

Mountain School FAQ

Please see below for answers to some common questions about TMS! If you have a question you don't see answered below, please send us an email at admissions@mountainschool.org.

1. [Application & Financial Aid](#)
2. Academics
3. Student Life

Application & Financial Aid

During which grades can I attend the Mountain School?

Most of our students attend as juniors, although we also enroll a small number of sophomores in the spring and seniors in the fall. We do not offer summer or gap-year programming.

What is the application timeline?

Applications for Fall 2025 and Spring 2026 are now open on our website. The first step in the process is submitting an [online inquiry](#). Applications for admission and financial aid (see below) are both due on February 15th, 2025.

What does a completed application include?

Applicants will need to submit: a short biographical information form, a series of short-form Student Statements, one 500-word Personal Essay (choice of three prompts), two teacher recommendations, and a transcript. The entire application, including recommendation and transcript requests, takes place on [Blackbaud](#), our application portal.

Does the Mountain School offer financial aid? How do I apply for it?

Yes, TMS offers need-based financial aid in the form of direct grants that do not need to be repaid. Applicants whose families wish to apply for need-based financial aid provide a Parent Financial Statement, including supporting documents, through our [SSS portal](#) (school code 3537). This statement is due at the same time as the student's portion of the application on February 15th, 2025. Our Admissions Team reviews your financial aid application at the same time as your application for admission and provides a financial aid package based on your family's demonstrated need.

How many students at the Mountain School receive financial aid?

In recent years, as many as 40 percent of students have received some amount of need-based financial aid.

Does TMS provide support for students with mental or physical health needs or learning differences?

Supporting students is central to how we run our program. We do this through a model called Multi-Tiered Systems of Support. Student supports range from tailored 1:1 health, mental health, or academic support to various smaller group settings allowing for deeper support and

connecting among faculty and peers. Support needs are monitored by a multidisciplinary faculty team who meet regularly to assess and implement support needs as they come up during the semester. Although we do provide academic support for 504/IEP, health support, and mental health support, it is important to know that our program is designed to build independence and is mainly designed for students who are highly self-motivated and independent by nature. In order to apply to TMS, families will be asked to certify that their student meets our [Essential Eligibility Criteria](#), or that they have already discussed the accommodations they need with our team. We have had many students come through our program with IEPs, 504s, complex medical needs, or mobility constraints and be successful. We ask families to be forthright about their student's talents, needs, and limitations; in turn, we will be comprehensive in our consideration of whether and how we can support that student at TMS.

Academics

Does the Mountain School have any required courses?

Yes, we have three required courses: Honors English, Honors Environmental Studies, and Honors TMS Core Seminar (which has modules on Food Systems, Health & Wellness, and Race, Class, & Gender).

What is the Core Seminar?

TMS Seminar connects the dots between farm and food justice; health and well-being; and race, class, and gender. These seminar-style classes meet four times a week and are graded and for credit. They introduce students to conceptual frameworks and terminology that will help students understand the labor practices and land uses of farming, the food economy, racial and cultural identity construction, and the physiological connections between sleep and anxiety, among many other topics.

What other courses can I take?

Students typically take 3-4 additional courses from the following list: Math (available at all levels), Spanish (available at all levels), French (available at all levels), AP US History, Art & the Environment, Environmental Humanities, and Culinary Studies. Beginning in Fall 2025, we also plan to offer Field Sciences (Physics and Chemistry) on campus.

What if TMS doesn't offer a course I need to take?

We encourage you to use your time at TMS to explore courses and subjects that can only be learned here on our campus. That said, we also recognize that sometimes students need to take a course for their graduation requirements that we aren't able to offer on campus. In these situations, we can accept an online course in lieu of **one** of a student's optional courses. It will be the student and their family's responsibility to identify and enroll in the online course. We require a syllabus and a teacher evaluation in order to list an online course on a student's TMS transcript. We encourage students to be creative and work with their home schools when course planning. Other options include taking a required course over the summer or during senior year.

What if there's a course (such as U.S. History), that students have already taken?

If students have already taken Environmental Studies, they will still take that class with us. Otherwise, they should choose a different class from among our elective options.

Student Life

How many students attend the Mountain School each semester?

We enroll between 45 and 50 students each semester.

What access to technology will I have at the Mountain School?

TMS is a cell phone-free campus, so you will not have access to your phone while you're here. Most students bring laptops (or borrow one from us) to use for schoolwork and staying in touch with family/friends. There is wireless internet in the academic building and in the dorms that shuts off after dorm check-in each evening. Each dorm also has a landline phone (you just might have to wait your turn to use it!).

What is residential life like at the Mountain School?

All students live on campus in one of our five small dorms (each with seven to 14 students). Most rooms are doubles or triples, with a few quads and singles available depending on the dorm. Each dorm has a common room, a bathroom, and a nearby laundry room. All dorms also have an attached apartment/house where dorm faculty live and serve as a resource for students. Some of our dorms are all-gender and some are single-gender. Each student has the chance to opt into whichever type of housing they prefer.

How are dorms chosen?

Students complete a housing questionnaire after accepting their place at TMS. This questionnaire is used to match them with a roommate who has similar living habits in a room which matches their gender identity. The housing survey also invites students to express a preference for an all-gender or single gender dorm.

What is a typical day like? Are there classes on the weekend?

You can view a typical day on our [Academics](#) page. It'll include meals, several classes, chores, work period (outdoors) and free time. There are no classes on the weekends, and most free time is in evenings or on weekends.

Can I play sports at the Mountain School?

Many students here are athletes and want to stay conditioned for their sport. We don't have official athletic teams, but students often organize basketball or frisbee games, do pull-ups in the dorm, run on our trail network, etc. Disciplined athletes can stay fit here, by running on roads and trails, lifting and carrying during farm work or woods crew, or working out in our on-campus gym. Our graduates have gone on to play sports in college and professionally.

Can I play my instrument at the Mountain School?

Yes! Definitely bring your instrument. TMS tends to attract lots of musicians. It's usually possible to find a quiet space on campus to practice, and there are plenty of opportunities to jam with your classmates. We have a piano in the dining hall.

Can TMS accommodate my dietary restrictions?

Our chefs do an amazing job of providing dishes that meet a wide variety of dietary and allergen guidelines. At every meal there are options without dairy, meat, gluten and eggs. We have supported many students to find a healthy diet here at TMS, including those with nut allergies, celiac disease, and diabetes.

What Affinity Groups does TMS offer to support students?

There are three affinity groups led by faculty and available to students who self-identify accordingly: BIPOC (Black, Indigenous & People of Color), LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and others), and FLI (First-Gen & Low-Income). Additionally, students may work with faculty to offer other affinity groups according to interest. Past semesters have had affinity groups for Dis/Ability, children of divorced parents, and Jewish students. These groups provide a space for students to connect with each other and with faculty members.