



Dear OMS Parents and Returning Student-Athletes,

Greetings from Okemo Mountain School! The 2024-2025 admissions season is upon us and all of us here at OMS would like to make the process as seamless as possible. Please complete the registration form specifically for returning student-athletes online at <https://www.okemomountainschool.org/how-to-apply>.

Please complete the registration form online. A non-refundable registration fee of \$50.00 is required by **April 1, 2024** for priority admissions consideration. The Admissions Committee reserves the right to review a student-athlete's athletic and academic progress from the previous year before granting re-enrollment. Additionally, we are unable to guarantee re-enrollment without the registration form and fee. The registration form is important as it provides us with the most up-to-date contact information for parents, student-athletes, and sending schools. *Please be sure this is filled out accurately and completely.*

OMS offers several options for enrollment. The first is a small full school year program. During the Fall and Spring months the schedule is similar to a traditional school setting. Our full school year student-athletes all become a part of our Winter Term program, which continues to be the mainstay of what OMS offers. Within the Winter Term, there are also several shorter Target Terms available. Dates and details for each term follow in this packet.

In this packet, we have also included a letter to share with your sending school, as well as the link for the Collaboration Tool that can be shared to further explain the process. This will be helpful if your child is attending a new sending school for the 2024-2025 school year. Also included is the Vermont State Board of Education Independent School Statute. Please begin the process of speaking to your child's sending school before the end of the 2023-2024 school year.

**Once we have received the initial registration form, you can expect to hear from us regarding:**

- **Tuition Deposit and Payment Schedule**
- **Sending School Approval Letter**
- **Immunization Records**
- **Enrollment Paperwork**
- **Summer Conditioning Program**
- **2024-2025 Calendar**

We have been very pleased with the progress we have seen among our student-athletes – both on the hill and in the classroom. It is our hope that every OMS student-athlete has achieved his or her personal goals. We look forward to the opportunity to work with each of you again next year.

Sincerely,  
**Okemo Mountain School**  
**Admissions Committee**



## Okemo Mountain School Contact Information

### **Head of School**

Mariel Meringolo

802-228-1513

[mmeringolo@okemomountainschool.org](mailto:mmeringolo@okemomountainschool.org)

### **Dean of Academics, Assistant to the Head of School & Admissions Coordinator**

Ashley Belcher

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### **Registrar & Academic Assistant**

Leslie Cassano

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### **Development Coordinator**

Kate Foster

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### **Alpine Program Director**

Chris Hurka

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### **Freestyle Sports Program Director**

Luke Bonang

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### **School Fax**

802-228-1511

### **School Website**

[www.okemomountainschool.org](http://www.okemomountainschool.org)

### **Mailing Address**

53 Main Street

Ludlow, VT 05149



# **OMS 2024/25 Term Dates**

## **FULL TERM**

September 3 – June 6

## **WINTER TERM & WINTER TERM TRAINING-ONLY**

November 4 – April 4

## **SEMESTER 1**

November 4 – January 24

## **TARGET TERM A**

December 2 – March 14

## **TARGET TERM B**

January 6 – April 4

## **TARGET TERM C**

January 6 – March 14

## **SEMESTER 2**

January 27 – April 4



# **OMS WINTER TERM STUDENT SCHEDULE**

***Mondays: Day off snow***

**Arrive at OMS: 11:45 am**

***Please eat lunch prior to arriving at school***

**1<sup>st</sup> period: 11:55 – 12:42 pm**

**2<sup>nd</sup> period: 12:45 – 1:32 pm**

**3<sup>rd</sup> period: 1:35 – 2:22 pm**

**4<sup>th</sup> period: 2:25 – 3:12 pm**

**5<sup>th</sup> period: 3:15 – 4:02 pm**

**6<sup>th</sup> period: 4:05 – 4:52 pm**

**7<sup>th</sup> period: 4:55 – 5:42 pm**

**Pick up at OMS: 5:45 pm**

## **Conditioning Periods:**

*Determined each year by grade, gender, and number of student-athletes in each group*



# **OMS WINTER TERM STUDENT SCHEDULE**

## ***Tuesday - Friday***

**Drop-off at Okemo: 8:15 am**

*Meet at the base of AB quads*

*Athletes should be dressed and ready for on-snow warmup*

**Load lift: 8:30 am**

**Morning Athletics: 8:30 am – 11:40 am**

**Buses depart for OMS: 11:50 am**

**Lunch at OMS: 12:00 pm – 12:27 pm**

**1<sup>st</sup> period: 12:30 – 1:12 pm**

**2<sup>nd</sup> period: 1:15 – 1:57 pm**

**3<sup>rd</sup> period: 2:00 – 2:42 pm**

**4<sup>th</sup> period: 2:45 – 3:27 pm**

**5<sup>th</sup> period: 3:30 – 4:12 pm**

**6<sup>th</sup> period: 4:15 – 4:57 pm**

**7<sup>th</sup> period: 5:00 – 5:42 pm**

**Pick up at OMS: 5:45 pm**

### **Conditioning Periods:**

*Determined each year by grade, gender, and number of student-athletes in each group*



