



**Phillips Exeter Academy
Commencement Information
Class of 2021**

April 12, 2021

Dear Parents and Guardians of Graduating Seniors,

Our thoughts have been occupied in the last few months with planning the best experience we can for the upcoming Academy Commencement for the Class of 2021. We hope you can make plans to join us on Sunday, June 6, and we are also working on robust plans to bring the ceremony to you if you are unable to travel. The graduation ceremony runs from 10:30 a.m. to noon EDT. Rain or shine, we expect to honor the class with an outdoor commencement ceremony at our stadium. Due to the pandemic protocols in place at this time, we warmly welcome **two guests per student** to the ceremony and will be live streaming the event for all other family and friends. Younger siblings enrolled at PEA will be given the opportunity to serve as an usher at the event, if they wish to attend their sibling's commencement in person rather than watch remotely, but no other exceptions to the maximum guest number can be made. Guests will be seated by household in compliance with physical distancing, and masks will be required while on campus, regardless of vaccination status. Our plans remain subject to change if pandemic conditions deteriorate or improve enough to permit loosened restrictions on seating distance.

Please visit the Parent Portal at www.exeter.edu/parents for additional graduation information. The link to the livestream will be sent to you before the ceremony and made available on the Parent Portal and website.

Travel and Housing: We encourage guests who can easily travel to Exeter on the morning of the ceremony to do so. For those coming in the day before, note that New Hampshire has recently relaxed its required quarantine rules for domestic out-of-state visitors. There is, however, still a recommendation to quarantine in place at the time of writing, and there are numerous restrictions on travel from international destinations to the U.S. We encourage you to explore the restrictions that might affect your family prior to making flight reservations. To reserve rooms, parents and adult guests should make direct inquiries to the various hotels in the Exeter, Portsmouth and Hampton area. Off-campus seniors are welcome to return to campus on Thursday, June 3, but not before. They will be accommodated on campus and be involved in all senior week festivities. More information will be sent to those students about their pre-arrival protocols and testing. Seniors staying remote will, of course, be honored in the ceremony along with their classmates.

When to Arrive: There are no events scheduled for guests before Sunday, June 6 this year, and in order to maintain our safety protocols, guests are not permitted to connect with their graduate until Saturday afternoon, when they will be able to meet with their child and receive their two tickets for the Sunday ceremony. The dormitories close Sunday afternoon, and most families will depart by Sunday evening. As with the beginning of the year drop-off, it is likely that parents will not be permitted to enter dorms, and boarding students will be instructed and given time to have their items packed and ready for pick-up at their dorm.

Saturday evening: Students will be hosted by faculty on Saturday evening for a lobster dinner, with a guest speaker selected by the class. Parents and guardians should not expect to be able to have dinner with their child, since attendance at that event will be an important part of the senior week celebrations.

Parking on Sunday: Parents will be directed by the Campus Safety staff to the parking lots and parking garage off Chadwick Lane, or to overflow parking with shuttle service to campus. Chadwick Lane is accessible from Court Street (Route 108). Drivers of cars bearing elderly or those with accessibility needs should reach out to Paul Gravel, Director of Campus Safety, (pgravel@exeter.edu) to make arrangements for drop off at the stadium. All guests should be aware that there is a half-mile (ten minute) walk to the stadium from the furthest parking on Chadwick Lane, and if you choose to park at your child's dormitory then the walk will be longer. We strongly suggest that you bring footwear that will make the walk comfortable.

Rain Plan: Our plan is to continue with an outdoor ceremony even in the case of heavy rain, but if weather conditions become dangerous then the ceremony will be held indoors in the Field House. We can host two guests per student at six foot spacing between guest groups in the Field House as well, but any guest who is not comfortable with an inside ceremony will be able to watch the livestream from any location with Wi-Fi or a strong cellular connection. The Academy will provide outdoor Wi-Fi at various tents located around campus.

Guests should understand the COVID symptoms that would preclude their attendance in-person. Anyone feeling ill on the day with fever, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, muscle aches, chills, headache, sore throat, congestion, nausea, diarrhea or new loss of taste or smell should not attend.

Tickets: Each senior will receive four free graduation announcements, which will not permit entry to the ceremony but will allow students and families to inform their friends of the achievement, and an additional announcement will be mailed to parents/guardians. Two days prior to the ceremony, two entry tickets will be given to each senior to distribute to their guests when they arrive on campus. If parents and/or seniors want additional announcements, they may be purchased for \$1 each at the Exeter Bookstore or by calling the bookstore at 603-777-3500.

Dress Code for the Graduation Ceremony: Surprising to most seniors, there is no formal dress code for the ceremony itself. Students traditionally choose to wear a jacket and tie, a white or light-colored dress or pants. Ethnic attire is welcome. Comfortable footwear is a must, particularly this year with a long procession from campus to the stadium.

Photographs: To minimize the number of people taking pictures during the ceremony, the school has contracted with an outside still photographer to take a photograph of each senior at the time he or she receives the diploma from the principal. GradImages, 800-261-2576, ecc.giservice@gradimages.net, will contact you shortly to offer you its services. While we realize that many parents may wish to take their own photos or video — we need to prohibit any movement from seats this year and appreciate your partnership in that regard. For that reason, the school will provide one 8x10 photograph of each student. Any additional photos or packages can be ordered through GradImages.

After the Ceremony: The graduation ceremony will end at approximately noon. Immediately following the ceremony, a boxed to-go lunch will be available near the Field House.

Financial Obligations: Seniors must pay all Academy obligations prior to graduation in order to receive their diploma. Seniors will receive a notice in May outlining procedures to be followed in reviewing their status.

Alcohol and Tobacco: We look forward to a joyous celebration. However, in keeping with the Academy's alcohol and tobacco policies and state law, we remind you that all alcoholic beverages are forbidden on campus both before and after graduation. Also, note that most spaces in campus, including the stadium and playing fields, are smoke-free.

Post-graduation Parties: The Academy remains concerned about the existence and nature of post-graduation parties where teenagers consume alcohol. The Academy does not condone underage drinking. Several states have passed laws addressing the hosting of such parties. For example, in 2004, New Hampshire enacted RSA 644:18, **Facilitating a Drug or Underage Alcohol House Party**, which you may read here: <http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/rsa/html/LXII/644/644-18.htm>. Laws vary from state to state, and the Academy encourages you to check the laws of your own state.

Should you have any questions about graduation, or if we at the Academy can help you in any way, please feel free to be in touch with us at graduation@exeter.edu.

Sincerely,

Dr. Eimer C. Page
Commencement Committee