

PAYSON HIGH SCHOOL

Graduation Handbook

https://bit.ly/PHS_GraduationHandbook



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Dear Parents and Guardians of the Class of 2026:

Graduation is quickly approaching and will be here before we know it! Payson High School's graduation ceremony is scheduled to take place at **7:00 p.m. on Thursday, May 21st, 2026** at our Football Field. The purpose of the graduation ceremony is to create a formal setting to present each graduate the evidence of their academic achievement, the diploma. For students, it marks the passage to adulthood and all of the opportunities that life, with a diploma in hand can bring. For parents and guardians, it is a time filled with emotion and pride.

Throughout the year, Jostens will be on campus to take orders for caps and gowns, class rings and other optional graduation products.

In early May, seniors eligible to graduate will attend a mandatory meeting to review graduation and all of the requirements to participate in the ceremony. This information will reflect on the content in this packet which contains pertinent information on rehearsal, behavior, dress expectations, and so on. Please review this handbook and keep an eye out for the practice dates and times.

The graduation ceremony is an occasion which carries a personal significance for the graduate and pride and excitement for their families. As principal, I am deeply honored to recognize our graduates' achievements for their high school careers. If you have any questions about the graduation ceremony, rehearsal, this handbook or your students senior year, please feel free to contact our school counselors.

Thank you,

Jeff Simon

Important Dates and Times

Awards Night	May 12th	6:00 P.M.	PHS Auditorium
Rehearsal	May 21st	4:00 P.M.	PHS Football Field
Dinner/ Pictures	May 21st	5:15 P.M.	PHS Dome
Graduation	May 21st	7:00 P.M.	PHS Football Field

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Student Responsibilities:

Clothing for Ceremonies

Ordering Cap and Gown

It is imperative that your cap and gown is ordered as soon as possible. You are only required to purchase the base cap & gown unit. There are several packages available at the following site which can include t-shirts and other graduation swag, invitations, thank you cards, etc.

<https://www.jostens.com/apps/store/customer/1001424/Payson-High-School/>

However, this link will take you to the basic cap & gown unit, which includes the cap, gown and tassel.

https://www.jostens.com/apps/store/productDetail/1001424/PAYSON-HIGH-SCHOOL/Cap-and-Gown/2416760825/CATALOG_REPOSITORY/Cap-and-Gown-Unit/2416760831

Ordering a Class Ring and Letter Jacket.

Ordering a class ring or letter jacket are optional purchases but are a great way to commemorate the achievements of your graduate. If you are interested in ordering any of the above products, please follow the designated link to make the purchase.

[Class Ring ordering link](#)

[Letter jacket ordering link](#)

Cap:

The hat (mortarboard) is a symbol of academic achievement and honor. It is recommended to be worn flat on the head with the tip in front and two fingers above the eyebrows. It should not be perched on the back of the head. Try the hat on at home to see if you need hair pins to keep your hat on when walking. Remember, no decorating of caps. Please write your name inside of your cap so that once it is thrown in the air at the end of the ceremony, you can get it back.

Tassels:

Tassels should be worn on the right-hand side of the cap.

Robes:

Graduation robes should be worn so that the hem hangs evenly in the front and back and fully zipped. Robes should be ironed BEFORE the Day of Graduation ceremonies. Each student will receive a Longhorn medallion to be worn in conjunction with the robe. Shorts are not acceptable under your robe. Gentlemen, wear dress pants.

Honor Society or Group Stoles or Cords:

If you are a member of an honor society that has a stole or cords, you must pick up stole or cords from your club advisor during regular school hours. The stole and/or cords will not be available at the graduation ceremony. It is a good idea to pin your stole or cords because of the slippery material from which most of these are made.

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Shoes:

“Appropriate Footwear” and NO Bare Feet!!! Please make sure you can comfortably walk up and down the hill to the dome, on the football field and on the top of the tarp covering the gym floor in the shoes you plan to wear for the Graduation ceremony. (NO FLIP-FLOPS!)

Is graduation practice required?

-YES, if you intend to march. ONLY administration can give special permission to miss practice. Only extenuating circumstances will be considered. Work is not a valid excuse.

Graduation practice starts at 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, May 21st.

Practice will be approximately 2 hours on the football field. Please meet on the field. You do not need to wear your cap and gown to graduation practice. BE CONSIDERATE...DON'T BE LATE!!!

Participating in the graduation ceremony is completely optional.

Please inform Mrs. Kadi Tenney, our Counselor if your student does not wish to participate in the ceremony. The diploma may be picked up in the Counseling Office after May 29th 2026.

