



Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Contra Costa County Public Health Department Interim Guidance for Graduation Ceremonies: May 11, 2020

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance for spring 2020 school graduation ceremonies in light of the current Contra Costa County Shelter in Place Order. To slow and decrease the spread of COVID-19, Contra Costa County joined Alameda, Marin, San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Clara counties and the City of Berkeley and issued a legal order directing their respective residents to shelter at home. The order limits activity, travel, and business functions to only the most essential needs. The current Shelter in Place Order in Contra Costa County is in place until May 31, 2020.

We recognize the need for people to connect and celebrate, during this time of graduation; however gatherings are a major contributor to the spread of COVID-19. **We strongly encourage organizers to consider “virtual” graduations that can be held online.**

If virtual graduations are not a possibility, below are guidelines for other options that might be considered for graduation ceremonies:

Social Distancing Graduation Drive Through Diploma Pickup:

A graduation event to provide students, accompanied by their families, the opportunity to receive a diploma/certificate at the school campus or alternate location. The following guidelines are recommended:

- All events should occur outdoors
- Depending on the size of the group and the ability to social distance, it may require holding multiple events for multiple groups of students.
- Limit the number of people to accompany the student to the site, allowing only parents/caregivers and siblings (those currently living in the student’s household) to attend or (up to 4-6 people).
- One family at a time approaches a graduation table/station where their student would receive a diploma.
- Stagger families so they are able to practice social distancing and be spaced 6 feet apart, at a minimum. The more space the better.
- Be sure that school staff are also practicing social distancing and are spaced 6 feet apart.
- **Ensure that any events don’t result in congregation of spectators/observers on streets, in parking lots, or in areas surrounding the event location**
- **Ensure that no more than 200 vehicles are allowed to park in parking areas associated with the event, and that vehicles are parked at least 6 feet apart from other vehicles.**



- Ensure families and staff are wearing cloth face coverings.
- Ensure there are ample handwashing stations on site and/or hand sanitizing stations accessible so students and staff are able to wash their hands upon entering and exiting the ceremony.
- Inform families and students that they should leave the school campus after receiving their diploma.
- If families drive their cars to the graduation site, ask that families park and wait to be called forward. Ensure they do not leave their car until called.
- Students and staff should be reminded to NOT participate in the ceremony if they are sick (if they have a new cough, complaints of sore throat, or shortness of breath, or have a fever of 100°F or above).
- **Consult with local law enforcement, particularly for a large group of cars heading to one destination at one time; following any guidance provided by local law enforcement**
- If families walk or bike to the walk-up graduation site, be sure to have a safe staging area where groups are able to social distance while they wait to be called. Use chalk, chairs, and/or tape to designate spaces for families to wait.
- Time the event appropriately to ensure families aren't waiting in their cars or in the staging area for long periods of time, which might encourage congregating.
- Perform a health check (with or without temperature check) at the entrance of the ceremony space. If a staff member or children shows signs of respiratory illness (a new cough, complaints of sore throat, or shortness of breath), a fever of 100°F or above, they should enter a separate room, or be safely isolated with a staff member, and be sent home as soon as possible.

Small group Social Distancing Graduation Event Scenario: This type of ceremony is permissible with children aged 13 or older and a group size of 25 students or less.

A graduation ceremony which would provide students the opportunity to receive their diploma/certificate on the school campus or alternative location. This ceremony would not include the parents/caregivers of the students or their extended families, but it could be filmed for them to view it at a later time.

- Set up chairs so they are spaced six feet apart, at a minimum.
- Handout diplomas to one student at a time with appropriate timing to enable at least 6 feet apart between each student.
- Ensure students and staff are wearing cloth face coverings.
- When students are waiting in line, before entering the graduation space, ensure there is at least 6 feet distance between each student. Use tape or chalk to designate where students should wait before they sit down.
- Time the sign-in/entrance process appropriately to ensure students aren't waiting for long periods of time, which might encourage congregating.
- Be sure that school staff are also practicing social distancing and are spaced 6 feet apart.
- Perform a health check (with or without temperature check) at the entrance of the ceremony space. If a staff member or children shows signs of respiratory illness (a new cough, complaints of sore throat, or shortness of breath), a fever of 100°F or above, they should enter a separate room, or be safely isolated with a staff member, and be sent home as soon as possible.

