



NORTH COUNTRY SCHOOL

Family Handbook

2026–2027

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Welcome to North Country School

Dear Families,

When you step onto our mountain campus in the Adirondacks for the first time, you immediately become part of a long and rich legacy of tradition and community here at North Country School & Camp Treetops, our summer camp with which we share our roots and values.

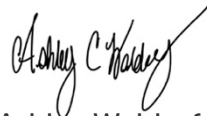
Here, children learn by doing and play an active role in their experience, one rooted in the tenets of progressive education. This student-centered learning is balanced with the careful attention and guidance of caring adults who are invested in your student's success every step of the way. They leave our campus with a deep understanding of what it means to be a part of a community—and with the skills, knowledge, and values to set them up for success down the road.

This handbook provides a comprehensive overview of North Country School—our history, learning philosophy, academic experience, the rhythms of life on our campus and in our broader Adirondack community, and important information about campus policies, residential life, and other vital information to prepare your student. Throughout, you'll also discover the key ways your family can be involved in your student's life throughout the academic year, whether attending events and performances or finding ways to give back to our community.

To those getting ready to take those first steps on our campus, welcome—we are so glad you're here. And for those returning, your mountain home can't wait to welcome you back again.



Todd Ormiston
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Who We Are: Our Mountain Home

Mission and Values

Mission

North Country School & Camp Treetops strive to create a diverse and inclusive community that gives children the self-confidence, knowledge, skills, and values to lead fulfilling and productive lives while contributing to a more equitable and sustainable world.

Values

- **Cultivate Community:** We believe in the inherent value and contributions of every person, and in fostering connections to build and nurture a strong, inclusive community.
- **Walk a Mile:** We believe that understanding and honoring every person's unique worldview, experiences, and challenges is at the root of empathy and compassion.
- **Dig Deep, Keep Growing:** We believe that by setting ambitious goals, working hard, and persevering, we build strength and character and set a course for lives of growth, purpose, and fulfillment.
- **Stay Curious:** We believe in the power of creativity and wonder. We believe that curiosity about ourselves, other people, and the world around us leads to growth, innovation, and sometimes unconventional ideas.
- **Our Planet, Our Job:** We believe in individual and collective responsibility for our planet, and in leading by example as a community that works to respect, protect, and restore the natural world.

History

North Country School (NCS) is located in the heart of the six-million-acre Adirondack Park, of which 2.7 million acres are classified as New York State Forest Preserve. Our 333-acre campus includes extensive vegetable and flower gardens, a working farm, a maple sugaring operation, a six-trail ski hill, a thirty-six route rock climbing crag, two riding rings, and over three miles of recreational trails. Our campus community has long practiced a progressive, student-centered, experiential, and place-based style of education. This includes utilizing our natural surroundings to the fullest extent on and off campus in the Adirondack High Peaks region, as well as the myriad cultural and recreational opportunities offered in nearby Lake Placid—a former two-time host city for the Winter Olympics in 1932 and 1980—as well as other surrounding communities. In recognition of the Indigenous Peoples who came before us, we acknowledge that our campus sits upon Haudenosaunee land—these communities continue to exist, thrive, and contribute to the Adirondack region.

Our Founders: Walter and Leo Clark

"It is not so much where you live, what work you do, where you have traveled, your IQ, or how much or little money you have. It is most of all how you feel about yourself, your family, other people, your work, our planet, the stars, sky, and the universe that matter."

– NCS Founder Walter Clark

North Country School was founded in 1938 by Walter and Leonora Clark. Leonora 'Leo' Clark's sister and brother-in-law, Helen and Douglas Haskell, assumed leadership of Camp Treetops in 1926. Both couples' educational philosophies were influenced by John Dewey and the Progressive Education Movement. They believed that close, nurturing relationships, and first-hand experiences were essential for children to develop confidence, knowledge, skills, and values. The two families enjoyed a close educational collaboration in overseeing Camp Treetops and North Country School. In many ways, School grew out of Camp, resulting in a set of shared and overlapping traditions and values that carry on to this day. Within that are a set of traditions that stem from our rich history and deeply ingrained values. Many of Walter and Leo's beliefs about how children best learn continue to inform North Country School's mission and values today.

You can learn more about the formative stories of [our School's creation here](#), including [this 1995 interview with Leo Clark](#).

Our Culture, Campus, and Community

Our community is a direct reflection of the individuals who comprise it. This forms a special sort of culture that our alumni refer back to throughout their lives. This includes a blend of backgrounds, cultures, and beliefs that come together to create a welcoming atmosphere centered around support and respect. In living, working, studying, and playing together, students assume a shared sense of responsibility for the community of which they are an integral part.

Our values grow and thrive across campus. On the farm and in the dining room, we promote the benefits of consuming nutritious, seasonal, and local food, as well as the importance of doing so mindfully. This mindset carries forth well beyond the food we eat—it impacts our broader choices. As a community, we encourage everyone to take only what they need and be mindful of sharing equitably with others. This shared sense of ownership, appreciation for nature, and recognition of the role we play in our world empowers our children to find purpose and success through hard work and meaningful relationships. NCS alumni go on to have a deep sense of gratitude for the lifelong connections they form—with fellow students, teachers, and staff—and for the transformative experiences they have here.

House Life

One of the first things you'll learn about our community is that we do everything we can to make it *feel* like a community. Our residential facilities, which we very purposefully refer to as “houses” and not “dormitories,” play a key piece in this. These six houses represent another cornerstone of our campus community, around which daily life revolves. Each house is run by a team of houseparents, with support from our Residential Life Coordinator and Dean of Students. Under the guidance of these caring adults, students learn to share space with their peers, take care of themselves and their belongings, take pride in caring for the physical house they call home, and contribute to the family-like environment each house provides. This setting creates a space where students can share and hone their interests and passions to deepen their knowledge and foster emotional intelligence.

To maintain this centerpiece of our community, we ask each student that they be safe, kind, and well-intentioned in their house and across campus. You can find more information about [Residential Life at North Country School below](#).

Your Role in Our Community

You play a pivotal role in the NCS experience and our community would not be what it is without your contributions—from honoring staff throughout the year to volunteering in various capacities and attending in-person events. In particular, the following events, performances, and annual traditions represent some of the best opportunities to celebrate your student's accomplishments throughout the year and engage with other families.

Those marked with an asterisk (*) indicate events for which we strongly encourage your in-person attendance (most coincide with breaks to better allow for this). For families traveling from outside of the area for these events, we recommend booking your lodging and travel plans to Lake Placid as far in advance as possible (please reach out if you need recommendations for where to stay). Our [NCS Events Google Calendar](#) also provides a full list of these and other events throughout the year (if you utilize Google Calendar personally, you can add this calendar to your own account by selecting the '+' button in the lower right corner).

Family Weekend*

Friday November 20–Saturday November 21, 2026

Family Weekend is a two-day event that takes place before Thanksgiving Break each year. After arrival, families can enjoy Academic Showcases that offer a chance to see what students have learned since the beginning of the year, followed by performances in the PAC. The weekend culminates with a gathering of our extended community to celebrate the harvest and one another during our annual Thanksgiving meal. The meal's menu is roughly 70% campus-sourced and includes a variety of farm-grown and homemade dishes, from maple-glazed carrots and mashed potatoes to roast turkey.

Intersession Showcases*

February 2027

At the end of Winter Term, fourth–eighth grade students take a break from their regular academic schedules for Intersession—a weeklong series of condensed classes that offer students the chance to deepen their skills in an area of interest or try something new. These experiences involve an in-depth study of one or two activities a day through topics that align with our signature programs in the arts, outdoors, and farm and garden, and are separate from normal academic offerings. At the conclusion of these special learning experiences, the community is invited to Intersession Showcases during which students share what they've learned and created.