## **OMS WINTER TERM STUDENT SCHEDULE**

***Tuesday - Friday (1 day a week): Full on snow day***

**Drop-off at Okemo: 8:15 am**

*Meet at the base of AB quads*

*Athletes should be dressed and ready for on-snow warmup*

**Load lift: 8:30 am**

**AM Training: 8:30 am – 11:45 am**

**Lunch on the mountain: 11:50 am – 12:25 pm**

**PM Training: 12:30 pm - 2:30 pm**

**2:45 pm** – Students will be transported back to OMS for video review, sports education, tuning, and trampoline.

**Pick up at OMS: 4:30 pm**

### **Groupings:**

*Tuesday: All U16s/U18s*

*Wednesday: All U14s*

*Thursday: Snowboard*

*Friday: U12s & Freeski*



# **OMS FULL TERM FALL & SPRING DAILY STUDENT SCHEDULE**

**8:30 -8:37am**

Arrival

**8:40 - 9:27 AM**

First Period

**9:30 - 10:17 AM**

Second Period

**10:20 - 11:07 AM**

Third Period

**11:10 - 11:57 AM**

Fourth Period

**12:00 - 12:27 PM**

Lunch

**12:30 - 1:17 PM**

Fifth Period

**1:20 - 2:07 PM**

6th Period

**2:10 - 2:57 PM**

7th Period

**3:00 PM**

Dismissal



## Winters at OMS

Days at Okemo Mountain School are long and challenging, but extremely rewarding. On-snow training, dry land conditioning, academic classes, equipment tuning, community involvement, and homework make for a busy schedule. However, the smiles that are seen and the laughter that is heard amongst our student-athletes as they leave each evening are proof that they enjoy the rigors of the day.

On days when on-snow training is held our student-athletes arrive at Okemo at 8:15 am. They begin with an on-snow warm-up, followed by their on-snow training. The alpine ski racing athletes can be found freeskiing the mountain to work on drills and fundamentals or training gates on a variety of trails. Wardance is our dedicated training facility at Okemo and is serviced by the Black Ridge Triple to allow for many training runs each morning, but Okemo also generously provides us with space on Chief for speed training or other trails to meet specific training goals. The freeski and snowboard athletes can be found freeriding on the mountain or taking lap after lap in the halfpipe or on the OMS inspired terrain park. The halfpipe and terrain park are serviced by a surface lift which provides our athletes with the chance to stay connected to the snow all morning long and lap the park and pipe many times each morning.

After morning on-snow training, our student-athletes are transported back to OMS to prepare for the second half of their day. Between 12 pm and 12:30 pm student-athletes can be found eating lunch and catching up with their friends before heading off to their first class at 12:30 pm. Each class is 42 minutes long and through the six academic periods of the day students meet with each of their subject teachers. Student to teacher ratios are generally no more than 2:1 and the focus is on each individual student and meeting their personal academic needs. Some students are fortunate enough to be able to fit a study hall into their schedule and during this time they can be found working on homework, watching training videos, or tuning equipment.

Built into each student-athlete's afternoon schedule is a strength and conditioning period. Athletes work with their coaches to follow a strength and conditioning routine that incorporates strength and plyometric training, agility and balance exercises, and cardiovascular workouts. These periods are broken down into age groups, allowing the student-athletes to work at an appropriate level for each of them individually.

One day each week, a specific group of athletes stays on the mountain for a longer day of on-snow training. They train until 2:30pm and then are transported back to OMS where they will have time for video review, sports education, tuning, and trampoline.

Student-athletes are also provided a brief respite on Monday mornings as they have the morning off from on-snow training. Most take the morning to sleep in, while some take the time to access additional academic support from their teachers. Others still will take the morning to have some fun with their friends or spend time with their family. Most student-athletes arrive around 11:45am having already eaten lunch with classes beginning at 11:55am. Their schedule also allows for longer academic classes on Monday's, lasting 47 minutes. Since days off are meant for physical rest, the student-athletes spend their conditioning period participating in an OMS Health curriculum, which takes the place of health provided by the sending school.

Finally at 5:45pm, the day is over and student-athletes are picked up by their parents or host families to head home for dinner, homework, and some much needed rest!



## **Fall & Spring at OMS Full Term Enrollment**

### **Overview**

Okemo Mountain School offers a small, personalized program for those student-athletes looking to learn with us for the full school year. As with all that we do at OMS, individualized academic attention is a mainstay. During the Fall and the Spring, which coincide with the first and fourth academic quarters, student-athletes learn in small groups following a daily schedule typical of a more traditional school setting (see above). During the Winter months, student-athletes are integrated with the [Winter Term and Target Term](#) student-athletes though they will continue to learn with the same teachers as during the Fall and Spring.

