2025 AC FLORA GRADUATION INFORMATION

GRADUATION TIME/DATE/LOCATION
The 2025 AC Flora Graduation Ceremony will be held at 11:00 am on Wednesday, May 28th at Colonial Life Arena. Graduates should arrive no later than 10:00 am at the Loading Dock. Doors will open for guests at 10:30 am and all guests must be seated by 10:50 pm. Parking maps and other traffic details will be forthcoming. It is better to be early than to be late.

MANDATORY GRADUATION PRACTICE
All graduating seniors are required to attend mandatory graduation practice on Friday, May 23rd at 10:00 am in the AC Flora Theater. Graduation practice will end at 2 pm. During practice, we will finalize paperwork, review procedures for graduation day, practice walking in and out of the arena, and we will have students review/confirm how their names are correctly pronounced.

GENERAL GUIDELINES
Richland One graduations are considered school events, and all school/district rules will apply. In addition, AC Flora/Richland One Administration, Richland One Security, and local law enforcement will be on hand to ensure that graduation is a respectful and safe event. All school/district rules and policies regarding student/guest behavior will apply. As a reminder, Colonial Life Arena is a non-smoking facility.

Please note that Colonial Life Arena has a clear bag policy. This policy can be found on the district web site and the AC Flora web site. If you must bring a bag, please ensure that it meets the guidelines. In addition, all graduates and guests will walk through metal detectors upon entry to the arena. Guests will enter via the main entrance to the arena and graduates will enter via the Loading Dock at the rear of the arena. School/district staff will be on hand to direct graduates and guests to the correct entrances. Guests should remain in their seats during the ceremony and will be able to meet their graduate outside the main entrance once the ceremony has concluded.

ARRIVAL/GUESTS/PARKING
When you arrive at Colonial Life Arena, we strongly suggest that you arrive in the same vehicle, or in as few vehicles as possible, to help with traffic, parking, and safety. Graduates will need to report to the Loading Dock and guests will need to report to the main entrance (near the A'ja Wilson statue). Upon completion of the ceremony, guests and graduates should promptly leave the arena and plan to meet near the main entrance.

Graduates should give themselves PLENTY of time to get downtown, find a place to park, and get to the Loading Dock. Remember, **you need to be IN the Loading Dock no later than 10:00 am.**

Parking is free if you park in a designated graduation lots. The large lots next to CLA will be available. If you park in a metered space or garage, you may be charged, and you will be subject to the parking regulations of the City of Columbia.

TICKETS
Tickets are not required for your guests who are attending the ceremony, and there is no limit to the number of guests you may invite. However, all guests are asked to arrive early, carpool if possible, follow all R1 and CLA rules/policies, and plan to be flexible.

ATTIRE/PERSONAL ITEMS
Graduate attire should be respectful and appropriate for the graduation ceremony. Graduation is a dignified and professional ceremony, and we expect all graduates to dress and act accordingly.

Ladies should wear dresses that don't hang below the gown or dress pants. Dress pants are an option. Ladies' shoes should be comfortable for walking and standing. Wedges are ok but high heels are discouraged.

Gentlemen should wear collared shirts and dress pants. Nice shoes are expected also.

Graduates should not bring or carry purses, cell phones, or other personal items with them during the ceremony. There is nowhere to store them.

If you arrive at the stadium and your graduation attire does not meet these guidelines, or if your cap/gown has been altered in any unapproved way, you will not be allowed to participate in the ceremony. Please note the guidelines for decorating your cap contained in this document that have also been previously communicated.

Students may only wear honor cords that are issued by AC Flora High School and/or Richland One. No cords or tassels that have been given/issued to you by any outside organizations (or any that have been custom-made by/for the graduate) may be worn during graduation!

Caps must be decorated according to the *Cap Decorating Guidelines* found in this packet. Caps will be checked by administration upon arrival and graduates will not be allowed to enter the stadium if their cap does not meet the guidelines. Whether or not you are decorating your cap, we encourage you to try it on in advance to make sure that it will stay on your head for the

duration of the ceremony. Please note that some hair styles may require the graduate to pin the cap to their hair in order for it to stay in place. Your tassel should hang to the right of the cap.