Friends' Weekend at Alta Lodge

Wednesday, April 14–Sunday, April 18, 2027

This event welcomes alumni, families, and friends of both North Country School & Camp Treetops for four days of skiing at Alta Ski Area or snowboarding at Snowbird. The 2027 event marks the 20th anniversary of this gathering thanks to the generosity of Alta Lodge owner and NCS alumna Cassie Levitt-Dippo. This is a wonderful opportunity to connect with the greater School and Camp community to share experiences, history, and stories. Discounts of at least twenty percent are generally offered on lodging during this reunion weekend. Breakfast and dinner are included in all stays. [Email us for more information.](#)

Pancake Breakfast

Saturday, May 8, 2027

Pancake Breakfast is an annual event during which we welcome neighbors from surrounding communities to see and experience our campus. Students act as servers in the dining room, serve as campus tour guides, and lend a hand with fun activities for the event—from joining visitors on hayrides to the barn and rock climbing at the Clark House chimney, to selling plants at the annual plant sale. The morning's breakfast serves as the highlight of the day, shining a light on our farm and garden program, as well as our commitment to sourcing our food from local and regional farmers and producers. We encourage families to get involved by asking about volunteer roles for the event.

Graduation Weekend*

Friday May 28–Saturday, May 29, 2027

Graduation Weekend is the culminating event of the academic year that brings families and friends together to celebrate the accomplishments of our ninth graders. The weekend kicks off with a special gratitude dinner for families to enjoy and get to know each other better, followed by a performance of the annual spring play in the PAC. At graduation the next morning, we gather to celebrate our ninth-grade class, as each graduate receives a heartfelt speech from a member of the staff before they are given the opportunity to speak in front of their friends, family, and our extended community to express thanks for their time at our mountain home. During the ceremony, each ninth grader receives their own individualized Senior Book. These unique keepsakes contain letters, photos, and art made by their teachers and peers, with original

covers designed by an art teacher each year. They are beautiful mementos that alumni treasure and enjoy years later.

Friends' Weekend Lake Placid

Wednesday, August 18–Sunday, August 22, 2027

Each August, Friends' Weekend provides another opportunity to meet and connect with NCS and Camp Treetops alumni, families, and friends. Acting as our reunion weekend, we typically welcome over 200 guests to campus for an experience akin to a summer family camp. Individuals and families are welcome for a five-day period to stay on or off campus and take advantage of programming, hiking, paddling, arts, and more. Registration includes lodging, meals, cocktail hours, activities, and events. [Email us for more information.](#)

NCS Family Council

The NCS Family Council is a collaborative effort between family members and staff to build and maintain a positive school culture, plan and support initiatives and school events for families, students, and faculty, and actively engage all members of our community. The Council meets regularly, and all are welcome to attend scheduled Zoom meetings.

Our Approach to Learning & Education

Curriculum

North Country School's core academic and signature programs are centered around the belief that direct experience, acquired in the context of a diverse social, emotional, and academic environment, are the best foundations for learning. Our curriculum intentionally blends the traditional with the progressive and incorporates best practices from hands-on, experiential, student-centered approaches. Students are provided a nurturing environment to expand their skills and grow their self confidence as they are encouraged to become critical thinkers, creative problem solvers, effective communicators, and active collaborators. This is achieved with a gradual release of responsibility, through which students gain increasing independence to guide their academic experience. Our curriculum is designed to empower NCS graduates to leave our campus equipped with the tools they need to succeed inside the classroom and the leadership skills, curiosity, and compassion that will help them thrive outside of it, too.

Our Signature Academic Programs

We believe there is great value in learning by doing—because when we teach and ask our children to do hard things and challenge themselves to build confidence, they come to better understand who they are and the larger world around them. Our signature programs are at the heart of the NCS experience. They give students the space to explore the arts and create with their hands, challenge themselves in the outdoors, and meaningfully participate in harvesting food to feed their community. We utilize our location, talent, and facilities to support our signature programs and create a learning environment that is dynamic and place-based. These well-rounded, hands-on experiences help to prepare students for secondary school, college, and beyond. This is where learning for life itself happens.

Outdoors

Our outdoor program is intentionally designed to build confidence, one step at a time, and support both students who are just discovering the natural world and those who arrive with prior outdoor experience. We use our stunning setting in the Adirondack High Peaks as a living laboratory where children can seek inspiration and knowledge while gaining real-world skills and respect for wild places. Exploration here comes in many forms, from outdoor science labs to climbing on our campus rock face. These experiences are deepened with guidance and expertise from faculty, as well as outdoor educators from across the region. As students hike, ski, climb, paddle, and backpack through the wilderness, they have the opportunities to experience personal growth, develop resilience, improve their peer-to-peer

communication, and develop problem solving and leadership skills, all while cultivating a deeper sense of self. Read more about our Outdoor Program on page 22.

Farm & Garden

A large part of our community's everyday life revolves around our working farm and garden. The eggs from our chickens are collected every morning and evening. The turkeys we raise are served during our annual Thanksgiving meal. The wool from our sheep is used in art class. The potatoes and greens we harvest are prepared in our kitchen. [Edible Schoolyard](#) classes create a framework that integrates learning opportunities across the garden, classroom, kitchen, and dining room. This work and learning across the farm and garden connects students to natural life cycles and provides hands-on experiences and tangible outcomes that teach compassion and real-world problem solving. Students have the opportunity to gain resourcefulness and confidence from succeeding at things that were once unfamiliar and even intimidating. Read more about our Farm & Garden programming and ESY on page 22.

Arts

Art happens every day on our campus. Most students take at least one art class every day, with younger students rotating through a series of classes including ceramics, music, theater, dance, studio arts, and more. Older students choose from elective courses that provide opportunities in visual, performing, and industrial arts that offer unique experiences such as documentary filmmaking, participating in the creation of a rock band, and the construction of campus structures. Each year, elective offerings may change based on the passions and strengths of faculty, as well as the interests and talents of students. Read more about our arts programming on pages 21-22.

The Ninth-Grade Experience

The ninth-grade year is the capstone of students' time in our community and the culmination of their junior boarding school experience as they prepare for secondary school and beyond. Ninth-grade students have the opportunity to take on unique leadership roles throughout the year, including organizing annual events and mentoring younger students. They also enjoy an extended trip off campus at the end of Winter Term to engage in field study that aligns with our curriculum. In past years, students have traveled to the American Southwest and taken Outward Bound sailing trips in the Florida Keys. [You can read more about our ninth-grade experience and how we prepare and help students with the secondary school application process here.](#)

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

When most schools and camps were segregated by gender, race, and religion in the 1930s and 1940s, North Country School and Camp Treetops enrolled boys and girls from diverse backgrounds. We have always remained steadfast in our commitment to build a diverse, equitable and inclusive environment—one that fosters a strong sense of belonging, empowers our students, and provides a foundation to form allies within our school and larger community. We want students to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to become effective allies, advocates, and upstanders.¹ We believe that these are formative years for students to build and understand these fundamental concepts—and that they will positively impact our students as they advance to adulthood. At North Country School we do not tolerate racist language or intentionally discriminatory behavior.

Our philosophy focuses on creating an inclusive environment where all students have equitable access to resources and opportunities to succeed. We recognize and value the importance of having unique backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives and encourage each student to feel confident in being who they are within our community. We strive to develop policies and practices that promote inclusivity, provide scaffolding and training to students and families, and promote the use of inclusive and culturally responsive teaching practices.

¹ [Facinghistory.org](#) defines an Upstander as “a person who speaks or acts in support of an individual or cause, particularly someone who intervenes on behalf of a person being attacked or bullied.”

We are aware that systemic barriers and biases exist within educational systems and we are committed to providing culturally relevant curriculum and materials, accommodating a diverse array of learning needs, and creating opportunities for students to engage with others from diverse backgrounds. This includes creating safe learning environments for all students and partnering with families to support learning differences.

We focus on supporting students in understanding and valuing differences while challenging systemic inequalities that contribute to inequitable outcomes. We pride ourselves on promoting equity and social justice while advocating for policies and practices that challenge and dismantle systems of oppression.

We facilitate opportunities for students to connect with one another, share experiences, and engage in meaningful and respectful dialogue. In our unique place here in the Adirondack region, we also collaborate with community organizations, develop partnerships with marginalized groups, and provide resources and support for individuals who have experienced discrimination or prejudice.

We hold ourselves accountable in this work through our Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) team. This group is composed of staff who oversee and implement all JEDI-focused school functions and programming throughout the school year.

Intentional Technology at NCS

Our philosophy around the use of technology on our campus is intentional and centered around our students and their unique place in the world as one of the first generations of “digital natives.” Today, much evidence exists surrounding the negative impacts of technology on our young people. In a world where technology is also increasingly integrated into our everyday lives, we must balance allowing our students to use it as a tool while learning the tenets of responsible digital citizenship. This ensures we are imparting lessons to our students that they can carry forth to their personal, academic, and professional lives in the future.