Academic course offerings are currently focused on 7th-12th grade in mathematics, science, social studies, civics, language arts, foreign language, and visual arts. With the help of our Dean of Academics, student-athletes will select courses from the OMS curriculum, which utilizes [Oak Meadow](#) materials in many subject areas. Academic content is rigorous and meant to challenge each student-athlete to learn and grow, achieving their personal best. Pacing can be personalized to allow student-athletes to accelerate where appropriate, or take their time as needed. Physical education is completed through strength and conditioning during the Full Term and a combination of strength and conditioning and winter snow sports during the Winter Term. Topics in health and wellness are also covered throughout the year.

### ***Tuition & Fees***

The cost of the Full Term at OMS is inclusive of the Winter Term tuition for each enrolled student-athlete. Tuition for 2023-24 is \$42,500 and the rates for the 2024-25 school year will be set in late March. Residents of Ludlow and Mount Holly (or other school choice towns) are eligible for town tuition. Families are responsible for the balance of tuition after the town's portion is paid.

Families are responsible for the purchase of academic materials, including student textbooks and workbooks, lab supplies, etc. The Dean of Academics will work with each student-athlete to determine what purchases need to be made.

Additionally, families are subject to additional charges for any Fall and Spring sports or after-school programs outside of the scheduled school day. Currently, OMS offers golf in the Fall and Spring.



## Winter Term Frequently Asked Questions

### **Will my student follow his or her sending school's curriculum or the OMS curriculum?**

Your student will follow the sending school's curriculum for each of his or her individual courses while here at OMS. Our goal is to cover your student's curriculum in a manner similar to that of his or her sending school teacher. We work to keep your student on track or ahead of his or her sending school classmates. In the case that a student is ahead, we also look for ways to enrich the curriculum. In the case of a school unenrolling the student and cutting them off from materials, we try to obtain an outline and do our own curriculum planning, allowing the student to still cover similar content as their sending school.

### **What courses do you facilitate at Okemo Mountain School?**

We work to facilitate any course that a student is taking at his or her sending school. However, given the broad spectrum of elective courses that are offered at the various schools with which we work, it is not always possible to do so. Additionally, it may be in students' best interest to focus on core curriculum and leave elective courses to fall and spring. We facilitate all courses within the departments of English/Language Arts, Science, Social Studies/History, and Mathematics. We also facilitate Spanish and French and have dedicated staff members to teach these courses. We facilitate courses in Visual Arts, such as drawing and painting, printmaking, digital photography, graphic arts, and fiber arts. Beyond these courses we will make our best effort to facilitate other courses, but cannot guarantee having the appropriate staff each year. If your student has an elective course that cannot be facilitated here, we can offer alternatives from our own curriculum for them to take during their time here. We also encourage the exploration of online courses if your student has a specific interest in a subject that is not facilitated here. If you have questions about elective courses that can be supported, we encourage you to reach out to us before making final schedule decisions with your child's sending school.

### **How do I approach my student's sending school?**

We recommend introducing the idea of Okemo Mountain School early to your student's sending school. We know that sometimes as a parent you might be apprehensive to approach your student's sending school about OMS – particularly if it is a new school for him or her – but we find that beginning the conversation early is best. You can use the letter to educators enclosed here, as well as the Collaboration Tool and Vermont State Statute, to introduce the idea. However, your student's teachers will not fill out the Collaboration Tool until the same school year in which they are attending OMS. We also encourage you to provide our contact information so that they can contact us if they wish. Additionally, if you meet any initial resistance to the idea, please let us know if you would like us to make contact first to further explain the program. As we move into the fall OMS will contact all sending schools to begin the process of collaboration. You will also want to contact your student's sending school to remind them of his or her plans to attend OMS. During the fall and throughout the winter, you as the parent may at times act as a liaison to facilitate the transfer of information from sending school to OMS.

### **What should I tell my sending school about how to best collaborate with OMS?**

Sending schools collaborate with us in varying ways. At a minimum, we require a course outline or syllabus and a student copy of the textbook. Some schools also opt to send more – daily assignments, tests, quizzes, major writing assignments or projects, and midterms. We also leave open the option of who will grade the student's work. However, we feel that in most cases it is most fair for the student to be graded by our teachers while they are here. If your school is open to suggestion on how to collaborate, the best case scenario is one in which each sending school teacher provides a course outline, two copies of the textbook (one for the student and one for the

OMS teacher), a clear indication of the content and format of assessments (either in the form of actual copies of assessments or copies of review sheets), and is open to weekly communication with our teachers. We do administer midterms here at OMS if requested by the sending school. However, we request that we receive either the midterm a week in advance of when it is going to be administered or a thorough review packet well in advance. This allows our teachers to ensure that your student is amply prepared. We believe that this is the best way for us to ensure that material is covered and assessed in a similar manner, which will ensure a smooth transition home. It is important that our teachers are able to move through the material for each student at a pace that matches the ebb and flow of training and competition schedules. When teachers are given the latitude to move through material at their own pace, they can forge ahead through material and then back off a bit during the height of the competitive season.

