

Pre-K to Grade 12 End of Academic Year Celebration Events, including Graduations

- The June 7, 2021 update to the [*Interim Guidance for In-Person Instruction at Pre-K to Grade 12 Schools During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency*](#) does not apply to end of academic year celebration events, such as graduations and moving-up ceremonies, which are large, public events that occur outside the scope of in-person instruction, scholastic, and extracurricular activities.

- End of academic year celebration events, such as graduations and moving-up ceremonies, must adhere to the Department of Health's [*Updated Interim Guidance for End of Academic Year Celebrations During the COVID-19 State of Emergency*](#), and any superseding modifications from the Department of Health's reopening guidance entitled [*Implementing CDC Guidance*](#). Specifically, these two guidance documents advise that:
 - As of May 19, 2021, the State's social gathering limits are 250 attendees indoors and 500 attendees outdoors.

 - For events (e.g., graduations) below the State's social gathering limit of 250 attendees indoors and 500 attendees outdoors:
 - Fully vaccinated individuals do not need to wear masks or be socially distanced.

 - Unvaccinated individuals and individuals who have an unknown vaccination status must continue to wear masks and maintain six feet of social distancing. Masks are required for unvaccinated/unknown vaccination status individuals indoors, except while seated and eating or drinking. Masks are optional outdoors for unvaccinated/unknown vaccination status individuals while they are seated and socially distanced.

 - Full vaccination status can be provided through paper form, digital application, or the State's Excelsior Pass OR since these events are below the social gathering limit, vaccination status can be self-reported (e.g., honor system).

- Children under the age of 12 who are not yet vaccine eligible, and under the age of 16 who have not yet been vaccinated, may accompany and be seated with a vaccinated adult.
- For events (e.g., graduations) above the State’s social gathering limit of 250 attendees indoors and 500 attendees outdoors:
- Fully vaccinated individuals do not need to wear masks or be socially distanced.
 - Since these events are above the social gathering limit, if the event is seeking to implement fully vaccinated sections (i.e., eliminating social distancing and increasing capacity), they must require attendees to present proof of vaccination status and cannot rely upon self-reporting of vaccination status (e.g., honor system). In other words, venues can operate up to 100% capacity so long as all attendees are fully vaccinated.
 - Unvaccinated individuals and individuals who have an unknown vaccination status must continue to be spaced six feet apart. Masks are required for unvaccinated/unknown vaccination status individual indoors, except while seated and eating or drinking. Masks are optional for unvaccinated/unknown vaccination status individuals outdoors while seated and socially distanced.
 - Further, for indoor events above the social gathering limit, unvaccinated/unknown vaccination status attendees over the age of four must instead present proof of recent negative COVID-19 test result. Outdoor events do not require proof of recent negative COVID-19 test result.
 - Children under the age of 12 who are not yet vaccine eligible, and under the age of 16 who have not yet been vaccinated, may accompany and be seated with a vaccinated adult.

- As announced by Governor Cuomo on June 6, 2021, most of the remaining COVID-19 restrictions will be lifted once 70 percent of New Yorkers aged 18 or older have received the first dose of their COVID-19 vaccination series. When New York reaches that threshold, most of the State's health guidelines—including capacity restrictions, social distancing, cleaning and disinfection, health screening, and contact information for tracing—will become optional with two exceptions that apply to end of academic year celebrations:

- Masks will still be required for unvaccinated individuals.

- Large-scale event venues—defined as venues that have an indoor capacity of greater than 1,500 or outdoor capacity of greater than 2,500—will still follow the State's existing health guidance for large events.

- (Please note: even when 70 percent of New Yorkers aged 18 or older have received the first dose of their COVID-19 vaccination series, the Department of Health's *Interim Guidance for In-Person Instruction at Pre-K to Grade 12 Schools During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency*, will remain in effect.)