Our intentional approach means that we have certain limitations and guidelines in place that dictate how our community can use technology. However, we are not “low-tech”—technology is utilized every day on our campus. Every student and teacher here has access to current, industry-standard computers, high-speed internet, campus-wide Wi-Fi, and more. The way we approach the use of these resources is deeply intentional—from how we set up our classrooms, to our protocols around the use of student Chromebooks and our broader technology policies. Each student signs an Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) through which they agree to these policies. [You can refer to the full AUP here.](#)

Preparing Your Student for NCS

"When each school introduces and trains children of society into membership within such a little community, saturating them with the spirit of service and providing them with the instruments of effective self direction, we shall have the deepest and best guarantee of a larger society which is worthy, lovely and harmonious."

— John Dewey

More On Our Culture and Traditions

Our culture and traditions are varied and unique and it can take time before students gain a full understanding of the rhythms and routines of life here. When your student arrives on our campus, they are also arriving into a deeply supportive community. Below are some of our community's cultural centerpieces and long-held traditions carried on since our founding in 1938, which students will experience in their everyday lives throughout the academic year—experiences and traditions in which they will receive support from a caring adult or a helpful new friend every step of the way.

Dining Room

Meals are served three times daily in the dining room. In addition, our kitchen serves three snacks mid-morning, before and after [out-time](#). Students are required to attend all meals unless excused by the nurse. Each student is greeted at the door and has their hands checked for cleanliness by a teacher before sitting down for meals. Students are assigned to tables of six (five students and an adult or ninth-grade table head) on a two-week rotation. Within the assigned period, each student will be the designated "waiter" on two or more days, or the individual who clears the table. Prior to the start of each meal, our community quiets for a brief moment of reflection. Each table head serves the communal-style meal, reinforces table manners, and oversees the conversation and behavior at the table. Students are encouraged to try a little of everything that is prepared, or what we like to call "no-thank-you" portions.

Council

Following meals, students stay at their tables for Council. This is a meeting in which announcements are made by adults and children concerning special activities, upcoming weekend trips, community recognition, lost or found items, and news about school or world events. Additionally, any visitors or guests are introduced to the community. Each student who contributes to Council is asked to stand and project so that the entire room is able to hear them during their announcement. Grade nine students help to facilitate lunch Council throughout the year—one of many public speaking and leadership opportunities that our ninth graders experience —Council also offers an opportunity for students in all grades to practice their public speaking skills. While it is a challenge at first for some students, it is one we see our students overcome and gain confidence through during their time at School.

Out-time

Out-time is the school's organized, daily physical activity period that generally takes place outside (comparable to recess, but much more varied). Students choose from a list of out-time offerings during lunch. There are some activities that are required throughout the year, such as community-wide jobs, but for the most part, out-time is an opportunity for students to explore and experience activities based on their own interests—from hiking the school's wooded trails and riding horses, to learning to climb at the school's climbing venues. Other out-time offerings include sledding, skiing, skating, biking, and community work-jobs throughout the year. Team sports such as soccer, basketball, and ultimate frisbee are also offered during out-time. Engaging in these activities focuses on the teamwork, skill building, good sportsmanship, and communication these outlets offer, as well as the connections they foster. If your student currently participates in a specialized, off-campus sport, please note that we do not provide transportation. If you have more questions you can contact our Dean of Students.

Homenights

On Wednesday, Homenights give students the opportunity to have an afternoon and evening “at home,” providing time for students to attend to housekeeping and laundry, as well as time to bond with their house. Students go to their ramp lockers to clean them out and gather clothing and other belongings that have accumulated during the week. These are sorted and taken back to their house as needed. At their house, boarding students gather their dirty clothes, put away clean laundry, clean their room, and make their beds with fresh linens. Afterward, students and houseparents prepare and enjoy a home-cooked meal and share in an activity together. Past examples have included sledding on the Lake Hill, working on craft projects, tobogganing, ice skating, going to a movie in Lake Placid, watching a movie at home, building forts in the woods, and playing games with another house. Special events are sometimes celebrated in place of regular Wednesday Homenights (i.e. Halloween, Holiday Banquet, Valentine’s Day, Earth Day, and fall harvest events).

School Trips & Weekend Programming

Students travel off-campus frequently as part of the academic, residential, outdoor, and weekend programs. At the beginning of the school year, each grade goes on a class trip as part of orientation. This required trip introduces them to on and off-campus spaces, helps to establish community expectations, and offers each class a chance to bond around a shared experience. Throughout the academic year, weekends include a broad range of outdoor recreational activities on and off-campus. On most Saturdays, this includes various outdoor excursions, often hiking, across the Adirondacks, and on Sundays, scheduled study hall time is available, as well as time during which our art and music rooms and the library are open. The weekend provides time for children to get outside, relax, and enjoy their friendships. Additionally, opt-in overnights are offered throughout the year, sometimes as part of academic or elective classes. These trips are assigned by experience level to give all students the ability to grow their skills in the outdoors and outdoor leadership. Each weekend is also highlighted by an all-school activity, which can range from competitive games between houses to celebrations centered around events and holidays such as Spring Festival, our community’s celebration of the Lunar New Year and Chinese New Year.

Whiteface Days & Skimeister

During Winter Term, Whiteface Days allow our students the chance to enjoy a morning or afternoon skiing or riding at our local ski resort, Whiteface Mountain. Lessons are provided for beginners (“never evers”) for the first few days, and students are grouped with adults based on ability. Transportation is provided to and from the mountain. These days are complemented by Skimeister, our annual community-wide, day-long event where students can put all that they’ve learned during Whiteface Days and beyond on display.

Title Trekking

The Adirondack Park is home to the 46 High Peaks, New York State’s highest mountains, many of which top in at over 4,000 feet. For those who summit all 46, they earn the coveted title of “Adirondack 46er”. At NCS, we have our own version of the 46er challenge: Title Trekking, in which our students are challenged to scale 46 literary peaks of adventure, fantasy, and intellect. Participating students are awarded specific prizes for finishing books along the way and those who read and document 46 books during their time here earn their rightful place on our Title Trek plaque as a “Literary 46er.” Offerings are differentiated between Lower and Upper School.

Key Kids

Earning recognition and privileges for responsible behavior is important to our students. The Key Kid program gives a ceremonial key to those students who have earned the right to use campus equipment and facilities independently and without supervision from faculty. Examples of Key Kid spaces include the Quonset, the art room, and the library/community lounge.

Mountain Cakes

Mountain Cakes is one way that our community celebrates the outdoor adventure achievements of students. A student's "Mountain Cake Miles" are calculated based on the amount they have hiked, biked, cross-country skied, and canoed since their arrival on campus. Each spring, our community gathers to find out which twelve students—known as the Dirty Dozen—have accumulated the most miles. These students are honored with community recognition and a custom-designed t-shirt, usually decorated with artwork created by a fellow student. The top three houses with the most "Mountain Cake Miles" per capita are also awarded specially made mountain-themed cakes.

Health and Wellness

From the moment your student arrives on campus until their time at NCS comes to an end, ensuring their health and wellness is always our top priority. Our dedicated health office and school counselors provide personalized, attentive, and expert-level care to support both the physical and mental health needs of our students. Your completion of required health forms and providing other medically necessary information in a timely manner empowers our nurses and counselors to do their best work in ensuring this.

Health Records & Health Office

We utilize Magnus Health as our secure Health Portal to manage our student health records, which [you can access here](#). It is critical that you carefully review all health requirements outlined within the platform to make sure they are complete, accurate, and in compliance with the rules and regulations outlined below. All forms can be found and submitted in the portal. On an annual basis, we also require that you upload a copy of your student's current health insurance card to the portal by August 1.

A team of Registered Nurses staff the School's health office. They are licensed by New York State and are required by law to comply with the American Nurses Association's [Scope and Standards of Practice](#) for Professional School Nursing. As part of these standards, families are required to provide current and complete health information for their students. The most important thing you can do to help our health office is to complete the required forms outlined in the health portal prior to the start of the academic year. **In particular, please note [New York State's Immunization Requirements](#).** Your student must be up to date on required immunizations in order to attend school.