### **What if my school asks me to withdraw or unenroll my student?**

This is a common formality for most schools and is a function of the fact that, without being withdrawn, each day that a student is at OMS shows up as an absence from his or her sending school. Many schools require a withdrawal but are still open to communication – this is important. Please encourage your school to remain open to communication from OMS. It will make your student’s transition home much easier and in turn make the sending school teachers’ jobs much easier. Additionally, sometimes being withdrawn de-activates a student’s log-in to his or her electronic assignment board – such as “Google Classroom” or “Schoology” – ask your school to keep your student’s log-in active if at all possible.

### **How long should I enroll my student-athlete at OMS?**

Many factors may play into the decision of how long to enroll your student-athlete at OMS. The first is the full Winter Term from November 4 – April 4, which we encourage everyone to consider. The full Winter Term provides the best opportunities both academically and athletically. The Winter Term coincides with most schools’ second and third academic quarters, which helps with academic transitions. The length of the Winter Term provides ample time for pre-season preparation athletically and also allows our student-athletes more time to work with their OMS teachers before the stress of competition season. Additionally, it allows for time at the end of the season to “wrap up” both academically and athletically. However, we will continue to offer Target Term options. Target Term A from December 2 – March 14 is designed with U16 athletes in mind as it allows some early season training and extends until just after what we project to be the dates for the 2025 U16 State Championships. Target Term B from January 6 – April 4 is designed with the U14 and U12 athletes’ competition schedule in mind, as well as with snowboard and freeski athletes who may wish to start when the parks and pipe are fully operational on the mountain. For student-athletes who are looking for an even shorter stay, we still offer Target Term C from January 6 – March 14, which is a 10 week term. Additionally, we will continue offering the option to enroll by semester.

### **What is the daily schedule like for my student-athlete?**

Academic classes are conducted daily Monday – Friday with six class periods and one period dedicated to strength and conditioning and special programming. Athletic on-snow training takes place in the mornings Tuesday-Friday. One day a week, athletes have an extended training day until 2:30pm, followed by time for video review, tuning, etc. Student-athletes arrive at Okemo at 8:15 am, complete an on snow warmup, and begin their morning of training. They return to school by 12:00 pm for lunch, which they bring with them each day, and then attend classes. Pick-up and drop-off is at OMS. All student-athletes should be picked up by 5:45 pm.

### **Where will my child live while at OMS?**

Most children live with a family member while at OMS. Either they are from the local area or a parent, grandparent, or extended relative stays with them locally for the winter. However, children who do not have this option available are housed with host families. Some host families have children in the school currently or are alumni families. Others have younger children in the weekend program at Okemo. Others yet are staff members or Ludlow community members with whom we have had a relationship who enjoy hosting student-athletes from OMS. If you are in need of a host family for your child, we will provide you with contact information for a few possibilities and help make an initial connection for you. Beyond setting up the initial contact, all arrangements are made privately between you and the host family.



Dear Fellow Educator:

Okemo Mountain School is an independent school approved by the Vermont State Board of Education. We are a ski and snowboard academy dedicated to delivering a rigorous academic curriculum while providing an intense on-snow training schedule that would not be possible within a traditional school setting. Our mission is to assist our student-athletes in the realization of their athletic goals without compromising their academic goals.

For our Winter Term student-athletes, our partnership with you as the student-athlete's sending school is vital. Academics at OMS are facilitated in an instruction based tutorial format, in which a student's courses are continued according to your curriculum. Our teachers work to create an environment in which all of your curriculum requirements are met. Therefore, we ask that you provide your student with, at a minimum, a textbook and a copy of the course outline or syllabus for each course in which he or she is enrolled at your school. If possible, it is quite helpful if you provide an additional copy of each textbook for our teachers.

The process of coordinating curricula begins in September. The Dean of Academics at OMS contacts the sending school's guidance counselor to confirm course schedules. OMS uses an online "Collaboration Tool" to generate the individual curriculum plans for each course and outline how the partnership between sending school and OMS teachers will proceed. This sheet outlines the responsibilities of OMS and the sending school addressing from where the curriculum will be drawn and who will provide assignments and assessments, as well as who will grade these. It is up to you and each of your teachers to decide which areas will be the responsibility of our teachers and which will remain your teachers' responsibility.

The collaboration between sending school and OMS teachers continues throughout the student's time with us. Our teachers are responsible for contacting individual sending school teachers for any information they may need, as well as keeping them updated on their students' progress. Communication is a key element; therefore, close contact is kept between our staff and yours to ensure that the program is running smoothly.

Our goal is for OMS students to continue to work at the same level as their sending school peers and transition seamlessly back into their sending school classes at the end of the winter. We realize that this process requires efforts beyond the normal scope for your staff, but we assure you that it is greatly appreciated by the student, his or her family, and the staff at OMS. Your willingness to collaborate with us will increase the ease with which your student will transition back into your school after his or her time here. We strive to maintain your academic standards, while having as small an impact on your staff as possible.

