

GRADUATION CEREMONIES AND ACTIVITIES

High school graduation ceremonies shall be held to recognize those students who have earned a diploma by successfully completing the required course of study, satisfying district standards, and passing any required assessments. The Governing Board believes that these students deserve the privilege of a public celebration that recognizes the significance of their achievement and encourages them to continue the pursuit of learning throughout their lives.

(cf. 6011 - Academic Standards)

(cf. 6143 - Courses of Study)

(cf. 6146.1 - High School Graduation Requirements)

(cf. 6146.4 - Differential Graduation and Competency Standards for Students with Disabilities)

High school students who have passed the California High School Proficiency Examination or the General Educational Development Test must also meet district graduation requirements in order to participate in graduation ceremonies.

(cf. 6146.2 - Certificate of Proficiency/High School Equivalency)

Invocations, prayers, or benedictions shall not be included in graduation ceremonies. The school or district shall not sponsor other ceremonies or programs for graduates that include prayer.

(cf. 1330 - Use of School Facilities)

(cf. 5145.2 - Freedom of Speech/Expression)

Honors and Awards

(cf. 5121 - Grades/Evaluation of Student Achievement)

The Superintendent or designee shall identify other school-sponsored awards which may be given during graduation exercises. A separate awards program may be held to recognize graduating students receiving other school and nonschool awards.

(cf. 5126 - Awards for Achievement)

Conduct at Graduation Ceremonies

Any student participating in a graduation ceremony shall comply with district policies and regulations pertaining to student conduct.

(cf. 5131 - Conduct)

The Superintendent or designee may require graduating students to wear ceremonial attire, such as cap and gown, at the ceremony.

However, any graduating student who has completed basic training and is an active member of any branch of the United States Armed Forces may, at his/her option, wear his/her military dress uniform at the ceremony. (Education Code 35183.3)

GRADUATION CEREMONIES AND ACTIVITIES (continued)

Disciplinary Considerations

In order to encourage high standards of student conduct and behavior, the principal may deny a student the privilege of participating in graduation ceremonies and/or activities in accordance with school rules. Prior to denial of the privilege, the student, and where practicable his/her parent/guardian, shall be made aware of the grounds for such denial and shall be given an opportunity to respond. If a privilege is to be denied, the student and parent/guardian shall receive written notice of the denied privilege and the means whereby he/she may appeal the decision.

(cf. 5125.2 - *Withholding Grades, Diploma or Transcripts*)

(cf. 5144 - *Discipline*)

(cf. 6161.2 - *Damaged or Lost Instructional Materials*)

Legal Reference:

EDUCATION CODE

35183.3 *Graduation ceremonies; military dress uniforms*

38119 *Lease of personal property; caps and gowns*

48904 *Liability of parent or guardian; withholding of grades, diplomas, transcripts*

51225.5 *Honorary diplomas; foreign exchange students*

51410-51412 *Diplomas*

COURT DECISIONS

Cole v. Oroville Union High School District, (2000, 9th Cir.) 228 F.3d 1092

Santa Fe Independent School District v. Doe, (2000) 530 U.S. 290

Lee v. Weisman, (1992) 505 U.S. 577

Sands v. Morongo Unified School District, (1991) 53 Cal. 3d 863

Lemon v. Kurtzman, (1971) 403 U.S. 602

Management Resources:

WEB SITES

California Department of Education, High School: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/gs/hs/>

Policy

adopted: February 23, 1999

revised: July 25, 2000

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revised: May 25, 2004

revised: April 14, 2009

revised: July 13, 2010

revised: November 18, 2014

revised: October 23, 2018

VISALIA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Visalia, California

STUDENTS

GRADUATION CEREMONIES AND ACTIVITIES

Attendance Requirement for Participation in High School Commencement Ceremony

Visalia Unified School District has a 94% attendance policy that must be met during the senior year for participation in commencement ceremonies.

1. Students must be in class at least 94% of the periods during the senior year of high school to participate in commencement ceremonies.
2. This is not an excused/unexcused absence policy. It is an attendance policy. The type of absence does not matter with the following exceptions:
 - a. doctor appointments or a doctor mandated stay at home
 - b. subpoenas to court
 - c. funeral of an immediate family member
 - d. approved and completed furlough
 - e. participated in a school activity
3. It is up to the student to bring verification from the doctor or court for an exception. Otherwise the absence will count against the policy. Verification must be brought within three school days following the absence.
4. Saturday School attendance (all four hours) may clear an absence. Banking of Saturday School credit is NOT allowed.

Appeal Process

An appeal must be originated by a parent. This appeal must be in writing using the Attendance Policy Appeal Form available in the Attendance Office.

The Appeal Board consists of:

1. Principal
2. Attendance Secretary
3. Counselor/Learning Director
4. Teacher

The Appeal Board's decision is final.

Diploma Distribution at Commencement

The participants in the ceremonial distribution of diploma covers at commencement are to be determined by the Superintendent only. The participants will always include Board members and may include selected staff but will never include students.

Regulation

approved: March 9, 2009

revised: September 24, 2018

VISALIA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Visalia, California