Medication

All families are required to register with Freedom Pharmacy. Please complete enrollment forms, which you can find in our health portal or on the Pharmacy's website, and submit them to Freedom Pharmacy prior to the start of school so that medications can be packaged and shipped in time for the beginning of the academic year. New York State requires Registered Nurses to have a prescriber's order in order to administer medication to your student. The prescriber's order must include the diagnosis, medication name, dose and time to be administered. All medications—prescription, over-the-counter, vitamins, supplements, and holistic remedies—must be listed on your student's record in Magnus Health. Freedom charges a \$25/month fee per student, regardless of how many medications they are on, and does not have a shipping fee. It is against school policy for students to keep any type of medications in their rooms or on their person. There are exceptions to this rule, including emergency medications (i.e. Epi-pens, rescue inhalers, diabetes medications) and some creams and lotions, but only with permission from the school nursing team.

Please note: Under Federal Law², your student's medications cannot be mailed to you. Please pick up medications before each break or provide permission to pack medication in students' luggage by emailing the school nursing team directly

² [According to the United States Postal Service](#) (USPS), "Medicines are controlled substances and are subject to strict regulations. Prescription medications may only be mailed by Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) registered distributors. Similar regulations apply to some over-the-counter medications."

(nurse@northcountryschool.org). Medications will be promptly disposed of at the end of the year if not picked up, or if medication is discontinued.

Medication Changes

Throughout the school year, students may need to adjust their medications. It is the school's policy for medicine changes to occur during breaks, while students are at home. Students must be stable on their new medication changes at home for a minimum of 2 weeks before returning as a boarding student. Any exception to this policy requires the approval of our school nurses, school counselors, and the Director of School.

International Medicine

If you are the family of an international student, we ask that you do not bring international brand medication to school. This includes medications that are purchased outside of the US as well as medications without English labels. New York State (NYS) Registered Nurses cannot administer international brand medication or non-FDA sanctioned medicines—this also extends to non-prescription medications or remedies from other countries. You should, however, bring copies of all of your student's prescriptions—as well as non-prescription medications or remedies if they are prescribed by a doctor—and these must be translated into English. Upon arrival on campus, your student will have an appointment with a NYS-licensed provider to review medications and write new, valid prescriptions to be filled by Freedom Pharmacy.

Health Appointments

All non-emergent appointments, such as orthodontic, dental or eye exams, must be scheduled at home prior to the opening of school or during school breaks. If your student requires emergency orthodontic, dental, or eye care, you will be notified, and a local provider will evaluate your student. The school can usually provide transportation by designated staff. However, some situations may require hiring another authorized person to transport a student to an out-of-the-area appointment (please note that there may be associated transportation fees in these instances). Our health office staff cannot complete physical exams for camps, work, or summer programs.

Medical Leave

There may be instances in which a student experiences changes to their physical or emotional health that diminish their ability to meet academic commitments and participate in the community. In such circumstances, our health office and/or Director of School may place your student on medical leave to ensure the fundamental wellbeing of your student. Medical leave never signifies a disciplinary action or punitive response. Rather, it is an opportunity to get a student the care and support they need. Medical leave will be handled collaboratively by a team that includes our Director of School, Dean of Students, and members of our health office. Prior to the start of any medical leave, this team will proactively communicate with a student's family to discuss the conditions, expectations, required evaluations, and documentation that must be in place before the student returns. When the leave begins, students must be picked up by a parent or guardian. All conditions and documentation outlined at the start of a medical leave must be submitted to the Director of School prior to a student's return to campus, which our team will review carefully, and a student's return to campus will need to be approved by our health office team.

If you have any questions or for further information, please email our school nurses at nurse@northcountryschool.org.

Medical & Counseling Support

As part of our health office, our two full-time School Counselors are dedicated to providing personalized and one-on-one support for our students. This includes individual sessions, close collaboration with our school nurses, faculty, staff, and houseparents, as well as keeping close contact with our students' families and outside support systems such as off-campus therapists. They are a trusted source of support for our students and help to ensure continuity of care by facilitating telehealth sessions with at-home therapists.

and more. They are also carefully trained in monitoring and flagging students for any potential signs of harmful behavior.

Social Emotional Learning

We are committed to developing the fundamental social and emotional skills of our students in support of their positive impact on learning and success in life. Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)³ is supported across the community and is guided by the core competencies named by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)—self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.

Wellbeing Classes

Every student participates in our Wellbeing curriculum over the course of the school year. The main focus of these classes is to equip students with developmentally appropriate skills and knowledge around mental health and SEL. This includes, but is not limited to: emotional vocabulary, stress management, conflict resolution, peer relationships, appreciating diversity, and understanding consent. Starting in seventh grade, students will have a Sex and Sexuality Unit; families will be notified before the unit with more details.

³ "SEL is an integral part of education and human development. It is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions." [CASEL](#)

Packing List

Ensuring your student has everything they need for the entire year can feel overwhelming at first. That's why we've created [this detailed packing list](#) to assist you as you prepare your student for their arrival on campus, which includes a helpful checklist. We strongly encourage you to use this tool by checking each item you and your student have packed in the months leading up to the start of the school year. We've intentionally left several blank spaces at the end for you to list any additional items, such as books and stuffed animals. Please note that every item on this list is mandatory unless stated otherwise. As you pack, please be mindful of packing unnecessary items that could inhibit your student's ability to share space with a roommate, maintain their personal organization, or keep their assigned storage spaces around campus clean and organized.

Upon arrival at school, your student will unpack with their houseparents (it is a great idea to bring a copy of their completed packing list with them so our houseparents can easily run through and confirm everything). This will allow houseparents to familiarize themselves with your student's belongings and to suggest strategic storage and organization ideas. We may also send home excess belongings that won't fit in assigned storage areas (please refrain from overpacking!). Valuables, such as money and electronics, not on the approved packing list, will also be collected during this time for safe storage in a locked space within each house.

Prohibited Items & "Stash"

We create an environment in which students can foster connections and understand how to be a helpful part of a larger community. The items they pack and bring to school can dramatically affect this ethos within our community. Given this, our packing list is carefully constructed each year so that everything your student will need is clearly outlined there—as are prohibited items. We discourage deviating from the provided packing list.

On occasion, students bring or pack prohibited items. We often find these items—what we colloquially refer to as "stash"—when unpacking. Depending on the nature of the items, these will either be sent home, thrown away, or safely kept in a locked storage area. Students who bring such items to campus will have a meeting with their houseparent team or the Dean of Students about their decision to sneak stash into school. Disciplinary actions will be based on the item, frequency, and the student's overall community standing.

Academic Supplies

We provide all books and other classroom supplies, including binders, paper, pens, pencils, etc., as well as Chromebooks, and other instructional technology that supports the educational needs of our students. Students do not need backpacks for the academic day, as they each have a conveniently located cubby in which to store their classroom supplies.

Horseback Riding Gear

Horseback riding helmets and riding boots are provided to all students, though they are welcome to bring their own if desired. If a student chooses to bring their own helmet, it must meet ASTM F1163 standards and bear an "SEI Approved" label. If a student-owned helmet does not meet these standards, we cannot legally permit its use.

Ski/Snowboard Equipment

All students participate in our alpine ski/snowboard program and are required to wear a helmet during these activities. For students who do not own or purchase a helmet for use during skiing and riding season, we maintain a limited inventory of helmets that students can borrow. We also partner with local ski shops to rent alpine ski or snowboard equipment—i.e. skis, snowboards, boots, and poles—for students to use.

Many families find renting to be more economical than buying this equipment. If you choose to rent, this additional charge will be added to your tuition bill. If you are considering buying equipment for your student, we recommend seeking gear that is simple and durable. Outdoor Program Co-director [Claire Carson](#) can be contacted with any questions.

Jackets and Boots for Barn Chores

Students are required to have a warm jacket and boots for barn chores. Most students prefer to layer these jackets over other clothing, so sizing up one or two sizes is a good idea. When looking for the right jacket, we recommend starting your search with reputable workwear brands, keeping in mind that your student will want something that can get dirty. For bottoms, an old pair of wind and/or rain pants that can be pulled on over layers will work best over the year. In fall and late spring, non-insulated rubber boots are acceptable for barn work. However, as soon as freezing temperatures begin—typically near the end of October—rubber boots will not be warm enough, and students transition to wearing insulated winter boots. While we maintain a large supply of uninsulated barn boots that can be loaned to students during the beginning and end of the year, we highly recommend investing in a pair of well-made insulated boots for your student to use during the winter. Some students prefer true winter boots, such as those from Sorel, which can also be used for playing in the snow and winter hiking, while others stick to a neoprene-style muck boot.