Pictures at Graduation Ceremony:

Pictures will be taken of the graduate as they receive their diploma and throughout the ceremony. They will take pictures of EVERY graduate as they are awarded their diploma as well as the final picture with the Principal. The proofs will be mailed to the student's homes. Students may choose to purchase or not to purchase the photos. No money is collected in advance. Only students who order, pay. All monies are handled by the Lifetouch, not the school.

May families do personal photography and videos?

Yes, of course. However, they will not be allowed to set-up equipment on the field and only photograph from the designated areas. Please don't disrupt the graduation proceedings in any way. Failure to follow these procedures will forfeit the right to take pictures or to videotape.

The stage, flowers and decorations will stay up after the graduation ceremony so you can take as many pictures as you would like! We will also have photo booths on the field for your picture backdrops.

Unpaid Fees: No student is allowed to march in the graduation commencement ceremonies if he/she owes any school fees. ALL FEES should be paid by Thursday, May 7th.

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Graduation Ceremony

Marching:

Leave 2 yards between you and the next person. Make sure that you keep the pace set for you by Mr. Heizer and those in front of you.

Stage:

When you are getting ready to get your diploma, wait for your name to be called and Mrs. Tenney acknowledging you that it is time to cross the stage. You will be shaking the hands of all 5 Board of Education members as well as the hand of the Superintendent of Schools. Watch your step coming off stage. After coming off stage, you will receive the “Class Flower” then over to the Principal for your official graduation photograph.

When to Remove Caps:

Please remove your caps during the National Anthem, and put them back on after the Anthem. If the cap is pinned to your hair, please leave it in place and follow the normal process for the National Anthem. You will leave them in place for the rest of the ceremony.

Cultural Regalia at Graduation

Payson High School honors and respects the cultural traditions of our graduating students. In accordance with Arizona state law, students who are members of, or eligible for membership in, a federally recognized Native American tribe are welcome to wear traditional tribal regalia or items of cultural significance during the graduation ceremony. This includes, but is not limited to, items such as eagle feathers or eagle plumes, which hold deep spiritual and cultural meaning. We are proud to celebrate the rich cultural heritage of our students and recognize the importance of allowing them to express their identity as part of this milestone achievement.

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BEHAVIOR

Graduation is a solemn occasion. It is a ceremony to honor the tremendous time and effort it has taken for you to reach this milestone. Everyone has planned this day for a long time. Among the guests who will be at the ceremony will be your families and friends as well as dignitaries from the city, former principals, alumni, school board members and the Superintendent.

We expect you to act in a manner that will show you consider it special that so many people are honoring you!

ALL student's parents, families and friends deserve the right to hear their student's name being announced! Please reserve any loud celebration until after the graduation ceremony.

Remember, walking at the graduation ceremony is a privilege, not a right!

Senior pranks could result in not being allowed to walk at graduation.

Information for Parents, Guardians and Guests

Please remember our graduation ceremony is on Thursday night prior to Memorial weekend, which is one of the busiest travel days of the year in Payson. We have had too many families miss graduation due to being stuck in traffic. Please communicate with your family early and be sure your graduate leaves for the rehearsal early.

Parents and guests will be able to access the stadium starting at 4:00. Seating for our guests are in the bleachers and no longer on the field. If special seating is needed, please speak to a staff member and they will be able to assist you to the chairs on the track.

There is plenty of parking between the football field lot, the bus loading zone lot, the main lot in the front as well as the dome lot. Please remember, there will be many guests here and the lots fill up quickly. Please park in designated spaces only.

Even though this is an outside ceremony, it is still important to be considerate of other guests. Please limit cell phones, excessive talking during the ceremony, air horns, loud confetti poppers and cowbells to name a few. Everybody wants to be able to hear their student's name be called or hear their speech and mitigating these distractions is helpful.

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We ask that any children brought to the ceremony be properly supervised. Since we host the ceremony on the football field, it is tempting for the kids to go play football, catch or chase on the field. Please know it is distracting to the presenters as well as the other families attending the ceremony.

ALL of these requests are based on our basic philosophy:

Both your parents and the graduate have waited a long time for this day! Families and friends deserve the right to clearly hear the graduates name called and see you walk across the stage without trying to hear over noise made by others or trying to see between people standing in front of them! Please be aware of your surroundings and create an atmosphere that allows this graduation to the best possible.

Handicapped Arrangements

Handicapped parking spaces are designated. Handicapped access is available next to the grandstands if someone needs to exit a vehicle there. This area can ONLY be used to drop off an individual, not to park due to fire code regulations.

Please let us know well in advance if any additional services will be needed for your situation.

There is limited seating on the track for the elderly or people that can not access the bleachers. Only these people will sit in these seats, with two other people (not the entire family), please be courteous of others.