



COVID-19 TIPS for ORGANIZING **GRADUATION CEREMONIES**

SCHOOLS THAT ARE PLANNING GRADUATION CEREMONIES ARE ENCOURAGED TO CONSULT THE FOLLOWING TIPS AND APPLICABLE GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS FOR ADVICE.

Written plans can be submitted via e-mail to your assigned School Public Health Nurse or to schools@timiskaminghu.com for review and recommendations.

- Approval of COVID-19 precautions regarding these events will not be issued. Please consult with your school board for further direction and approval.
- If you would like your plan reviewed, please allow a minimum 7 days from submission of your plan.

Please note: In planning an in-person event, consider having a back-up plan for weather and/or for changes in Ministry Guidance or Provincial restrictions as these may impact in-person and drive through events. Contactless delivery of diploma and virtual ceremonies are highly recommended.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contactless delivery of diploma	3
Drive-in/drive-through event	3
In-person event	3
Gathering	3
Screening	4
Attendance	4
Physical distancing	4
Masks and eye protection	5
Hand Hygiene	5
Disinfection	6
Signage	6
Gown caps and other items	6
Food and drink	7
Outdoor event considerations	7
Indoor event considerations	7

CONTACTLESS DELIVERY OF DIPLOMA

- ✓ Ensure physical distancing is always maintained.
- ✓ Hands should be disinfected before and after handling items and diploma.
- ✓ Carpooling to complete deliveries is not recommended.
- ✓ Masks are to be worn outdoors when physical distancing of 2m cannot be maintained. Please note: Masks may also be required outdoors regardless of physical distancing. Please refer to school board COVID-19 protocols for further guidance.
- ✓ Avoid gathering by limiting or restricting other individuals outside the student's household from attending diploma delivery/hand off. This should coincide with gathering limits set out by the Ministry at that time (see "Gathering" below). Consider advising participants and/or making public announcements beforehand.

DRIVE-IN/DRIVE-THROUGH EVENT

- ✓ Instruct to families that they are to remain in their vehicles in the waiting car line up area thus avoiding any social gathering.
- ✓ All attendees should complete COVID screening before attending drive-in/drive-through event (see screening section below).
 - For further information, see: SCHEDULE 2: SPECIFIC RULES – *Section 12. Drive-in or drive-through cinemas, performances, etc.* of [O. Reg. 364/20](#)
Note: This order only applies throughout the Green Zone, the Yellow Zone and the Orange Zone and may be subject to change once stay-at-home order is over.

IN-PERSON EVENT



GATHERING

- ✓ Carefully consider rules pertaining to organized public events and social gatherings. Also consider limits on renting of meeting and event spaces, set out in the regulations made under the *Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020* (ROA):

[Framework for Re-Opening Ontario](#)

- [O. Reg. 364/20](#): Green-Prevent, Yellow-Protect, and Orange-Restrict
- [O. Reg. 263/20](#): Red-Control
- [O. Reg. 82/20](#): Grey- Shutdown

[Enhanced Public Health Measures and Advice for each Zone](#)

- ✓ School assemblies or other large gatherings (e.g., concerts or dances) should be avoided. Virtual options should be offered instead of in-person gatherings.



SCREENING

- ✓ Inform attendees (students, staff, volunteers, household members, photographer, etc.) on protocols and expected behaviours. Reinforce the message that people must not attend if they or any member of their household are ill.
- ✓ All attendees should complete COVID-19 screening prior to the event. Screening used should be the most recent version. ([COVID-19 school screening \(ontario.ca\)](https://www.ontario.ca/covid-19-school-screening))
- ✓ Encourage staff and attendees to download the COVID Alert app so they can be notified directly if they have been in close contact with someone who was contagious with COVID-19.



ATTENDANCE

- ✓ Keep a list of names and contact information for all individuals who attend the event/gathering. This also includes a list of teams of staff and volunteers working together on a specific task (setting up, take-down, etc.). Lists are to be kept for 30 days to facilitate contact tracing as needed.
- ✓ Consider significantly limiting or even prohibiting visitors/participants.
- ✓ Maintain cohorting strategies to limit exposure to multiple individuals or a wide variety of classmates.



PHYSICAL DISTANCING

- ✓ As much physical distancing as possible between all participants should always be maintained and promoted.
- ✓ The event must not exceed allowed capacity. However, once one attendee leaves, another may enter.
- ✓ Assign staff to monitor lines within and outside the venue. Make public announcements reminding attendees to keep two metres apart.
- ✓ Use barriers/structures to enclose the event space/venue and manage capacity and pedestrian traffic flow.