Bicycles

School-owned bicycles will be provided for supervised trips and use around campus. New York State Law (and NCS) requires all bike riders to wear helmets. Students are welcome to bring their bikes for the school year, but this is unnecessary. If they do bring a bike, they must also bring a bike helmet.

Labeling and Nametags

Books, combs, musical instruments, duffels, tennis rackets, hats, electronic devices—everything!—needs to be labeled with your student's name. Sanford Sharpie markers work well on sneakers and raincoats, but nothing can beat sewn-in name tags (iron-on labels often come off in the first wash and markers can fade). Sew name tags, doubled over, like a tab at the back of the neck or back of the waist of clothing and at the tops of socks.

Sports and Outdoor Gear

We supply students with all non-personal items needed for day and overnight trips—warm sleeping bags, crampons, snowshoes, backpacks, day packs, sleeping pads, and tents. Students do not need to bring any of this gear. However, if your child wants to pack a sleeping bag, make sure that it is one that is lightweight and compact.

Cotton vs. Wool or Synthetic Clothing

Many items here must be made of wool or synthetic material rather than cotton. This is an important designation to pay attention to when choosing clothes for your student. Cotton clothing retains moisture in a way that wool and synthetic materials do not, meaning that wearing cotton in cold, wet, and windy conditions will not keep you warm or dry, leaving you at risk for emergencies such as hypothermia. Synthetic fabrics are usually a blend of polyester, nylon, and spandex. When shopping for synthetic clothing, check the label. If the item is blended with cotton, it won't be as effective. Wool typically refers to merino wool, a fine and soft fiber. Synthetic fabrics and wool are the materials of choice in the wilderness, especially when the weather may turn cold, wet, and windy (For more, visit adventuretreks.com).

Bedding and Linens

We provide sheets, pillows, pillowcases, blankets, towels, and washcloths. You may send a comforter or quilt from home, but it must be sent with two removable, washable duvet covers as these items cannot be washed regularly. If your student would like to bring their own linens, please provide two sets of each item

as they will be sent down weekly with students' clothes and not returned until the following week. Student bedding is washed once a week by our housekeeping staff.

Laundry

Our housekeeping staff wash and sort student laundry once per week. Students collect and send down their dirty laundry weekly on Wednesday Homenights and receive clean clothes back at the beginning of Homenight the following week. Given this, each student needs enough clothes to last a two-week cycle. Due to the volume of laundry processed by our housekeeping staff, we cannot accommodate dry cleaning or hang-drying individual garments in our community laundry room. Please keep this in mind when selecting clothing items to pack for your student. Formal dress clothes are typically worn at end-of-term events, so if they need special care, you can take them home to clean over breaks. To best assist our housekeeping staff, please remember to sew in name tags to all of your student's clothing items. Laundry loads are run separately, but each item of clothing should still be labeled.

The NCS Academic Experience

Our faculty embrace, engage, and encourage all students as unique learners. Learning here is rooted in a “gradual release of responsibility” that enables our students to gain independence. Our small class sizes help to facilitate this, as does our philosophy on grading—no formalized grades are given to students until their 9th-grade year. In order to prepare for this transition to formalized grades, students in eighth grade begin to receive unofficial grades in the Spring Term, which are noted on a separate page in their reports as opposed to in the reports themselves. This ensures that students are less concerned about the pressure of getting a “good grade” and more engaged in the process of learning, which in turn helps to facilitate a positive relationship with learning.

Our Lower and Upper Schools

Our school structure is divided between our Lower and Upper Schools, which helps to facilitate positive learning experiences and increased independence over time. Our physical learning spaces reflect this in our Main Building, where our core academic classes take place—from the self-contained classrooms of grades four, five, and six in the East End of the building, to the departmentalized structure of grades seven, eight, and nine on the West End. This configuration fosters developmentally appropriate settings for our students to learn and thrive.

Our Academic Curriculum

Across all grades, core academic classes include English, Math, Science, and Social Studies/History. These are complemented by classes across our signature programming that are woven into class schedules. We encourage collaborative, interdisciplinary work between classes and grades when possible. For students in the Lower School, signature program experiences include a rotation of topics over the course of the academic year, while students in the Upper School select signature program electives each term. We value diversity in our elective offerings and strive to balance student desires to concentrate on their particular areas of interest with opportunities to explore additional disciplines that challenge and expand their creative skills. One of our unique graduation requirements is that all students take at least one elective in each of our signature programs by the time they graduate in order to have a variety of experiences.

Signature Program Electives & Extracurriculars

Performing Arts

Under the guidance of our experienced theater faculty, students have a hand in everything from set building to adapting a script to lighting the stage. Some children act, dance, and/or sing. Others design costumes or stage sets. Several choose to join the stage crew. Everyone who wants to participate finds a role. All students have the opportunity to create, play, and perform in the PAC, our state-of-the-art performing arts center. Classes in these subjects range from introductory theater and music classes for the younger grades to advanced electives for the older grades. In each experience, students develop key strengths—from the determination it takes to write a monologue or practice an instrument, to the confidence built when performing in front of one’s peers and public audiences. Children who play an instrument are welcomed and encouraged to bring it with them to school. Inquiries regarding music lessons should be directed to the head of our music program, [Gwen Tracy](#).

Visual Arts

Our expansive visual art offerings have included painting and drawing, ceramics, mixed media, photography, film studies, fiber arts, and more. In our art rooms, students make great creative leaps and grow their resourcefulness. Students also have the opportunity to use these studio spaces as “Key Kids” or during Open Art sessions on some afternoons.

Industrial Arts

Industrial Arts courses introduce students to the entire process of design, construction, and craftsmanship in technical theater and industrial arts, including woodworking and metal fabrication, as well as hands-on engineering projects. With good technique and close supervision, students have learned to plan and build bridges for everyday use on our physical campus, to make their own instruments, craft furniture, program hummingbird robots, create kinetic sculptures, design sets and light plots for the theater, and more.

Edible Schoolyard - Farm & Garden

Involving children in growing and harvesting food is an important part of what we've been doing since 1938. Today, we practice "edible education" and are proud to be one of [eight Founding Edible Schoolyards \(FESYs\)](#), a small collective of organizations celebrated and supported by Alice Waters as models for how edible education can thrive across the country. This renowned program out of Berkley, CA aims to provide interactive, cross-curricular experiences for our students in the classroom, kitchen, garden and dining room. ESY was founded in 1995 by renowned chef, activist, and author Alice Waters—considered by many as the founding mother of the Slow Food movement. ESY continues to transform the health and values of children by striving to make edible education part of the core curriculum of every school in the nation.

Throughout the academic year, our students engage with the farm in a wide variety of ways during twice-daily barn chores, in ESY classes, during afternoon and weekend activities, and while enjoying meals in our dining room. They not only learn how to plant, harvest, cook and compost, but hone their knowledge in cross-curricular experiences in our classrooms, kitchens, garden and dining room. Students take ESY classes that utilize our Teaching and Learning Kitchen (TLK) facility, where they prepare dishes using produce from the gardens while engaging with issues around sustainable agriculture and food systems. The TLK is an innovative, experiential learning space that complements the hands-on activities of our farm and garden program and is one of a handful of instructional facilities of its kind in the country. It's a space that helps to reinforce the work that campers and students do on our five acres of gardens and in our 4,000 square foot greenhouses. Fresh produce harvested on the farm is brought to the space for lessons about sustainability, earth science, botany, world history, food systems, and so much more.

"Partnering with the true pioneer in edible education has been incredibly valuable for the Edible Schoolyard Project. North Country School and Camp Treetops have been giving children the experience of being a part of nature and the food system for 90 years, and their experience is invaluable as is their approach to working in a cold climate."

