

## **Here's How DHS Will Have a Graduation Like No Other Before: Diplomas Handed Out on June 11 [UPDATED]**

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As everyone knows, Darien High School's graduation this year won't be a ceremony with crowds, due to the restrictions on gatherings, but just how it would be done has been finally announced with a packet (below) emailed to students and parents on Wednesday night.

Here's how:

*[See update in the bulleted, gray-boxed paragraph, below.]*

On Thursday, June 11, graduation will be in two parts: First, from 8 to 9 a.m., the "Wave Through" — a parade of sorts — will go through the high school campus, with seniors and their families in cars. The cars will first go to the Middlesex Middle School parking lot, at 7:45 a.m., then proceed to the high school in a long line.

Then, at various times of day from 9:15 a.m. to 5 p.m., seniors and their families will go back to campus at scheduled times in another line of cars. At the end of the line, seniors in their caps and gowns will get out of their vehicles with their parents and be presented with their diplomas — from their parents. A photographer will be on hand.

At 8 p.m., a "Senior Send-Off Slideshow" has been prepared for online viewing. A "link to viewing [web]site will be provided," according to the high school." Also: Students "will all be included in 'door prizes' for the event, and winners will be announced during the video."

The packet includes a letter from DHS Principal Ellen Dunn to students that says, in part:

"We are so proud of your commitment to learning, your resilience amid so many disappointments and your selflessness in staying apart during a time when all you really want is to be together. We hope that you feel the love we have for you at DHS over the coming weeks in the celebrations we have planned.

"Of course, many of the traditions you have looked forward to have been disrupted, but yours will be a celebration like no other, and I am sure one to remember! [...] We will send reminders with further details as we approach these events and some additional surprises along the way! We can't wait to see you and celebrate with you, even from a distance."

- **Update, 10:47 a.m., Thursday:** Darienite.com's original article didn't have the text of the end of the letter, now added below. Dunn said she hoped to have a ceremony outdoors on July 25 or Aug. 1, and if so, the high school will be in communication with students and parents.

Before "Diploma Day" on June 11, there will be a "Senior Day" on Tuesday, June 9, where seniors must drop off equipment like school iPads and receive things like caps and gowns, awards certificates and honorary cords.

Oh, and if students don't return their iPads and the accessories that go along with them, that'll cost their families as much as \$491 (see the itemized price list is at the end of the "June 9" section, because if students don't return any parts of it, they'll pay for those parts — if something's missing, start scrounging).

It's not all going to be a grind: The Darien High School Parent Association says it will have "some surprises" waiting for seniors.

Here's what was sent to families on Wednesday night:

- Editor's note: We've included the entire packet sent to families of graduating seniors although some of it are instructions only useful to graduating students. We thought readers would be

interested in the details of this year's unusual process, and parents of younger students (and younger students themselves) might find it interesting to see what they might be doing if the pandemic affects future graduations.

## **From Principal Ellen Dunn**

*A cover letter for the information packet:*

Good evening, Families

I am writing to share the information (links above) included in an email to seniors this evening regarding upcoming celebrations.

I would like to sincerely thank the DHSPA, especially Lori and Joan, for their support and partnership in creating memorable and meaningful events to recognize this exceptional class. Please find a message from the DHSPA below.

Sincerely, Ellen

## **Letter to Students**

Dunn sent this letter to students. The original version of this article didn't have the ending (it didn't show up on the program we were using to open up the document. Later on Thursday morning we tried a different program).

## From the Darien High School Parent Association

Dear DHS Senior Family,

The Darien High School Parent Association's Senior Send-Off committee is working closely with the Darien High School Administration to develop new, creative and safe ways to celebrate our seniors.

We are excited to share our plans with you and will send further details as they are finalized. These events and activities are designed to supplement the senior recognition being offered by the DHS Administration.

**Yard Signs** Yard signs congratulating the Class of 2020 were delivered on May 12 to every member of the senior class whose parents opted-in to our "Senior Surprises" Google form. We hope your seniors were surprised!

**Senior Send-Off Slideshow** - Parents have been invited to upload photos of seniors at DHS events/activities/clubs for the Senior Send-Off Slideshow; a link will be provided to view the slideshow on June 11.

**Adopt-a-DHS Senior Week — June 1 to 5** — We invite all parents of DHS Seniors to participate in this program designed specifically for the Class of 2020, which randomly matches families of Darien elementary & middle school students with a DHS senior. Families will drop off a homemade card or sign, a flower from their yard, or a small token at the student's home between June 1 and June 5.

### **Senior Cap and Gown Pick-Up Day — June 9**

The DHSPA will provide decorations so students can decorate their cars!

### **Class of 2020 Diploma Distribution Day — June 11**

All seniors will be entered into a raffle drawing for exciting Senior Send-Off prizes.

**8 pm: Senior Send-Off Slideshow.** Families are encouraged to enjoy the slideshow together at home (link to viewing site will be provided). Raffle winners will be announced during the video.

We have been working closely with the administration and town officials to explore all options to celebrate the seniors, taking into account all town/health department restrictions and social distancing guidelines.

All local and state Executive Orders have been respected in our planning. Our team of parent volunteers is working tirelessly to make this time special and memorable for the Class of 2020. We thank you for your support!

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Lori Olson and Joan Kanlian

DHSPA Co-Chairs

**JUNE 9 — Tuesday**

"All Seniors- Come to DHS to make a trade! This is your opportunity to bring return items to return to DHS, and we will give you some special items in return!

Your Cap and Gown, awards certificates, honorary cords, etc. will be ready for you in preparation for Diploma Pick Up Day on June 11."

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**JUNE 11 — Thursday**

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