

**Phillips Exeter Academy**  
**Class of 2022 Commencement Information**  
Tentative Plan *(subject to COVID updates)*

February 2022

Dear Parents of Graduating Seniors:

With spring on the horizon, our thoughts turn toward the upcoming Academy Commencement. As we prepare graduation materials in February, it is difficult to know exactly where we will be with the pandemic come June. This is, however, our tentative plan for graduation weekend, Thursday noon until Sunday evening, subject to any further changes. Assuming all goes well, we hope you can make plans to join us beginning on Saturday, June 4 – the first day of family graduation activities. The graduation ceremony runs from 10:30 a.m.–noon on Sunday, June 5. Rain or shine, there is unlimited seating for family and friends of the graduating class.

**Please visit our Academy website (parents' page) at [www.exeter.edu/parents](http://www.exeter.edu/parents) regularly for the most up-to-date graduation information, including links to the Graduation Week Schedule, Local Accommodations and Directions.**

### **Housing**

To reserve rooms, parents and adult guests should make direct inquiries to the various hotels in the Exeter, Portsmouth and Hampton area. Please check the [parents' page](#) on our website for a link to various hotels and motels in the area. Off-campus seniors are welcome to return to campus on Thursday, June 2, but not before.

### **When to Arrive**

There are no events scheduled for parents and friends before Saturday, June 4. However, most parents, friends and families arrive either Friday or Saturday. Please note that some local hotels have a minimum night-stay policy, an issue over which the school has no control. However, Friday/Saturday night is better than Saturday/Sunday as the dormitories close Sunday afternoon, and most families are on their way by Sunday evening.

### **Special Events**

The Cum Laude Society will host a ceremony for senior members and their families on Saturday, June 4. New members will receive invitations on Friday evening, June 3.

## **Saturday Evening**

The time after the Principal's Reception on Saturday evening is generally left free for families and friends or guests to take their graduating senior out to dinner, if that is appropriate and desired. That could be in town or in the area, but note that advanced reservations may be necessary and desirable. Check-in Saturday evening is at 10:30 p.m.

## **Parking on Sunday**

We ask that parents leave their vehicles near their child's dormitory. Campus Safety staff will direct other guests to the parking areas off Chadwick Lane adjacent to the boiler plant. Chadwick Lane is accessible from Court Street (Route 108). If the weather favors an outdoor ceremony, the roadway in front of Peabody Hall and the driveway beside Bissell House will be cleared for emergency use only, while Front Street and Tan Lane will be closed to traffic. Drivers of cars bearing elderly guests or those with accessibility needs should ask the police officers for permission to use the Peabody roadway to let off their passengers, and then should park elsewhere on the street.

If extreme weather requires us to hold the ceremony indoors in the William Boyce Thompson Field House, people may enter the Field House from Court Street via the main door past Love Gym and the Goel Center for Theater and Dance, or from the parking garage beneath Thompson Field House. There is space for 170 cars in the garage, including a number of designated handicap spaces. Guests with accessibility needs may access Thompson Field House from the parking garage entrance and take the elevator up to the first floor.

## **Graduation Invitations**

**Invitations or tickets are NOT required to attend the graduation ceremony, and there is unlimited seating based on a first come, first serve basis.** Please note that there is ample seating inside or out, so there is no limit on the number of guests a senior may invite to the graduation ceremony.

The Exeter Bookstore will give each senior five free graduation invitations; one of these invitations will be included in a mailing to seniors' parents in March. After spring break, each senior will receive the other four free invitations in their P.O. Box. If parents and/or seniors would like additional invitations, they will be available for purchase for \$1 each at the Exeter Bookstore or by calling the bookstore at 603-777-3500.

## **Pandemic Protocols**

As we are requiring COVID vaccinations for adults and students on campus, we will be requesting vaccination status for everyone attending the graduation ceremony. In the event that the ceremony shifts indoors due to weather, we will only be able to accommodate those individuals who are fully vaccinated (including booster). All others may view the live-streamed graduation ceremony from a venue of their choice.

## **Dress Code for the Graduation Ceremony**

Surprising to most seniors, there is no formal dress code for the ceremony itself, although good taste and common sense should prevail. Students have traditionally worn a jacket and tie, or light-colored dress. Ethnic attire is welcome. In deciding what to wear, it is important, however, to remember that whatever is worn should be appropriate for a ceremony in front of 4,000 family members and guests.

## **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 they receive their diploma from the principal. GradImages (<https://www.gradimages.com>, 800-261-2576) will contact you shortly to offer their services.

While the school realizes many parents may wish to take their own pictures – still or video – it is the Commencement Committee’s hope that those doing so will be thoughtful of other spectators and be as inconspicuous as possible.

## **Live Streaming of Graduation Ceremony**

There will be a live-stream of the graduation ceremony for friends and family members who are unable to attend in person. A link to the live-stream will be posted on the [parents’ page](#) on our website closer to graduation.

## **After the Ceremony**

The graduation ceremony will end at approximately noon. Immediately following the ceremony, there will be a lunch reception on the lawn in front of the Academy Library. If the ceremony is held indoors in the Thompson Field House, lunch also will be available indoors. All in attendance at the day’s events – graduates, families and friends – are invited. Although some families choose to make reservations for a lunch in the Exeter area and/or leave when the ceremony is over, the majority of families remain for this last meal together – a festive send-off for the graduates, and their family and friends. Either option is, of course, completely at the discretion of each family. You may wish to make travel plans that include an extra hour or two if you choose to attend the lunch.

## **Financial Obligations**

Seniors must pay all Academy and town obligations prior to graduation in order to receive their diploma. Seniors will receive a special notice in May outlining procedures to be followed in reviewing their status. Diplomas will be withheld until all obligations have been fulfilled.

## **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 alcoholic beverages – including champagne – are forbidden on campus both before and after graduation. Also, note that Exeter is a smoke-free campus and as such, we discourage the use of cigars after the ceremony.

## **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. We want you to be aware that more and more states are passing legislation against the hosting of such parties. In New Hampshire, a property owner, or one in control of property, who hosts a gathering of five or more unrelated people under the age of 21, knowing that these persons possess or intend to consume alcohol, may be charged with a misdemeanor, punishable by fine or up to one year in jail. While alcohol laws may vary from state to state, the Academy encourages you to check the laws of your state, for other states may also have become more proactive in trying to control underage drinking by holding adults criminally or civilly liable.

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 me at [pvorkink@exeter.edu](mailto:pvorkink@exeter.edu).

Sincerely,

The Rev. Peter Vorkink II  
Commencement Committee