—Alice Waters, ESY Founder

Outdoor Program (OP)

Our Outdoor Program (OP) is intentionally modeled on the premise that a child can plan, guide, and make informed decisions during a trip outdoors. Our instructors teach students to understand and value nature while instilling essential knowledge in the hard skills required for a lifetime of safely and responsibly enjoying the outdoors. The program draws upon our existing philosophy of community building by focusing on adventuring and working as a group. It also neatly aligns with our hands-on, place-based education model by getting students outside in an informative and engaging way. Lower School students participate in L.O.S.T. ("Learning Outdoor Skills Together") classes in order to learn or review elementary skills for staying safe in the woods. Upper School students in more advanced OP classes are challenged to step outside of their comfort zones as they plan, participate in, and co-lead day and overnight trips in the Adirondack Mountains. These experiences help our students to gain collaborative insights, good decision-making skills, and strong leadership qualities. OP classes and extracurricular experiences help students to

not only build a sense of resiliency to help them navigate the outdoors with confidence, and to apply those skills beyond the woods to enhance their personal journeys.

We often cover the following subjects in our OP classes:

- Fall: Backpacking, Land Navigation, Wilderness First Aid, Leave No Trace Principles, and Intro to Rock Climbing
- Winter: Avalanche Training, Winter Camping, Backcountry Ski Touring, and Ice Climbing
- Spring: Rock Climbing, Paddling, Backpacking, Trip Planning, and Co-leading with adults

Intersession & Endersession

Intersession and Endersession classes vary, but are always a highlight for students during the academic year. Past classes have included topics such as African dancing and drumming, basket weaving, cooking, costume design, darkroom photography, ice climbing, poetry writing/performance, pop-up band, set building, stop-motion animation, telemark skiing, telescope building, and woodcarving. Most activities happen on campus or in the surrounding community. Intersession occurs at the end of Winter Term, and Endersession takes place in the final week of the school year. During Endersession, a large number of our students are involved in the annual spring play.

See our [Curriculum Guide](#) for more information about our core academics and signature programming.

Learning Support Program

Our Learning Support team works with students along a continuum of experience and needs—from those who need an individualized plan to students who require regular check-ins in a small group setting. Learning Support programs are fee-based. Enrollment is initiated during the application process, or at the recommendation of our Director of Learning Support Services. Once enrolled, our team provides goal-driven guidance in small groups, separate from classroom instruction, and these sessions focus on individual student needs across four key areas: executive function, reading, writing, and math skills.

In the Lower School, essential academic skills are taught by our classroom faculty in consultation with the Learning Support team. The self-contained classroom setting for our younger students allows for consistent routines, monitoring of skills, and individual attention.

In the Upper School, students can be enrolled in two-day reading, writing, and/or math labs in order to build on core skills. They can also receive additional support to sharpen executive function skills through five-day Learning Skills class offerings or three-day Learning Lab.

Learning Support fees vary, with some offering close guidance, monitoring, and support, and others providing more room for independence. All Learning Support services are offered on an annual basis. Contact Director of Learning Support Services for more information.

Catching Up

On Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays from 4:30-5:45 PM, all students are offered optional additional time to work on their homework, late assignments, and test corrections. This open study hall is run by a member of our Learning Support team.

Homework

Homework typically intensifies as students progress from the Lower to Upper School. Lower School students can typically complete academic assignments during the school day. Upper School boarding students have a scheduled evening and weekend study hall to complete assignments, and day students should expect to complete work at home during these times. We utilize Google Classroom to distribute homework, and families should check regularly for assignments and due dates. Students are required to make up work and assignments that occur during school absences.

English as a Second Language (ESL)

ESL at North Country School develops students' literacy, academic writing, and critical thinking skills to prepare for mainstream English courses and to support learning in mainstream science, math, and social studies courses. Living in our small community also gives students numerous opportunities outside the classroom to participate in school life and deepen their understanding of diverse American and English-speaking cultures. Students who are enrolled in ESL classes typically have one one period of ESL daily. For those students enrolled in ESL classes, a Learning Support class that meets two or three times weekly may be recommended to help with completing work in English for other courses. ESL class sizes are kept small (two to six students) to facilitate active participation. There are additional fees for ESL services. For more information, contact International Student Program Coordinator, [Meredith Hanson](#).

Monitoring and Supporting Student Progress

During the school year, students and their families receive regular feedback on academic progress through a regular cadence of reports and updates.

To ensure they have additional support at school, each student is assigned a faculty advisor who serves as a helpful resource for the student and their family.

Friday Feedback

At the end of each week, our teachers write narrative comments to students and their families on three categories of academic performance: promptness and preparedness, citizenship and class norms, and homework and classwork. This personalized report is created for each student and provides a measurable way to track progress over the course of a term and of the year. These narratives provide feedback to students about their academic and transferable skills. The frequency of Friday Feedback is intended to identify and foster strong academic habits and actively encourages students to develop a growth mindset about their capabilities. Students receive feedback on half of their classes each week, with the exception of the final week of classes each term (during which students are generally completing summative assignments, which are reflected upon in End-of-Term reports). It is essential that students and families take the time to review and reflect on this feedback. This empowers students to take ownership of their academic growth, identify areas where they can grow and improve, and gain a deeper understanding into their successes. [You can reference the Friday Feedback rubric here in the appendix.](#)

Advising Students and Families

Each student is assigned a faculty member who takes on the role of advisor. Each faculty member has their own advisor group—usually two to five students—that they regularly meet and check in with. A student can go to their advisor when in need of support academically or personally, but beyond that, advisors form a close relationship with their advisees. Advisors also connect with and offer a resource to families.

NCS Notes

In addition to weekly academic progress reports, we recognize student achievement and contributions to the community in the form of "NCS Notes." These are less formal communications that can highlight a student's success in the classroom and other parts of our program and community—from jobs and out-times, to weekend trips and meals. NCS Notes may be shared with administrators, the student's advisor, the student's Houseparents, the student, and the student's family.

End-of-Term Reports

At the end of each term, student achievement and progress is reported with a three-part report for each class. The first section describes the curricular content covered during the term. The second section consists of a checklist of academic habits and skills demonstrated during the term. The final section of each

report includes a narrative that highlights areas of strength and growth, as well as areas where there are opportunities for continued progress. A House Report, detailing a student's experience and success in the residential life space, is also included in End-of-Term Reports for boarding students.

Community Expectations

"We are here at North Country School to help each other learn and grow, each to his or her greatest potential. This means encouraging the growth of our bodies, our minds, our hearts, and our spirits. This also means learning to care for the entire community, both the people in this community and the greater environment."

— Walter Clark

Students are expected to contribute positively to our culture and community—and we know that children learn and grow best when they are supported through intentionally developed relationships with caring adults and community members. Faculty members are dedicated to fostering student behavior that supports growth and discourages behavior that works against the health and safety of the individual or community. Here, students are also encouraged to deeply know themselves and who they are in a way that can help them better resolve situations where conflict, small and large, may arise. However, we expect students to make mistakes, and we will do our best to use those mistakes as learning opportunities.

To uphold these community standards, we are guided by a list of core rules of behavior:

- Be safe
- Be kind
- Be well-intentioned.

When student choices deviate from these three core guiding principles, there will be follow up with the appropriate adults.

Every member of our community deserves respect, even in the midst of conflict. Respect means remaining mindful and courteous; it means making time to listen and trying to understand what the other person is saying. It means being willing to stop what you are doing in order to solve a conflict or situation that needs dialogue. At times, students may lose sight of the importance of showing respect to themselves and other members of our community. It is in these moments when faculty will intervene to counsel students to reflect on the impact of their choices. We also educate students about the reality that their behavior, even when students are away from school, may adversely impact the community as a whole. In these more severe instances, a disciplinary response may be issued.

Misuse of technology (refer to the [Acceptable Use Policy](#) for more information), use of drugs, alcohol, tobacco or e-cigarette products (vaping), and any violation of the law are some examples of behavioral choices that violate the basic rules of behavior and would prompt disciplinary measures.

Disciplinary Measures

"Corrective measure is almost in direct proportion to the amount of positive affection, satisfaction, and consideration that a person is receiving."

— Walter Clark

Proactive Discipline

Our community norms are supported with proactive discipline. All community members are involved in the process of creating a nurturing and caring space to inhabit. At the start of the year, a significant amount of time is dedicated to building such a foundation for our community to carry us through the year. This ensures students can feel a sense of safety and belonging. By engaging in the establishment and understanding of community norms students are more likely to uphold them. As part of this approach, students and staff are encouraged to model appropriate behaviors and remind and redirect others when

necessary. If community rules are broken, we guide community members toward a restorative discipline approach.