We have had great success with our program since its inception in 1991. Over the years, OMS students have been accepted into colleges such as Dartmouth, Colgate, Cornell, University of Vermont, Boston College, MIT, St. Michael's, University of New Hampshire, Colby Sawyer, Villanova, St. Lawrence, and many more too numerous to mention.

Please do not hesitate to contact myself or the Admissions Coordinator/Dean of Academics, Ashley Belcher, if you would like to discuss further our school and the way in which the program works. If you choose to support your student's participation in our program, and we hope you do, please provide us with a letter stating this. We look forward to the opportunity to work with you and your teachers.

Sincerely,  
Mariel Meringolo  
Head of School  
Okemo Mountain School  
53 Main Street  
Ludlow, VT 05149  
802-228-1513



### **Important Links for Sending Schools**

- [Sending School Acknowledgement Letter](#) – Please send to your school during the application process. This should be completed to confirm that they are aware of your child’s application to OMS.
- [Letters of Recommendation Form](#)- This form should be sent to those that your child would like to use as references.
- [Sending School Collaboration Form](#)- This will be sent to your child’s school by our Dean of Academics or Academic Assistant.

# Vermont Statute

## Title 16: Education

### *STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION*

#### **16 V.S.A. § 166. Approved and recognized independent schools**

##### **§ 166. Approved and recognized independent schools**

(a) Authority. An independent school may operate and provide elementary education or secondary education if it is either approved or recognized as set forth herein.

Subsection (b) effective until July 1, 2022; see also subsection (b) effective July 1, 2022 .

(b) Approved independent schools. On application, the State Board shall approve an independent school that offers elementary or secondary education if it finds, after opportunity for hearing, that the school provides a minimum course of study pursuant to section 906 of this title and that it substantially complies with the Board's rules for approved independent schools. Except as provided in subdivision (6) of this subsection, the Board's rules must at minimum require that the school have the resources required to meet its stated objectives, including financial capacity, faculty who are qualified by training and experience in the areas in which they are assigned, and physical facilities and special services that are in accordance with any State or federal law or regulation. Approval may be granted without State Board evaluation in the case of any school accredited by a private, State, or regional agency recognized by the State Board for accrediting purposes.

(1) On application, the State Board shall approve an independent school that offers kindergarten but no other graded education if it finds, after opportunity for hearing, that the school substantially complies with the Board's rules for approved independent kindergartens. The State Board may delegate to another State agency the authority to evaluate the safety and adequacy of the buildings in which kindergartens are conducted, but shall consider all findings and recommendations of any such agency in making its approval decision.

(2) Approvals under this subsection (b) shall be for a term established by rule of the Board but not greater than five years.

(3) An approved independent school shall provide to the parent or guardian responsible for each of its students, prior to accepting any money for a student, an accurate statement in writing of its status under this section, and a copy of this section. Failure to comply with this provision may create a permissible inference of false advertising in violation of 13 V.S.A. § 2005.

(4) Each approved independent school shall provide to the Secretary on October 1 of each year the names, genders, dates of birth, and addresses of its enrolled students. Within seven days of the termination of a student's enrollment, the approved independent school shall notify the Secretary of the name and address of the student. The Secretary shall notify the appropriate school officials as provided in section 1126 of this title.

(5) The State Board may revoke, suspend, or impose conditions upon the approval of an approved independent school, after having provided an opportunity for a hearing, for substantial failure to comply with the minimum course of study, for failure to demonstrate that the school has the resources required to meet its stated objectives, for failure to comply with statutory requirements or the Board's rules for approved independent schools, or for failure to report under subdivision (4) of this subsection (b). Upon that revocation or suspension, students required to attend school who are enrolled in that school shall become truant unless they enroll in a public school, an approved or recognized independent school, or a home study program.

(6) This subdivision (6) applies to an independent school located in Vermont that offers a distance learning program and that, because of its structure, does not meet some or all the rules of the State Board for approved independent schools. In order to be approved under this subdivision, a school shall meet the standards adopted by rule of the State Board for approved independent schools that can be applied to the applicant school and any other standards or rules adopted by the State Board

regarding these types of schools. A school approved under this subdivision shall not be eligible to receive tuition payments from public school districts under chapter 21 of this title.

(7) Approval for independent residential schools under this subsection is also contingent upon proof of the school's satisfactory completion of an annual fire safety inspection by the Department of Public Safety or its designee pursuant to 20 V.S.A. chapter 173, subchapter 2. A certificate executed by the inspecting entity, declaring satisfactory completion of the inspection and identifying the date by which a new inspection must occur, shall be posted at the school in a public location. The school shall provide a copy of the certificate to the Secretary of Education after each annual inspection. The school shall pay the actual cost of the inspection unless waived or reduced by the inspecting entity.

