

CLASS OF 2017 YEAR-END SENIOR EVENTS & GRADUATION GUIDELINES

Congratulations on your upcoming graduation! We are giving you the following guidelines and information so that graduation will be a proud memory for all graduates. While we hope it does not become necessary, diplomas may be pulled for any student not following school rules throughout the rest of the year as well as the guidelines set forth here at any point prior to and including the graduation ceremony.

GRADUATION STATUS

Students will be informed by their guidance counselor if their graduation status changes. If a student is no longer eligible to graduate per the standards set by the State of Florida and the School District of Pasco County, then he/she will not be able to participate in the May graduation ceremony. We thank you in advance for your cooperation in making our graduation ceremony a memorable event for our graduates and their guests. If you have any questions regarding graduation, please contact **Mr. Bruno** at (727) 774-7214 or email rbruno@pasco.k12.fl.us.

SHOUT OUTS

A Shout Out message is a special message to congratulate students who are graduating (or messages from the student to their parents). This message will be shown on giant screens in the Sun Dome. These are due to Mr. Bruno by **April 28th**. Each Shout Out is **\$25** and is limited to **100 characters**. There is a **limit of 70** Shout Outs.

Grad Bash

The seats for Grad Bash have already been purchased and reserved. Seniors who have purchased tickets for the event have already been given the directions. They need to be in the high school bus loop at 4:00 pm on Saturday, April 29. The dress code set forth by Universal will be enforced.

ONLINE CLASSES COMPLETION

Students who are taking online classes must have assignments and DBAs completed no later than **Friday, April 28, 2017 at 11:59pm** and exams completed no later than **Friday, May 5, 2017 at 11:59pm** if they intend to participate in the May 27th graduation ceremony. Please don't wait until the last minute.

SENIOR EXAMS & LAST DAY FOR SENIORS

Senior final exams will be held during the month of May based on the district final exam schedule, ending May 12th. Check the RRHS website for dates and times of the exams. These exams are **NOT** optional, and not taking them might impact your graduation status. The **last official day for seniors is Friday, May 12, 2017**. Seniors are not allowed on campus during the week of May 15-19, with the exception of the **Awards Night on May 17, 6 pm**, in the theater.

Prom

Tickets for prom must be purchased between April 10 and April 28 only. There will be no ticket sales at the door. Prom is at the Airport Marriott in Tampa, May 13, 8 pm. District School Board policies are in effect for this event; failure to follow these policies may keep you from participation in the graduation ceremony.

BACCALAUREATE

River Ridge will be joining Fivay, Hudson, and Ridgewood for the **Class of 2017 baccalaureate**. The interfaith service will be **Monday, May 22, at 6:30 pm** and held at the Word of Life Fellowship Hall, Harry Bollback Performing Arts Center, 13247 Word of Life Drive, Hudson. Participating seniors will check in at 6:00 pm, and refreshments will be served after the service. You must **RSVP by May 12** to bdukeman@pasco.k12.fl.us if you wish to be part of this event. Provide senior's name, and how many guests will be attending.

GRADUATION PRACTICE & SENIOR CHECKOUT

The first graduation practice will be held on **Tuesday, May 23, 2017 from 8:00am – 10:00am** and **Wednesday, May 24, 2017 from 8:00am – 10:00am** in the theater at River Ridge. **NO FOOD OR DRINK IS ALLOWED IN THE THEATER**. You must be prompt to practice both days! Attendance on both days is **MANDATORY** for participation in graduation. Honors cords will be distributed during practice on Tuesday. Senior checkout will be conducted on Wednesday May 24th in the gym immediately following the graduation practice scheduled for that day. **Only students who are properly checked out and attend graduation practice both days will be able to participate in the graduation ceremony or receive diplomas**. The administrator in charge of graduation, Mr. Bruno, **MUST** review and approve any extenuating circumstances. *Students must be dressed according to the*

Pasco County School District Dress Code. Students will be sent home to change if they are out of dress code and this may jeopardize their participation in graduation.

CAPS AND GOWNS

Caps and gowns will be distributed during senior checkout. A Herff Jones rep will be on hand for any problems. A cap decorating party will be held in 5-210 directly after checkout on Wednesday, May 24. Hang the gown for a couple days prior to the graduation ceremony to minimize the amount of wrinkles. Do **NOT** iron the gown as the material will melt. Do **NOT** wash the gown.

SENIOR BREAKFAST

All seniors are invited to attend the annual Senior Breakfast that will be held on **Thursday, May 25, 2017 at Spartan Manor at 8pm**. The address is 6121 Massachusetts Ave, New Port Richey, FL, 34653. This event is included in senior fees and needs no ticket. Students will be required to dress in business casual attire. This would include dress pants or khaki pants, dress shirt with tie or collared polo, socks and closed-toe dress shoes for boys. For girls, a dress/sundress or blouse with skirt or pants. Jeans, shorts, shirts without a collar, sneakers, and flip-flops will not be permitted, and students will be sent home to change if they come to the event dressed in this manner. Event ends at 10:00 am.

CEREMONY

The graduation ceremony will be held on **Saturday, May 27th at 7:30pm**. It will begin promptly at 7:30pm. Seniors are to report at **6:30pm** to the University of South Florida Sun Dome in Tampa in order to sign in and line up for the ceremony. Please follow the signs upon entering the University of South Florida Sun Dome, as they will direct students and guests to the areas in which they should go. Parking is \$5 (cash only). Students should enter at the Corral, which is to the left of Gate A. Leave your personal belongings with a family member. ***Security will do a visual search and wand all of the graduates entering Sun Dome. All bags and purses will be searched. No backpacks will be permitted in the Sun Dome.***

DRESS FOR GRADUATION

Males: Dark dress pants, dress shirt & tie, socks & closed-toe dress shoes (no sneakers, sandals, flip flops, etc).