- ✓ Use separate areas for entry and exit, multiple of each may be required. Entry and exit points must be managed to control the flow and number of attendees.
- ✓ Stagger arrivals, departures, and breaks, where possible, to reduce congestion at points of entrance and exit and in common areas.
- ✓ Clear, visible [signage](#) reminding people about physical distancing.
- ✓ [Consider the use of floor markers and other visual cues where not possible.](#)



Maintain Your
Distance Floor Sticker



MASKS AND EYE PROTECTION

- ✓ Masks are to be worn by all participants indoors.
- ✓ Masks are to be worn outdoors when physical distancing of 2m cannot be maintained.
Please note: Masks may also be required outdoors regardless of physical distancing. Please refer to school board COVID-19 protocols for further guidance.
- ✓ Staff and volunteers should wear eye protection if physical distancing of 2m cannot be maintained.
 - Consider having staff and volunteer review how to put on and take off their mask and eye protection as well as how to clean and disinfect reusable eye protection.
 - [Putting on Mask and Eye Protection](#)
 - [Taking off Mask and eye Protection](#)
 - [Cleaning and disinfection of reusable eye protection](#)
- ✓ Consider having supply of appropriately sized non-medical masks available for participants who forget or lose their mask, who do not have masks, or if their mask becomes soiled during the event.
- ✓ Ensure physical distancing and masks worn during photo ops.



HAND HYGIENE

- ✓ Alcohol-based hand rub with a concentration of 60%-90% is available at all entry points and near any high-touch surfaces (e.g., water fountains/dispensers, where items are picked up and dropped off such as diplomas, gowns, etc.).
- ✓ Display clear, visible signage on [How to Wash your Hands by hand sanitizing stations.](#)

- ✓ Consider having staff members at entrances reminding participants to sanitize their hands prior to entering.



DISINFECTION

- ✓ Cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched surfaces should be done before and after the event and throughout the event if needed. (i.e., washrooms, counters, and other high-touch surfaces, as well as shared objects between uses) [Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings](#)



SIGNAGE

- ✓ Display posters in high visibility areas in your setting to promote messages about how to stay safe during the COVID-19 pandemic:
 - [Physical Distancing](#)
 - [Mask Required](#)
 - [Please Wash your Hands](#)
 - [How to Wash your Hands](#)
 - [Cover your Cough](#)



GOWN CAPS AND OTHER ITEMS

- ✓ Ideally, a sufficient number of gowns should be available to reduce the need for sharing by different individuals, or to allow for sufficient time for cleaning in between uses by different individuals.
- ✓ Hand hygiene should be performed by individuals before and after handling shared graduation gowns and accompanying items (i.e., hoods, sashes, caps).
- ✓ After removal, students are to avoid shaking of items, put away carefully and perform hand hygiene.
- ✓ Consider ways for physical distancing to be maintained when items are picked up and dropped off.
- ✓ Gowns should be laundered, dry cleaned or steam cleaned after each use (as applicable), or as often as is practical/feasible, and as per the laundering instructions provided by the manufacturer of the gown.

- ✓ For items that can withstand laundering, regular laundry detergent is sufficient. The hottest compatible temperature setting should be used for washing of launderable items, followed by thorough drying. Provide separate, cleanable receptacles for clean gowns and for used gowns awaiting cleaning.
- ✓ For shared items that are not able to be laundered, dry cleaned, steam cleaned or disinfected after use (as applicable), consideration may be given to setting these aside for the appropriate length of time (based on material composition) before reusing these.

FOOD AND DRINK

- ✓ Communal/event meals or snacks are not recommended.
- ✓ Consider having designated areas where staff/volunteers can take breaks to eat and/or drink. These areas should have capacity limits posted and visual cues to identify physically distanced spots that are 2m or more from each other. A sign-in/sign-out sheet for this area is also recommended.

OUTDOOR EVENT CONSIDERATIONS

Reminder: Carefully consider rules pertaining to organized public events and social gatherings. (see gathering section for more information)

- ✓ Identify areas where crowding and bottlenecks are common and use volunteers, staff, or barriers to redirect people who may gather in these areas.
- ✓ Areas to consider: Parking lots, entrances, and exits, photo ops, etc.

INDOOR EVENT CONSIDERATIONS

Reminder: Carefully consider rules pertaining to organized public events and social gatherings. (see gathering section)

- ✓ Marking 2 meters between seats and seating areas and in common or shared spaces. If chairs cannot be physically removed, mark out which chairs to sit on.
- ✓ Where feasible, unnecessary furniture and equipment have been removed to increase available space for physical distancing.
- ✓ Increase floor marking and aisle signage to encourage one-way movement with prominent signage and/or floor markings.
- ✓ Identify areas where crowding and bottlenecks are common, such as lobbies or bathrooms, and use volunteers, staff, or barriers to redirect people who may gather in these areas.
- ✓ Consider posting capacity limits for the ceremony such as bathrooms, theater, etc.)
- ✓ Discourage people from gathering outside the venue.

- ✓ Weather permitting, windows and doors are kept open if this can be done safely (ventilation with outdoor air is preferred)
- ✓ Where possible, air from portable fans or air conditioners is not blowing at typical breathing height (i.e., at head level); e.g., airflow is to be directed upwards.