Restorative Measures

Restorative discipline⁴ is a comprehensive approach to working with students when they make mistakes and gives students a chance to fix a problem. When all affected parties are satisfied with the outcome, the problem has been resolved. There are no prescribed outcomes or consequences in our restorative discipline model, but the process is meant to repair relationships, be respectful to all parties involved, and be developmentally appropriate. Staff members are encouraged to use restorative practices in working with students. This discipline model requires time, the establishment of a safe space, and trust between students and staff members. When any of these critical pieces are missing, we will work to re-establish these foundational elements, sometimes with the help of the Dean of Students and/or school counselors.

Reactive Discipline: Procedures and Consequences

Reactive discipline is reserved for those times when students engage in behaviors that are considered harmful to themselves or our community. It is employed when all efforts to prevent, defuse, and contain have been exhausted. Our approach to discipline is highly individualized and does not follow a specific chart or set of rules. It is designed to help students progress in a meaningful way. Some possible outcomes of reactive discipline may include loss of privileges, in-school suspension, at-home suspension, and, on rare occasions, dismissal from school.

North Country School reserves the right to remove or dismiss a student at any time if, in the judgment of the Director of School or their designee, that student's progress, personal health or the student or student's parents/guardians' conduct or influence on or off campus is not in keeping with North Country School standards or that either the student or the student's parents/guardians are felt to jeopardize the safety of any member of the community.

What's in an NCS Day?

A Typical Weekday Schedule

Our students eat their meals family-style in the dining room, engage in their classes during the academic day, participate in community jobs, and spend time outdoors and being active during out-time to round out the day.

Community Work Program

"Many of these students may never milk a cow again, or chop a tree with an axe, or climb a mountain on skis, or sleep out in the woods on a cold winter night, or try to drive an obstinate pig from one pen to another. No, it is not because we need these specific skills that we learn and practice them. It is because we need to know what it means to undertake jobs no matter how difficult and unpleasant, and see them through to a useful, practical, satisfying finish. What is important is the persistence and determination to stick with a job, no matter how discouraging it may be at times—the confidence and assurance that comes from having successfully mastered a great multitude of demanding situations, either working alone or in cooperation with others."

— Walter Clark

Everyone in our community, adult or student, has a morning or afternoon assignment or "work-job," in which they clean a classroom, organize the locker areas, set tables in the dining room, take care of animals

⁴ "Restorative Discipline is a whole-school, relational approach to building school climate and addressing student behavior that fosters belonging over exclusion, social engagement over control, and meaningful accountability over punishment. Its practices replace fear, uncertainty, and punishment as motivators with belonging, connectedness and the willingness to change because people matter to each other." *The Institute for Restorative Justice and Restorative Dialogue*

at the barn, help out in the kitchen during a meal, or shovel snow off walkways to campus buildings. These are not superfluous jobs. They are essential to the operation of our community. For this reason, it is a student's responsibility to be on time to their job and to make sure their job will be completed by a substitute in their absence. Students should always check in with the adult overseeing their job in such instances to see if a sub will be required while they are gone. Jobs are completed on a daily basis and rotate every two weeks.

Throughout the year there are also numerous community work opportunities. These include farm and garden harvesting, sap gathering during maple sugaring season, and cleaning campus. These jobs may involve the whole school or they may be completed by a smaller group during out-time. At the end of the year, the Jamieson-Roseliep Work Award is presented to the student or students who best exemplify commitment to community through service to others and hard work.

Town Meeting

Town Meetings are held weekly and are led by a staff member, often accompanied by students, and focus on topics important to the community or that are deserving of reflection. Often, the inspiration for Town Meetings comes out of daily life; however, certain themes are chosen in order to enhance the educational experience of both our students and the community as a whole. Town Meetings are an opportunity for students and faculty alike to participate in meaningful discussion and to share their thoughts with the entire school community.

Day Families

About one-third of our students are day students from surrounding communities. If you are the family of a day student, we encourage you to read the following information carefully as it may differ slightly from that which applies to our boarding students and/or may only apply to day students.

School Calendar

[The 2026–2027 academic calendar can be found here.](#) It is important to note that, as many of our students live on campus, academic programming continues on many widely recognized holidays. All students are expected to attend programming according to our academic calendar.

Attendance

Day students are expected to attend academic classes, out-time activities, and work-jobs daily. Please arrive on campus five to ten minutes before programming starts to ensure each student has time to put away their personal belongings. Excessive tardiness or absences from areas of programming will be reviewed by the school administration and health office. If a student will be absent for the day or has any schedule changes, please email attendance@northcountryschool.org with this information.

Homenight

Like our boarding students, day students are also assigned to one of our houses so that they may foster a connection with their peers through the residential program. Day students are welcomed and encouraged to participate in house activities and we ask that your student spend at least one Homenight per term with their house. If your student chooses to participate, RSVP using the weekly Google form when you receive it so that our kitchen staff can provide the correct portions and houseparents can coordinate student numbers for activities. Day students not staying for Homenight should depart at 3:20 on Wednesdays. Those attending should be picked up at 8 pm at the COD.

Homenight activities occasionally include going to Lake Placid or another local community for a movie, bowling, or dinner at a restaurant. If a scheduled activity changes the 8 pm pick-up time, you will be notified in advance by houseparents. Day families also have the option of hosting a Homenight for your student's house. These events should be coordinated directly with houseparents and are a wonderful way

for day families to connect with their student's housemates and house team. We welcome and appreciate these activities.

Special Events

Special events are sometimes celebrated in place of regular Homenight activities, such as Halloween, Valentine's Day, and community events surrounding Earth Day and fall harvest. Day families will receive emails about these, as well as reminders about pick-up times or other details.

Weekend Participation

We offer elective program opportunities every weekend. Saturdays are generally designated as "trip days" for a variety of activities, either on or off campus. When space is limited for trips, priority is given to boarding students, but every effort will be made to ensure day students can participate. Day families will receive an email outlining the trip options on Tuesday, and any interest must be confirmed before school starts on Wednesday. Sunday programming is provided primarily for boarding students, but occasionally day students may be invited to participate. Day students who participate in weekend programming should be prepared to participate in a daily job. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Dean of Students.

School Week Drop-Off and Pick-Up

Generally, the school day runs from 7:30 am to 4:30 pm. Drop-off and pick-up times for day students vary depending on which job your student is assigned to and whether or not they have signed up for any extended-day activities, which generally conclude by 6pm at the latest. Day students are invited to participate in most Wednesday Homenights and Friday night activities (both of which end at 8pm), and Saturday trips each week. Activities such as class trips and special events will be shared as they are planned.

Weekend Drop-Off and Pick-Up

On Saturdays, please drop your student off for breakfast at 8:00 am (unless the Outdoor Program Co-Directors have specified that your trip departs at a different time) and plan to pick up your student at 4:30 pm. When day students leave campus, they should inform a faculty member to let them know of their departure.

Late Pick-Up

If an unavoidable delay occurs and you are unable to pick up your student at the assigned time, please contact the school office or the [AOD Phone](#). Day students are not typically permitted to stay overnight on campus. However, should an extraordinary situation arise, please reach out to the AOD. You will be charged a fee of \$75/night or \$225/weekend if your student stays overnight at the request of their family. There is no charge for an overnight stay if the stay is program-related.

Health and Wellness

Illness spread among school communities is expected. Knowing [when to stay home while sick](#) and when it is best to return following sickness can slow the spread of infection. In general, children and adults with improving symptoms should be able to participate in school. In some cases the health office may request documentation from a student's health provider that indicates they have been cleared to return to school. Please be prepared to provide documentation to the health office for health-related absences lasting longer than three days.

When to Stay Home

If your student comes to school with any of the following symptoms, you will be asked to pick them up to prevent the spread of illness.