(8)(A) If an approved independent school experiences any of the following financial reporting events during the period of its approved status, the school shall notify the Secretary of Education within five days after its knowledge of the event unless the failure is de minimis:

- (i) the school's failure to file its federal or State tax returns when due, after permissible extension periods have been taken into account;
- (ii) the school's failure to meet its payroll obligations as they are due or to pay federal or State payroll tax obligations as they are due;
- (iii) the school's failure to maintain required retirement contributions;
- (iv) the school's use of designated funds for non designated purposes;
- (v) the school's inability to fully comply with the financial terms of its secured installment debt obligations over a period of two consecutive months, including the school's failure to make interest or principal payments as they are due or to maintain any required financial ratios;
- (vi) the withdrawal or conditioning of the school's accreditation on financial grounds by a private, State, or regional agency recognized by the State Board for accreditation purposes; or
- (vii) the school's insolvency, as defined in 9 V.S.A. § 2286(a).

(B)(i) If the State Board reasonably believes that an approved independent school lacks financial capacity to meet its stated objectives during the period of its approved status, then the State Board shall notify the school in writing of the reasons for this belief and permit the school a reasonable opportunity to respond.

(ii) If the State Board, after having provided the school a reasonable opportunity to respond, does not find that the school has satisfactorily responded or demonstrated its financial capacity, the State Board may establish a review team, that, with the consent of the school, includes a member of the Council of Independent Schools, to:

- (I) conduct a school visit to assess the school's financial capacity;
- (II) obtain from the school such financial documentation as the review team requires to perform its assessment; and
- (III) submit a report of its findings and recommendations to the State Board.

(iii) If the State Board concludes that an approved independent school lacks financial capacity to meet its stated objectives during the period of its approved status, the State Board may take any action that is authorized by this section.

(iv) In considering whether an independent school lacks financial capacity to meet its stated objectives during the period of its approved status and what actions the State Board should take if it makes this finding, the State Board may consult with, and draw on the analytical resources of, the Vermont Department of Financial Regulation.

(C) Information provided by an independent school under this subsection that is not already in the public domain is exempt from public inspection and copying under the Public Records Act and shall be kept confidential.

Subsection (b) effective July 1, 2022; see also subsection (b) effective until July 1, 2022 .

(b) Approved independent schools. On application, the State Board shall approve an independent school that offers elementary or secondary education if it finds, after opportunity for hearing, that the school provides a minimum course of study pursuant to section 906 of this title and that it substantially complies with all statutory requirements for approved independent schools and the Board's rules for approved independent schools. An independent school that intends to accept

public tuition shall be approved by the State Board only on the condition that the school agrees, notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, to enroll any student who requires special education services and who is placed in or referred to the approved independent school as an appropriate placement and least restrictive environment for the student by the student's individualized education program team or by the local education agency; provided, however, that this requirement shall not apply to an independent school that limits enrollment to students who are on an individualized education program or a plan under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. § 794, and who are enrolled pursuant to a written agreement between the local education agency and the school. Except as provided in subdivision (6) of this subsection, the Board's rules must at minimum require that the school have the resources required to meet its stated objectives, including financial capacity, faculty who are qualified by training and experience in the areas in which they are assigned, and physical facilities and special services that are in accordance with any State or federal law or regulation. Approval may be granted without State Board evaluation in the case of any school accredited by a private, State, or regional agency recognized by the State Board for accreditation purposes, provided that the State Board shall determine that the school complies with all student enrollment provisions required by law.

- (1) On application, the State Board shall approve an independent school that offers kindergarten but no other graded education if it finds, after opportunity for hearing, that the school substantially complies with the Board's rules for approved independent kindergartens. The State Board may delegate to another State agency the authority to evaluate the safety and adequacy of the buildings in which kindergartens are conducted, but shall consider all findings and recommendations of any such agency in making its approval decision.
- (2) Approvals under this subsection (b) shall be for a term established by rule of the Board but not greater than five years.
- (3) An approved independent school shall provide to the parent or guardian responsible for each of its students, prior to accepting any money for a student, an accurate statement in writing of its status under this section, and a copy of this section. Failure to comply with this provision may create a permissible inference of false advertising in violation of 13 V.S.A. § 2005.
- (4) Each approved independent school shall provide to the Secretary on October 1 of each year the names, genders, dates of birth, and addresses of its enrolled students. Within seven days of the termination of a student's enrollment, the approved independent school shall notify the Secretary of the name and address of the student. The Secretary shall notify the appropriate school officials as provided in section 1126 of this title.
- (5) The State Board may revoke, suspend, or impose conditions upon the approval of an approved independent school, after having provided an opportunity for a hearing, for substantial failure to comply with the minimum course of study, for failure to demonstrate that the school has the resources required to meet its stated objectives, for failure to comply with statutory requirements or the Board's rules for approved independent schools, or for failure to report under subdivision (4) of this subsection (b). Upon that revocation or suspension, students required to attend school who are enrolled in that school shall become truant unless they enroll in a public school, an approved or recognized independent school, or a home study program.
- (6) This subdivision (6) applies to an independent school located in Vermont that offers a distance learning program and that, because of its structure, does not meet some or all the rules of the State Board for approved independent schools. In order to be approved under this subdivision, a school shall meet the standards adopted by rule of the State Board for approved independent schools that can be applied to the applicant school and any other standards or rules adopted by the State Board regarding these types of schools. A school approved under this subdivision shall not be eligible to receive tuition payments from public school districts under chapter 21 of this title.
- (7) Approval for independent residential schools under this subsection is also contingent upon proof of the school's satisfactory completion of an annual fire safety inspection by the Department of Public Safety or its designee pursuant to 20 V.S.A. chapter 173, subchapter 2. A certificate executed by the inspecting entity, declaring satisfactory completion of the inspection and identifying the date by which a new inspection must occur, shall be posted at the school in a public location. The school shall provide a copy of the certificate to the Secretary of Education after each annual inspection. The school shall pay the actual cost of the inspection unless waived or reduced by the inspecting entity.
- (8)(A) If an approved independent school experiences any of the following financial reporting events during the period of its approved status, the school shall notify the Secretary of Education within five days after its knowledge of the event unless the failure is de minimis:

