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End-of-School-Year 2020-2021 Activities Guidance

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Overview

This page provides additional Health & Safety, Facilities & Operations, Budget, Student Advisory, Family & Community Engagement, Communications, and Programming guidance related to end-of-school-year activities for the 2020-2021 school year.

We are committed to supporting schools in finding meaningful and creative ways to celebrate the class of 2021 in these unprecedented times. Please review the guidance below regarding end-of-year celebrations and return to this page for additional information and updates.

Photography Guidance

Photographs serve to memorialize significant milestones such as promotions and graduations.

Overview

To ensure health and safety during photo-taking, promotion and graduation picture taking activities are subject to strict adherence to all Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) and NYC Department of Education (DOE) policies, including:

- Health & Safety Guidance related to Picture Day:
 - [DOE COVID-19 School Health Policy](#)
 - [Face Covering Guidance](#)
- [Guidance for Entry, Dismissal, Circulation and Use of Public Assembly Spaces in School Buildings](#), especially the following topics related to Picture Day:
 - General Health Protocols,
 - Student Circulation,
 - Public Assembly Spaces
 - Signage, and
 - Visitors
- Additional DOE guidelines below (i.e., End-of-School-Year/ Activities Guidance/ Picture Day Health & Safety Guidance)

It is important to note that depending on a [school's zone designation](#) in a particular area the threshold for gatherings and other activities may be more restrictive. For purposes of equity, the below guidance considers the highest thresholds in the most

Related Links

[Teach from Home](#)

[Return to School 2020](#)

[School Transition](#)

[End of Year Activities Guidance](#)

Calendar

[View Key Dates Calendar](#) >

[Mon, May 31, 2021](#)

[Memorial Day](#) >

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restrictive zones. Review the [COVID-19 School Health Policy](#) in the DOE InfoHub, specifically the Thresholds for School Opening and Closure During the COVID-19 Pandemic section regarding **schools in Yellow zones**.

Location(s) for Photography

- Promotion and/or graduation pictures should be taken outdoors, when possible.
- If promotion and/or graduation pictures must be indoors
 - Pursuant to [DOE guidelines](#), [all visitors](#) who enter DOE buildings, including photography staff, are to complete either the [online health screening questionnaire](#) [↗](#) or the [hard copy health screening questionnaire](#) [↗](#)
 - Picture taking must adhere to social distancing guidelines outlined in DOE guidance on [Public Assembly Spaces](#) and should be in a large, well-ventilated, open space such as a gym that allows for social distancing.
 - Multiple photography stations may be configured within the school building only if there are sufficiently large, well-ventilated, open spaces that allow for social-distancing.

Scheduling & Logistics

- No more than one (1) student every half hour should be scheduled for a picture session. In the event that scheduling one (1) student per half hour is impractical, no more than one (1) student every fifteen (15) minutes should be scheduled.
- To accommodate appropriate student appointment scheduling, it may be necessary to schedule picture-taking over several days.
- If pictures are to be taken over multiple days, the same photography staff should take all photos, where possible.
- To avoid clusters of students waiting to have their picture taken, the use of an electronic appointment scheduling tool or sign-up platform is encouraged.

Attendees & Visitors

- No parents, guardians, or other family members should enter the building to assist with photo-taking activities or preparing students for photos.
- Schools should keep a record of all photography staff who enter the building.
- Photographers should ensure that only the minimum amount of photography staff is present to assist with photo taking.


Signage & Social Distancing

- Use tape or signs that denote distances of 6 feet if participants are queuing to wait their turn.
- Use signs with arrows or other markers to indicate the flow of traffic.
- All participants must stay at least 6 feet away from each other and the photographer.
- The photographer should not approach students to fix hair or pose during sitting.



Face Coverings

- Face coverings are required for every attendee.
- Face covering use should be in accordance with the latest DOE face-covering guidance.



- To ensure the health and safety of all our students and staff, at this time schools may arrange for in-person graduation pictures and explore opportunities for outdoor in-person graduations and other virtual celebrations.
- Proms typically involve eating and drinking, which require removal of face coverings, and dancing, which can potentially promote COVID-19 transmission. As a result, in-person proms, both indoor and outdoor, are not permitted at this time.
- Schools planning to hold outdoor in-person graduations should also offer a virtual option for families and students.
- All outdoor graduations and moving-up ceremonies are subject to strict adherence to Department of Health and Mental Hygiene’s (DOHMH) COVID-19 policies, inclusive of the [New York City low-risk outdoor arts and entertainment guidelines](#) , and DOE’s previously published [COVID-19 School Health Policy](#) and guidelines

Virtual Graduations, Moving-up Ceremonies, and Celebrations:

- In addition to outdoor in-person graduations, schools may hold virtual graduations, moving-up ceremonies (including live streams), and virtual proms to celebrate their students.
 - Schools may work with vendors and organizations from the [virtual vendor list](#)  to design and host virtual ceremonies, provided that purchases are in alignment with [DOE Standard Operating Procedures](#)  for procurement. Additional vendors and organizations may be added to the list as they are approved for use.
 - Please note that the DOE encourages the use of certified Minority-Owned Business Enterprise, and the vendor list confirms the designation of each firm as applicable.
- In the event that a vendor would like to offer services free-of-charge, vendors and organizations must still be reviewed by the DOE, to ensure that providers agree to necessary privacy and data security provisions. A contribution, including the donation of virtual graduation services or platforms, will not affect any business dealings with the City or provide special access to City officials, and this disclaimer must be communicated in writing to donors. Employees who have a particular matter related to the organization pending before them cannot be involved in any discussions about a donation with the organization.