Hang your gown prior to graduation to eliminate any wrinkles. If you press the gown, please be sure to use a **cool iron** to avoid damaging the gown. DO NOT WASH IT! We do not have replacement gowns!

LIVE STREAM

Graduation will be live-streamed on the district's web site at www.richlandone.org. Multiple cameras will be used to ensure that every graduate will be seen as much as possible. Please note that the live stream link is not yet posted on the district's web site, but will be added in advance of the ceremony date/time.

BEHAVIOR

Only diploma covers will be presented during the ceremony. Students/guests who disregard the guidelines for appropriate behavior before, during and/or after the ceremony run the risk of not receiving their actual diploma, which will be distributed at Flora in the days following the ceremony. Examples of inappropriate behavior include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **a.** Calling out or cheering
- **b.** Inappropriate hand/body gestures
- **c.** Altering your graduation attire in unapproved ways
- **d.** Throwing caps in the air
- **e.** Loud, inappropriate noises
- **f.** Waving to the crowd as you cross the stage
- **g.** Dancing across the stage
- **h.** Cell phones ringing
- **i.** Use of/under the influence of tobacco, vaping products, alcohol, drugs, or any other unauthorized/illegal substance

**In addition, all debts must be cleared, all after-school detention hours must be served, and all school-issued items must be returned before diplomas will be issued. This is non-negotiable!

Diplomas can be picked up at the front office after the ceremony or during school hours the following days.

CAP DECORATING - Optional

Please take into consideration the following rules and guidelines when decorating your 2025 graduation cap. This should be a positive experience for you and your family. We want to celebrate your achievements at Flora as well as what you will be doing after high school. We encourage you to be creative, unique, respectful, and positive as you decorate your cap. Failure to follow these rules will result in a replacement cap being given to you during commencement at your own cost ($25)! Cap decorating is an optional experience.

****Administration reserves the right to disallow any cap design for any reason prior to, just before, or during the graduation ceremony. All decisions made by administration are final.****

Positive cap decorating ideas include, but are not limited to:

- Thanking a parent, grandparent, teacher, guardian
- Recognizing the branch of the military you will be joining
- Recognizing the college/university you will be attending
- Recognizing a club, class, sport, or other organization you are involved in
- Positive quotes/images
- Positive Flora-themed images/quotes
- Original artwork

General Cap Decorating Guidelines

- All decorations must be neat and organized. You may NOT simply write on top of your cap. It must be truly *decorated.*
- No offensive language, sayings, nicknames, pictures or lyrics on cap
- No objects such as signs, stuffed animals, bells, flowers, or any 3D object may rest on the cap. This includes lights.
- ALL decorations MUST lay FLAT on the cap. Nothing can lay perpendicular thus allowing us to see the decoration beyond eye level. Your cap must not block anyone's view.
- Your cap CANNOT make noise. No bells, horns, or anything that makes noise.
- No symbols, logos, words, sayings or any action that can be deemed as offensive to those in any culture. Remember, this is not just your ceremony but a ceremony you share with all of your classmates and their respective friends and family members!
- No symbols, logos, words, sayings, or actions that affiliate themselves with criminals, alcohol or drug paraphernalia, or any other illegal activity.
- No sexual or inappropriate references or innuendos.
- You may decorate the entire top of the mortarboard, but underneath and the headpiece should remain untouched and unaltered.
- The tassel must still be present on the cap. You may not alter your tassel in any way.

****If you have any questions about any intended information/images that you feel might be questionable, be sure to talk to an administrator before graduation. If you think your idea might be inappropriate, it probably is!****

We highly suggest you trace your cap onto cardboard and decorate the cardboard so that, if you make a mistake, you can start over with a new piece of cardboard. Please be sure to include a small hole for the tassel. After you decorate it, stick it to your cap with double-sided tape or Velcro tape. **We will not furnish new caps if you mess yours up decorating.** Please be sure before you decorate!

All caps will be reviewed prior to the graduation ceremony. AC Flora and/or Richland One Administration reserves the right to disallow anything that is not considered appropriate for the commencement ceremony for any reason. In order to encourage high standards of student conduct and behavior, administration will replace a student's cap if it is in violation of the guidelines. If this is the case, the student will be charged $25 for the replacement cap.

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