- (i) the school's failure to file its federal or State tax returns when due, after permissible extension periods have been taken into account;

(ii) the school's failure to meet its payroll obligations as they are due or to pay federal or State payroll tax obligations as they are due;

(iii) the school's failure to maintain required retirement contributions;

(iv) the school's use of designated funds for non designated purposes;

(v) the school's inability to fully comply with the financial terms of its secured installment debt obligations over a period of two consecutive months, including the school's failure to make interest or principal payments as they are due or to maintain any required financial ratios;

(vi) the withdrawal or conditioning of the school's accreditation on financial grounds by a private, State, or regional agency recognized by the State Board for accreditation purposes; or

(vii) the school's insolvency, as defined in 9 V.S.A. § 2286(a).

(B)(i) If the State Board reasonably believes that an approved independent school lacks financial capacity to meet its stated objectives during the period of its approved status, then the State Board shall notify the school in writing of the reasons for this belief and permit the school a reasonable opportunity to respond.

(ii) If the State Board, after having provided the school a reasonable opportunity to respond, does not find that the school has satisfactorily responded or demonstrated its financial capacity, the State Board may establish a review team, that, with the consent of the school, includes a member of the Council of Independent Schools, to:

(I) conduct a school visit to assess the school's financial capacity;

(II) obtain from the school such financial documentation as the review team requires to perform its assessment; and

(III) submit a report of its findings and recommendations to the State Board.

(iii) If the State Board concludes that an approved independent school lacks financial capacity to meet its stated objectives during the period of its approved status, the State Board may take any action that is authorized by this section.

(iv) In considering whether an independent school lacks financial capacity to meet its stated objectives during the period of its approved status and what actions the State Board should take if it makes this finding, the State Board may consult with, and draw on the analytical resources of, the Vermont Department of Financial Regulation.

(C) Information provided by an independent school under this subsection that is not already in the public domain is exempt from public inspection and copying under the Public Records Act and shall be kept confidential.

(c) Recognized independent schools. Upon filing an enrollment notice, a recognized independent school may provide elementary or secondary education in Vermont. The enrollment notice shall be on a form provided by the Secretary and shall be filed with the Secretary no earlier than three months before the beginning of the school year for the public schools in the town in which the applicant proposes to locate.

(1) The enrollment notice shall contain the following information and assurances:

(A) a statement that the school will be in session an amount of time substantially equivalent to that required for public schools;

(B) a detailed description or outline of the minimum course of study for each grade level the school offers, and how the annual assessment of each student will be performed; and

(C) assurances that:

(i) the school will prepare and maintain attendance records for each student enrolled or regularly attending classes;

(ii) at least once each year, the school will assess each student's progress, and will maintain records of that assessment, and present the result of that assessment to each student's parent or guardian;

(iii) the school's educational program will include the minimum course of study set forth in section 906 of this title;

(iv) the school will have teachers and materials sufficient to carry out the school's educational program; and

(v) the school will meet such State and federal laws and regulations concerning its physical facilities and health and safety matters as are applicable to recognized independent schools.

(2) If the Secretary has information that creates significant doubt about whether the school would be able to meet the requirements set forth in this subsection (c), the Secretary may call a hearing. At the hearing, the school shall establish that it can meet the requirements for recognized independent schools. Failure to do so shall result in a finding by the Secretary that the school must take specified action to come into compliance within a specified time frame or the children enrolled must attend another recognized independent school, a public school, an approved independent school, or a home study program, or be declared truant unless absent with legal excuse.

(3) A recognized independent school shall provide to each student's parent or guardian a copy of its currently filed statement of objectives and a copy of this section. The copy shall be provided when the student enrolls or before September 1, whichever comes later. Failure to comply with this subsection may create a permissible inference of false advertising in violation of 13 V.S.A. § 2005.

(4) A recognized independent school shall renew its enrollment notice annually. An independent school shall be recognized for a period not to exceed five years by the Secretary without need for filing an annual enrollment notice if:

(A) it is recognized by an organization approved by the State Board for the purpose of recognizing such school; or

(B) it is accredited by a private, state, or regional agency approved by the State Board for accreditation purposes; provided, however, nothing in this subdivision (4) shall be construed to prohibit the Secretary from initiating a hearing under this subsection (c).