Security Considerations for Virtual Events:

- To ensure that virtual ceremonies have appropriate security in place, events should be configured in a way so that attendees do not have the opportunity to disrupt the event.
- As such, virtual graduations and moving-up ceremonies should be configured as view-only, so that participants cannot share audio, video, or desktop sessions, and participants cannot rename themselves or interact in a whiteboard session.
- Private chats between participants and attendees should be disabled, and any Q&A functionality should be limited to providing technical support to attendees.
- This can be accomplished by leveraging a platform that automatically enforces appropriate participant rules (Zoom Webinar Rooms, Microsoft Teams Live Events), or by providing a live stream of the event that the graduates and families can only watch.

Drive-In/Drive-Through Graduation Ceremonies:



To host a drive-in or drive-through graduation ceremony, principals or their designee should take the following steps:

- Reach out to the Neighborhood Coordination Officer as well as the Commanding Officer at your local NYPD precinct no later than Friday, **May 14**.
- When contacting your local precinct, use the [Find your precinct and sector tool](#)  to enter the school address in the mid-page search bar. Your local precinct will appear on the screen with the names of the Neighborhood Coordination Officers (NCO) assigned to your sector. A badge icon will also appear. Click on the badge icon to get the name of the Commanding Officer.
- Email the NCOs and the Commanding Officer with your Drive-In/Drive-Through request.
 - The NYPD standard email address is "FirstName.LastName@NYPD.org" .
 - Please cc: [Serge St. Leger](#) , Senior Program Manager at the Division of School Climate and Wellness, when reaching out to NYPD.

- Please be ready to provide NYPD with the following information:
 - Date(s) of graduation
 - Start and approximate end time of graduation.
 - Specific street closure information
 - Anticipated number of vehicles and/or pedestrians expected.
 - Type of graduation (Drive-in / Drive-through)

Field Trip Policy Reminder for the 2020–21 School Year

As it is challenging to ensure health and safety measures in locations outside of DOE public school buildings and campuses—specifically maintaining social distancing at all times, including during travel to and from locations, and the increased likelihood of congregating in close spaces.

Therefore, field trips continue to be prohibited for the remainder of the 2020–21 school year.

Note that this policy does not apply to schools holding graduation or moving up ceremonies at locations other than their school building, including those applying for a permit for public park or street space for their graduation or moving-up ceremonies.


For questions, contact your [BCO director of operations](#) .

Budget Guidance


Payments for Graduation Expenses:

- As is customary, General School Funds (GSF) should be the primary source of funding for graduation expenses, such as caps and gowns, yearbooks, graduation paraphernalia, and school rings.
- As needed, school discretionary tax-levy funding can be used to supplement purchases when GSF are insufficient—except for school rings and e-gift cards/gift cards, which should not be paid for out of tax-levy funds.



- Generally, charges to discretionary tax-levy funding are for small amounts of these items to fill in where students were unable to contribute to GSF.
- Tax levy funds should not be used to supplant costs that can be paid from GSF accounts.
- As a reminder, GSF funds are expected to be used for the class in which they were raised. As such, student donations collected for the class of 2021 must only be used for this year's graduating class, unless parent or student consent is obtained, or funds are returned to the family or student after receiving refunds from vendors for these purposes.
- For items in which schools would need to procure via Purchase Order, items must be scheduled in Galaxy by **March 25th** and purchased by the **May 3rd** PO deadline. [DOE Standard Operating Procedures](#)  for procurement still apply to goods and services and must be received by **June 30**. Please reach out to your BCO procurement specialist for support.
- To avoid expenses being charged to your school's budget for fiscal year 2022 (FY22), all goods and services must be delivered and completed by June 30, 2021.

General School Fund Refunds

- For guidance on issuing refunds to students and families from general school fund bank accounts, including refunds of senior dues, review the [General School Fund Refunds](#)  guide.
- For any goods or services purchased with general school funds (GSF) for end-of-school-year activities, if possible, please pay close attention that the terms and conditions provide for appropriate cancellation and refund.

Purchase Order Refunds/Cancellations:

- Schools must process cancellation and change notices in FAMIS and notify non-restricted vendors. This will avoid delivery and/or payment issues.
- Schools do not have the ability to cancel select purchase orders issued to the following restricted vendors: Staples; TGI (Object code 403/433); Riso (Object code 403/433); Apple (Object code 331/332); Lenovo (Object code 331/332); CDW (Object code 331/332); and Tempositions. For these cancellations, users must email Clientservices@schools.nyc.gov within 48 hours (including weekends), to request a cancellation. The request must include confirmation from the vendor, acknowledging the cancellation and non-shipment of goods. The request is then forwarded to the Accounts Payables Office to process the cancellation in FAMIS.
- Vendors submitting a refund to the DOE must send a check addressed to the "New York City Department of Education" as the payee. The vendor must indicate the purchase order number on the reference line of the check and mail it to the following address:

NYC Department of Education
 Attn: Accounts Payable
 65 Court Street, RM 1501
 Brooklyn, NY 11201


- Please note, refunds received after the annual cutoff date will not become available for future use.



Schools have the option of applying for a permit for public park or street space via the [DOE's Outdoor Learning Initiative](#) in the COVID-19 Resources section of the InfoHub. There you can also find more information on the conditions for applications; schools must apply for permits for park or street space by April 30th. For questions, email OutdoorLearning@schools.nyc.gov.

Additional guidance regarding end-of-year promotion and graduation ceremonies, including a list of eligible virtual platforms, will be available in the coming days in future editions of *Principals Digest* and added here.



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