under 12 that require supervision) allowed per student. For indoor ceremonies, guests should be members of the students’ household(s) or someone who lives on their own but regularly interacts with the occupants of the household(s).
Consider live streaming the ceremony and posting a program schedule so those not able to attend in-person are able to participate.¹
- Gathering and crowding must be prevented at all times, in the school and on the school grounds.
Schedule individual ceremonies throughout the day/week.
Stage students and their guests, to ensure groups do not gather and there is at least 2M physical distance between different groups (and within groups, if not members of the same household).
Minimize the number of guests onsite at any given time. Guests should be reminded to only arrive at the school just prior to their scheduled ceremony, and to leave as soon as their ceremony is complete.
- Guests must abide by all required safety measures. See the Visitor Access section of the K-12 Health & Safety Guidelines (page 22).

Equity considerations – to ensure an inclusive graduation ceremony

- The location of the event and ensuring it is close to the school (if unable to host on the school grounds).
- Alternative ways of participating in drive-thru events for those who do not have access to a vehicle.
- Translation of communication materials so that students and family members are clear on the specific instructions and protocols of the ceremony.
- Live streaming and recording graduation ceremonies to reach those who do not have reliable access to technology, are unable to attend in-person, or live in a different time zone¹.
- Consider pre-recording speeches by school staff or valedictorians in advance and making them accessible online.
- How students can participate remotely.
- How to limit the environmental impact of drive-thru events (e.g. requesting attendees do not idle their vehicles, and do not litter).

¹ Schools and school districts must ensure that privacy and protection of information safeguards are in place when live streaming or recording ceremony events. Links to privacy information and resources are available in the [COVID-19 Operational Guidelines](#) under the Instructional Delivery, Curriculum and Assessment - Privacy and Protection of Information section.