



# Florham Park School District

Ridgedale Middle School  
71 Ridgedale Avenue  
Florham Park, NJ 07932

Nicholas Steffner, Principal  
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Dear Parents and Guardians,

We are very excited to host an in-person graduation ceremony for the 2021 graduating class of Ridgedale Middle School. Outlined below are the details regarding the ceremony.

## **Date & Time**

Tuesday, June 22nd at 7:00pm (ceremony is scheduled to last approximately 1 hour).

Students should arrive no later than 6:30PM.

As previously communicated, our goal is to host an outdoor graduation ceremony to ensure that we are able to accommodate as many guests as possible. Therefore, if the weather looks more favorable on the 21st or 23rd, we may adjust the ceremony date and/or time to take place on either one of those days. We will closely monitor the weather forecast as graduation day approaches and be sure to communicate any change in plans as soon as possible.

## **Location**

Ridgedale Middle School Front Lawn

In the event that we are not able to host an outdoor graduation ceremony due to inclement weather, we will host the ceremony in the Ridgedale Middle School Gymnasium. Information regarding seating arrangements for an indoor ceremony can be found below.

## **Seating Arrangements**

### **Outdoor Ceremony**

For our outdoor graduation ceremony, all families will be assigned a pod from which they can view the ceremony. All pods will be socially distanced (6 feet) in all directions from one another and will ensure that families are positioned equidistant from their child for the best view. Each pod will be outfitted with 6 folding chairs for your guests. The dimensions of the pod can ultimately seat 8 individuals. If you require more than 6 seats, we ask that you bring lawn chairs or a blanket of your own to accommodate any additional persons in your pod. In the event that you bring more than 8 guests, we will have an overflow section with additional seating and standing room for those guests. Similar to last year, each family pod will be marked with a sign that displays the graduation picture of your child and you may take this sign home with you upon the completion of the ceremony. We are excited about adopting this practice as it will ensure that all of our families have a definitive seat from which they can view graduation which will alleviate guests from having to rush to the lawn to save seats or not having a place from which they can view their graduate during the ceremony.

### **Indoor Ceremony**

For our indoor graduation ceremony, as done in the past, all families will be permitted to have 4 guests in attendance as that is the maximum capacity we can accommodate in the Middle School gymnasium. Each family of a graduating student will be provided with 4 tickets for this event. We will not assign individual seats for that ceremony, we will simply indicate the area in which attendees will be seated.

### Live Stream

The graduation ceremony, whether indoors or outdoors, will be live streamed and that link will be shared with all families in the Florham Park community. That means you may share that link with relatives or friends that are unable to make the ceremony so they can view it in real time. This link will be saved, posted on a secure Youtube Channel and shared with families in the Florham Park community so it can also be viewed after the live event has taken place.

### Mask Wearing

As per the most recent guidance provided by the Governor's office, mask requirements for graduation ceremonies are optional for both guests and students. Therefore, we will be following this guidance for this specific event. Please know that you have freedom to determine how you will proceed with this information as it relates to mask wearing for your child and guests.

Please be aware, as stated earlier, all family pods and student seating arrangements will be socially distanced (6 feet) regardless of this recent guidance pertaining to graduation ceremonies.

*\*Additionally, as per Executive Order 242, individuals attending events that occur outside of the instructional day in indoor public spaces are not required to wear masks, however, per CDC guidance, individuals who are not fully vaccinated are strongly encouraged to continue masking and social distancing.\**

## **Parking**

Families will have access to the following locations for the purposes of parking during the night of graduation (first come first serve); Ridgedale Middle School campus, Murphy Circle, Townsend Drive.

## **Restrooms**

The school building will be accessible for restroom use throughout the course of the graduation ceremony.

## **Graduation Practice**

We will be running an in-person graduation practice on 6/18, 6/21 & 6/22. On 6/18, we will be providing students with the opportunity to sign yearbooks beginning at 9:00am before going out to practice and finishing at 12:00pm. Practice on 6/21 and 6/22 will be from 8:00am-10:00am. Sanitizer stations and best practices as it relates to social distancing and mask wearing will continue to be followed during these events.

If your child is a virtual student and you would like them to participate in any of these practices, please reach out to the Building Principal ([nicholas.steffner@fpks.org](mailto:nicholas.steffner@fpks.org)) to make arrangements.

## **Attending Graduation (RSVP link below)**

If you have not filled out the Graduation RSVP, please click on the link below. We need an accurate count for student attendance in order to properly set up for the event. Thank you!

[Graduation RSVP.](#)

**Graduation Video**

In preparation for not knowing what kind of graduation we would be permitted to hold, we developed a virtual graduation video for the graduating class of 2021. We will be sharing this video with all students and parents when it is complete as another way to honor and celebrate this year's 8th grade class of graduates!

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the information in this letter, please reach out to the main office at the Middle School or contact me via email. If your status for attending graduation changes between now and the date of the event, please email me ([nicholas.steffner@fpks.org](mailto:nicholas.steffner@fpks.org)) or Ms. Stein ([karen.stein@fpks.org](mailto:karen.stein@fpks.org)) as soon as possible so we can make adjustments.

We look forward to sharing in this very important milestone with our students and families at Ridgedale Middle School and are hoping for a beautiful evening on the 22nd!

Be well!



Mr. Steffner

Principal

Ridgedale Middle School

*"A Community of One"*