(5) If the Secretary has information that creates significant doubt about whether the school, once in operation, is meeting the requirements for recognized independent schools, the Secretary may call a hearing. At the hearing, the school shall establish that it has met the requirements for recognized independent schools. Failure to do so shall result in a finding by the Secretary that:

(A) the school may not be in operation for the remainder of the school year and that the children are truant unless absent with legal excuse or enrolled in a public school, an independent school, another recognized independent school, or a home study program; or

(B) the school must take specified action to come into compliance within a specified time frame or the school will not be permitted to operate for the remainder of the school year.

(6) Each recognized independent school shall provide to the Secretary on October 1 of each year the names, genders, dates of birth, and addresses of its enrolled students. Within seven days of the termination of a student's enrollment, the recognized independent school shall notify the Secretary of the name and address of the student. The Secretary shall notify the appropriate school officials as provided in section 1126 of this title.

(7) After the filing of the enrollment notice or at a hearing, if the school is unable to comply with any specific requirements due to deep religious conviction shared by an organized group, the Secretary may waive such requirements if he or she determines that the educational purposes of this subsection are being or will be substantially met.

(d) Council of Independent Schools. A Council of Independent Schools is created consisting of 11 members, no fewer than three of whom shall be representatives of recognized independent schools. The Secretary shall appoint nine members from within the independent schools' community. The Secretary shall appoint two members from the public-at-large. Each member shall serve for two years and may be reappointed for up to an additional two terms. The Council shall adopt rules for its own operation. A chair shall be elected by and from among the members. The duties of the Council shall include advising the Secretary on policies and procedures with respect to independent schools. No hearing shall be initiated under this section before the State Board or by the Secretary until the recommendations of the Council have been sought and received. The recommendations of the Council, including any minority reports, shall be admissible at the hearing.

(e) Harassment, hazing, and bullying policies. The board of trustees of an approved or recognized independent school operating in Vermont shall adopt harassment, hazing, and bullying prevention policies, establish procedures for dealing with harassment, hazing, and bullying of students, and provide notice of these. The provisions of chapter 9, subchapter 5 of this title for public schools shall apply to this subsection, except that the board shall follow its own procedures for adopting policy.

(f) An approved independent school that accepts students for whom the district of residence pays tuition under chapter 21 of this title shall bill the sending district monthly for a State-placed student and shall not bill the sending district for any month in which the State-placed student was not enrolled.

(g) An approved independent school that accepts students for whom the district of residence pays tuition under chapter 21 of this title shall use the assessment or assessments required under subdivision 164(9) of this title to measure attainment of standards for student performance of those students. In addition the school shall provide data related to the assessment or assessments as required by the Secretary. (Amended 1981, No. 151 (Adj. Sess.), § 8; 1983, No. 248 (Adj. Sess.), § 3; 1989, No. 44, § 1; 1993, No. 162 (Adj. Sess.), § 3; 1995, No. 157 (Adj. Sess.), § 2; 1997, No. 60, § 5, eff. June 26, 1997; 1997, No. 84 (Adj. Sess.), § 2; 1999, No. 120 (Adj. Sess.), § 5; 2007, No. 66, § 2; 2007, No. 138 (Adj. Sess.), § 1, eff. May 9, 2008; 2009, No. 153 (Adj. Sess.), § 21b; 2013, No. 92 (Adj. Sess.), § 13, eff. Feb. 14, 2014; 2017, No. 173 (Adj. Sess.), § 20, eff. May 25, 2018; 2017, No. 173 (Adj. Sess.), § 20a, eff. July 1, 2022.



## **Nondiscrimination Policy**

Okemo Mountain School complies with all applicable state and federal nondiscrimination statutes, including the Vermont Public Accommodations Act (9 V.S.A. Chapter 139), the Vermont Fair Employment Practices Act (21 V.S.A. Chapter 5, Subchapter 6) and Vermont State Board of Education rules 2226.6 and 2229.1.



## **Enrollment Policy**

As an approved independent school Okemo Mountain School follows these enrollment policies:

- 1) All applications to Okemo Mountain School shall be made voluntarily.
- 2) No student shall be denied acceptance for enrollment in Okemo Mountain School on the basis of disability (as defined in Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended), or that the student is eligible for special education or undergoing the comprehensive evaluation process for special education, or on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity or any other classification protected by federal or state law.
- 3) Okemo Mountain School may make acceptance decisions based on considerations including enrollment of other family members, meeting minimum academic or extracurricular activity preparation requirements, student and family agreement with the school's educational philosophy, student willingness to participate in extracurricular programs and activities, and family willingness promptly to pay invoices for tuition, fees and other student expenses.
- 4) If the number of applicants to Okemo Mountain School exceeds capacity, enrollment decisions shall be based first upon continuing to enroll previously enrolled students and then upon considerations itemized in paragraph 3 above.