Females: Dress/sundress or blouse with skirt or pants. Dress shoes or dressy sandals (no sneakers, flip flops, etc.). Flats are acceptable. We recommend that girls wear sensible heels, as there will be a lot of walking and stair climbing.

Both: Leave purses, cameras, and personal items with a parent or friend in the audience; they may not be taken in during the processional. Flowers or corsages are NOT permitted.

Graduation Gowns: Please carry your cap and gown on your arm into the Sun Dome (i.e. don't wear them in). We will not have extra gowns on hand. Make sure that you bring yours to the ceremony.

Graduation Cap: The mortarboard (graduation cap) is to be worn flat with the tassel over the right eye. Once the seniors are declared graduates, the tassel is moved to the left side in unison with the class. All cap decorations are subject to inspection at any given time. A new cap will be assigned if there is any inappropriate material or subject matter on the cap. We will have limited caps or tassels on hand, so please make sure you decorate your cap with this in mind. You cannot graduate without a cap. Please make sure that you bring yours to the ceremony. ***Failure to comply with any part of the dress policy may result in the student not being permitted to participate in the ceremony.***

BEHAVIOR

Graduation is a momentous occasion not only for the seniors, but also for their parents, families, and friends. For that reason, the ceremony is to be held with dignity and courtesy to others. ***All participants are expected to conduct themselves in a manner appropriate for the occasion, which includes walking across the stage. All participants must comply with the Pasco County Student Code of Conduct. Inappropriate behavior will result in both students and parents/guardians having to meet with the school administration prior to receiving a diploma.***

Improper noises and distractions will not be permitted. This includes, but is not limited to, noisemakers such as bullhorns, air horns, whistles, cowbells, and firecrackers, etc.; visual distractions such as signs, balloons, streamers, etc. Do **NOT** bring in beach balls, silly string, or any item that would be deemed inappropriate. We ask that you request family and friends to remain seated throughout the ceremony, except when it is appropriate to stand (during the Pledge of Allegiance, for example), as a courtesy to other graduates and their families and friends. No one, other than graduates and designated guests, is permitted in the seating area for graduates or in the Corral prior to graduation.

Anyone under the influence of alcohol or drugs will not receive his/her diploma and/or will be turned over to appropriate law enforcement officials. As this is a School District of Pasco County event, alcohol will not be permitted inside of any of the areas in the University of South Florida Sun Dome dedicated to the graduation ceremony.

TRAFFIC TO AND PARKING AT THE USF SUN DOME

Please be advised that the time of arrival for the graduation ceremony for students (6:30PM) will coincide with early evening traffic that is heavy based on the location of the USF Sun Dome. Please plan appropriately when leaving your homes and give yourself more than enough time to arrive without incident. Once students and staff have left for the beginning of the ceremony, the students will not be permitted to enter into the seating area for graduates (i.e. don't be late to graduation). This is University of South Florida Sun Dome's security policy and will be strictly enforced. *There is a \$5.00 charge for parking. There are parking areas throughout the areas around the University of South Florida Sun Dome.* Disabled parking is located at Gate A and Gate D, Parking Lot Area 22F. The address is 4202 E. Fowler Avenue, Tampa, FL, 33620.

SEATING & TICKETS

Security will do a visual search and wand all guests to the USF Sun Dome. All bags and purses will be searched. No backpacks will be permitted in the Sun Dome. Cameras/binoculars must be out of their cases – cases need to be left in the car. Seating is unlimited in the University of South Florida Sun Dome, and tickets are not necessary. **No one, other than graduates and designated guests, is permitted on the USF Sun Dome floor.** Floor seating is only permitted for invited dignitaries, graduating seniors, band members, faculty and staff, and other invited guests. All of these people will have tickets in order to go to the floor and will be listed on pre-approved lists provided to the USF Sun Dome. Those who need handicapped seating would be advised to enter in at Gate A, where there are elevators available. There is handicapped seating available throughout the Sun Dome. There is also reserved seating for the hearing impaired; please contact Mr. Bruno if you have hearing impaired guests attending graduation. Concessions in the Sun Dome will be open before the ceremony begins. Food and drink can be purchased for guests only.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Gigante Productions (813-907-1078) will photograph each senior individually upon receiving his/her diploma and congratulations from the principal, as well as with their diplomas. Purchase of these photographs is optional. Gigante Productions will notify seniors via mail when the pictures are ready, and all questions regarding these pictures should go to Gigante Productions. Please make sure that your address is correct with River Ridge High School, as that is the address that we will provide to Gigante Productions. River Ridge High School does not receive any of these pictures or information following graduation.

DIPLOMA DISTRIBUTION

Diplomas will be distributed by alphabet in the same way that students lined up behind the seating for guests. ***Students who have officially checked out will be able to receive their diplomas and participate in graduation. Only students meeting the behavioral requirements at graduation will receive a diploma.***

After receiving your diploma, please exit the University of South Florida Sun Dome. We recommend having a pre-arranged meeting place set with your family.

LOST AND FOUND

Any items left behind from graduation will be kept in a box at student services, and will be available May 30 and 31.

**THE CLASS OF 2017 IS SETTING THE NEW STANDARD
WHICH ALL OTHER CLASSES WILL FOLLOW.
LET'S LEAD THE WAY!**