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Kara Merlin • Principal
Assistant Principals: Douglas Elias • Tisha Doohen
Christine Ramirez • Jeffrey Wolff

Dear Seahawk Families,

The Class of 2026 graduation ceremony is coming up soon! This time of year is so exciting and filled with many traditions and celebratory events. We hope this guide helps ensure our traditions are fun and memorable for all involved.

GRADUATION

Friday, June 5, 2026

6:30PM

University of South Florida Yuengling Center

Though the ceremony begins promptly at 6:30PM, students **must** report to the Yuengling Center by **5:30PM**.

To uphold the dignity of our graduation ceremony and to meet increased security requirements, the following procedures will be followed by the University of South Florida Yuengling Center and Pasco County Schools:

Graduates:

1. Graduates only should enter and go immediately to the entry that is marked for graduates (the Gate A Annex near the USF Store).
2. The graduates must carry their caps and gowns into the University of South Florida Yuengling Center as students will go through a metal detector and/or be wanded by security personnel. Graduates will put their gowns on after they have entered the building.
3. Graduates may bring only their caps, gowns, approved regalia and cell phones (if they intend to carry it into the ceremony). Purses, bags, clothes hangers etc. are not allowed as there is not secure storage at USF. Any sashes or stoles that are not school issued will be collected by Sunlake personnel upon entry to the corral and will need to be picked up by the student after the ceremony.
4. All graduates are expected to conduct themselves in a manner appropriate for the occasion, which includes walking across the stage. The Student Code of Conduct applies to this event. Inappropriate behavior will result in withholding of the graduate's diploma and both the student and parents will need to meet with school administration prior to receiving a diploma.

Guests:

1. Tickets are not required for entry into the commencement exercises.
2. When you arrive at the University of South Florida, please enter at the Fowler Avenue and Bull Run entrance. There will be signs throughout the area to direct you.

3. University of South Florida charges \$13.00 per vehicle for parking. Cash is not accepted and the fee must be paid via credit card. Disabled parking is located at Gate A and Gate D, Parking Lot Area 22F.
4. Your entire party should coordinate to arrive at the same time if you prefer to sit together. Saving of seats is not permitted.
5. All guests will proceed through metal detectors and bags will be searched. Weapons of any kind, outside food or beverage, backpacks and large bags are not permitted. Personal bags must be smaller than 12"x12"x12". Cameras are permitted with the exception of professional cameras with larger lenses.
6. Balloons, flowers, signs, noisemakers of any kind (including, but not limited to, bull horns, cowbells, whistles, air horns, confetti poppers etc.) and laser pointers are prohibited by the University of South Florida.
7. Concessions at the University of South Florida may be open before the ceremony begins. Food and drink can be purchased for guests only.
8. Hearing-impaired services are available. Please contact our graduation coordinator, Ms. Karen Hall (khall@pasco.k12.fl.us), if you need this service.
9. We highly recommend having a pre-arranged meeting place set with your graduate and family following the ceremony. Graduates will first have to pick up their diplomas following the ceremony in the corral prior to exiting the venue.
10. The graduation ceremony will be live streamed for those who are not able to attend. The link to the livestream will be on the Sunlake website and the Pasco County Schools website.

Photography:

Gigante Productions (813-907-1078) will photograph each graduate individually upon receiving his/her diploma from the principal as well as individually with their diploma. Purchase of these photographs is optional and Gigante Productions will notify seniors via mail when the pictures are ready. All questions regarding these pictures should go to Gigante Productions. Please make sure that your address is correct via the Parent Portal, as that is the address that we will provide to Gigante Productions. Sunlake does not receive these pictures or information following graduation. Outside professional photographers are not permitted.

Please contact Dr. Tisha Doohen, Assistant Principal for 12th grade

SENIOR ACTIVITIES

Senior Breakfast:

Tuesday, May 26th

9:00 AM

The Bethany Center

This event is free for all seniors (students only) and does not require a ticket. Dress code event is business casual. Jeans, shorts, flip-flops, and beach attire are not considered business casual. Students will be admitted only if they are following the dress code for this event.

Graduation Practice/Senior Checkout/Senior Picnic

Sunlake Gymnasium

Thursday, May 28, 2026

7:30 AM – 10:00 AM

- Graduation practice and senior checkout are mandatory for all seniors.
- Any student who does not attend graduation practice may not be allowed to participate in the ceremony. Students should arrive at the school by 7:25 AM and wait outside of the gymnasium until 7:30 AM. Final checkout will occur at the end of graduation practice and students are expected to stay for the duration.
- Prior to Graduation Practice, students will be receiving a final notice of debts. These will be due by Thursday, May 28th and balances must be paid to receive caps and gowns.
- Caps and gowns will be distributed only on May 28th at the end of graduation practice.
- Students will be informed by their school 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 graduation ceremony.
- Senior Picnic will follow graduation practice and will take place on the football field. Students will receive a special bracelet at practice so that they can be admitted to the picnic.

Night of Excellence

Sunlake Gymnasium

Tuesday, May 26, 2026

6:00 PM-7:30 PM

- This is a scholarship and honor night for Seniors and their parents.
- Your child will receive an invitation to attend this evening if they are receiving an award, a scholarship or an honor stole.