

**Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)**  
**Guidance for Graduation/Recognition of Graduates**  
**Santa Clara County Public Health Department & Santa Clara County**  
**Office of Education**  
**Updated June 5, 2020**

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance for 2020 school graduation recognition in light of the current Santa Clara County Shelter in Place Order. To slow and decrease the spread of COVID-19, Santa Clara County joined Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, San Francisco, and San Mateo Counties and the City of Berkeley in directing their respective residents to shelter at home. Many businesses and activities have been able to resume since the initial Shelter in Place Order was issued, but restrictions and social distancing limitations are still in place to ensure that COVID-19 transmission remains low. The current Shelter in Place Order in Santa Clara County was updated on June 5, 2020 will remain in effect until the Health Officer amends or rescinds it.

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

Additionally, the following guidelines offer an opportunity for graduates to pick up their diplomas, and for celebrating graduates safely:

**Diploma Pickup:**

To provide an opportunity for students, accompanied by their household members, to receive a diploma/certificate at the school campus, we ask that schools follow these rules as they plan these activities:

*For Walk-Up Diploma Pickup:*

- For most schools, based on the number of students graduating and the space in which diplomas will be handed out, diploma pickup timing should be staggered to ensure social distancing can be maintained and no persons congregate outside their vehicles.
- Limit the number of people who can accompany the student to the site, allowing only parents/caregivers and siblings (just those currently living in the student’s household) to attend.
- Ensure that only one family at a time approaches a graduation table/station where the student will receive a diploma.
- Ensure that each family maintains social distance from all others, spaced at least 6 feet apart. The more space the better.
- Ensure that all diploma pick-up occurs outside, if at all possible.
- Be sure that school staff are also practicing social distancing and are spaced 6 feet apart at minimum.
- **Planning for the diploma pickup must be done in such a way to ensure that there is no congregation of spectators/observers who are not inside a vehicle.**
- Ensure that families and staff are advised to wear cloth face coverings (unless they are 6 years old or younger or it is medically inadvisable for them to wear a face covering).

- Ensure that 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.
- Inform families and students that they should leave the school campus immediately after receiving their diploma.
- If families drive their vehicles to the graduation site, ask that families park and wait to be called forward. Ensure they do not leave their vehicle until called. Vehicles must remain 6 feet apart at all times.
- Students and staff should be reminded NOT to 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).
- 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 outside of vehicles.
- Consult with local law enforcement if a group of more than 10 vehicles may be congregating in one place for an extended period for the purpose of holding an automobile gathering (see section (2) of [Appendix C-2](#) for more information on automobile gatherings).

*For Drive-thru Diploma Pickup:*

- Schools that wish to hold drive-thru graduation events should organize them in accordance with the requirements of section (2) of [Appendix C-2](#).
- Diplomas may be placed into trunks of cars or handed to graduates through vehicle windows. No items may be passed between occupants of separate vehicles.
- No one may ride in the bed of a pickup truck, or ride a bicycle or motorcycle, during the drive-thru event.

**Ideas for Celebrating Graduates:**

If families wish to celebrate a graduate with people outside the graduate's household or living unit, they may do so in the following ways:

- With a remote celebration conducted virtually over videoconference or telephone.
- With an automobile parade or automobile gathering. The limitations and requirements for these events are in sections (1) and (2) of [Appendix C-2](#).
- By holding small outdoor graduation ceremonies of up to 25 people. The limitations and requirements for these events are in section (5) of [Appendix C-2](#).
- By meeting with members of up to one other household for an outdoor, socially distanced gathering such as a picnic or frisbee game. The limitations and requirements for these events are in section (3) of [Appendix C-2](#).