- Fever, including a fever with a new rash

- Vomiting more than twice in the preceding 24 hours
- Persistent diarrhea, particularly if it is bloody, or results in greater than two bowel movements above what the student normally experiences in a 24-hour period
- Skin sores that are draining fluid on an uncovered part of the body and are unable to be covered with a bandage
- [Respiratory virus symptoms](#) that are worsening or not improving and not better explained by another cause such as seasonal allergies

When to Return to School

- No fever and no use of fever-reducing medications for at least 24 hours
- Fever with a new rash has been evaluated by a healthcare provider and fever has resolved
- Uncovered skin sores are crusting and are under treatment from a provider
- Vomiting has resolved overnight and food / liquids can be consumed without vomiting
- Diarrhea has improved and normal bowel movements have returned to a normal frequency (i.e. no more than two above normal per 24-hour period for the student; bloody diarrhea should be evaluated by a healthcare provider prior to return.)
- Respiratory virus symptoms [have improved](#) for at least 24 hours. Students and staff returning after a respiratory illness can consider [additional actions](#) to help reduce community spread.

Inclement Weather

We do not close for inclement weather. Families should use their best judgment when deciding whether or not their student should attend classes during weather events. If your student will be absent due to weather, please email attendance@northcountryschool.org.

Program Considerations

Clothing and Equipment

Having the appropriate outdoor clothing available at school every day is essential. Students should come to school prepared to be outdoors every day of the week. This includes clothing appropriate for the weather, as well as an extra set of clothing left at school. Throughout the year, please send a pair of closed-toe shoes that can remain at school for use inside—outdoor shoes should remain in your student's locker during the day. The school can issue barn boots for your student, however, if you have this item at home, please provide them yourself. If you choose to provide boots, it is important that they be dedicated for barn use only and that they stay at school. Your student will also need a dedicated barn jacket (we recommend sizing up to allow room for warmer layers in winter), as they will spend a significant amount of time outdoors. To prepare for this, please review our [packing list](#) carefully to make sure you have the needed clothing and equipment.

Academic Supplies & Electronics

We provide all books and other classroom supplies, including binders, paper, pens, pencils, etc., as well as Chromebooks and other instructional technology that supports the educational needs of our students. Most day students, especially those in the Upper School, need to work on computer-based assignments at home and at school. Students will not need, nor will they be permitted, to use personal electronic devices at school. This work is done and managed primarily through Google Workspace, a cloud-based system that can be accessed anywhere with an internet connection. If you have any questions about the compatibility of an at-home device, please contact our [Director of Technology](#).

Personal Electronics

Day students should not bring media players, tablets, smartwatches, phones or cameras to campus except when specifically allowed by a teacher or trip leader. Any device capable of displaying movies, games or videos are not permitted at any time, even if that capability is disabled. Such devices will be taken away if brought to school by a student and held by an administrator until it can be retrieved by a parent or guardian from the Dean of Students.

Cameras

The use of cameras is only allowed during special occasions such as holidays, class trips, or when specifically requested by a teacher, trip leader or houseparent. Students will be informed when these events are happening. Mobile phones, iPads, tablets, and other devices may not be used as a digital camera replacement.

Parent Chaperones

Given that we are primarily a boarding school, we have no formal system in place for parents and/or guardians to chaperone field trips or outings. All of our off-campus trips are chaperoned by our staff. There are many other creative ways to volunteer and lend a hand. We encourage any families interested in volunteer opportunities to reach out to the NCS Families Council or a member of the Advancement team.

Inviting Boarding Students to Your Home

As a day student, your student may invite a boarding student to town for daytime activities during the weekend or for an overnight stay. It is important that an invitation to take another student off campus be communicated to the Dean of Students by the Tuesday prior to the off-campus visit to allow adequate time for such visits. A boarding student guest may be picked up after breakfast at approximately 8:30 am and should return to campus by 8 pm on Saturday night and 5:45 pm on Sunday evening. Boarding students invited to be the guest of a day student family for an overnight stay will be approved on a case-by-case basis by the Dean of Students. Boarding students are still responsible for completing homework when off-campus.

Visits happen when:

1. The guest boarding student's family has signed a permission form allowing for such visits
2. Our Dean of Students finds both students to be in good community standing

When another student is under your care, it is assumed that they are under direct supervision by a parent or guardian at all times. If at any point during the visit you are not able to provide this level of supervision please contact the AOD to return the student to campus.

More on the Ninth-Grade Experience

There are a number of special events, cultural traditions, and unique privileges that are reserved for ninth-grade students. Our ninth graders are not only given bigger responsibilities throughout their final year, but they also get the chance to put the leadership skills they've honed during their time here to the test—all while enjoying the privileges, big and small, that are a part of becoming our community's most senior students.

Table Heads & Tea Cart

Table heading is a responsibility and privilege that ninth-grade students, once fully trained, may elect to take on when asked by a faculty member. Ninth graders are trained by a faculty member and can practice under the guidance of an adult table head. Table heading a table is a learning experience and there is an

expectation that this privilege will be taken seriously. Once trained to table head, ninth-grade students enjoy the privilege of using the dining room's tea cart.

Laundry

Ninth graders may choose to do their own laundry on their assigned day in their house after discussion with, and approval from, their primary houseparents.

Ninth-Grade Cell Phone Privilege

Our intentional approach to technology means that we consciously restrict the use of cell phones and social media. Our commitment to reduced screen time and avoidance of passive technology creates a unique environment that isn't available to most teenagers in today's world. We also recognize that the devices and social networks will still be there when our students graduate in ninth grade and understand the importance of fostering responsible use of technology within them. Ninth-grade students are permitted to bring a cell phone or a tablet (iPad, Kindle Fire, etc.) to begin building this vital skill around the responsible use of technology as they prepare for secondary school and beyond.

As part of this, ninth-grade boarding students may use their personal electronic device for one half-hour before they get ready for bed on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday nights, and during the length of weekly ninth-grade town trips on Friday evenings. This begins partway into their ninth-grade year once they have demonstrated they are ready to bear this responsibility. All grade nine students who wish to use a device during the designated times must have signed permission from a parent or guardian and must abide by our [Acceptable Use Policy](#). Cell phones are only to be used in designated areas of houses and only during activities as designated by staff. Device usage is a privilege and can be revoked at any time at the discretion of the school administration.

Day students bringing their phones for special programming, including town trips, must drop off their device at the Dean of Students' office when arriving on campus.

Weekly Town Trip

Ninth-grade students in good community and academic standing are eligible to go into the town of Lake Placid on Friday nights from 5:45-8 pm. This program starts part way through the year when students demonstrate readiness (students who receive Friday Feedback of an "N" or "U" are not eligible to participate). Students are given money for dinner (\$25 per night, billed to families through the business office) and are permitted to wander freely and independently in town for the duration of the evening (a faculty member who transports them stays in town until it is time to return to campus).

Ninth-Grade Trip

The ninth-grade class goes on an annual weeklong trip during Intersession week. The aim of this trip is to engage in field study that is related to work done as part of our program. In past years, students have traveled to the American Southwest and taken Outward Bound sailing trips in the Florida Keys.

Graduation & Senior Books

The ninth-grade graduation is the culminating event of the academic year that brings families and friends together to celebrate the accomplishments of our seniors. During the ceremony, each member of the ninth-grade class receives a heartfelt speech from a member of the staff before they are given the opportunity to speak in front of their friends, family, and our extended community to express thanks and gratitude for their time at our mountain home. During the ceremony, each ninth grader receives their own individualized Senior Book. These unique keepsakes contain letters, photos, and art made for graduating students by their teachers and peers, and are created by an art teacher each year. They are beautiful mementos that our alumni treasure and enjoy years later.

Preparing for Life Beyond NCS

Secondary School Placement

The majority of our ninth-grade students apply to independent secondary schools for their 10th-grade year. In the spring, families of rising ninth graders receive a communication explaining the secondary school application process and timeline. In the fall, these students attend regular classes during which they meet with admission representatives from a variety of high schools, participate in mock interviews, finalize their registration for the Secondary School Admission Test (SSAT), and are supported in the composition of their application essays. Following our Thanksgiving break, we set aside ten days for students and families to tour and interview at their top schools. The identification of these schools is coordinated with the Secondary School Placement Office the summer before a student's ninth-grade year. You can find a helpful Secondary School Guidebook in the [Academics section](#) of our website.

Standardized Testing

Our older students begin to develop their "test wiseness" in preparation for taking standardized tests as part of the secondary school admissions process. We do not provide tutoring services for these exams at school.

Within reason, we may be able to accommodate students taking online tests if they are able to do so asynchronously, without direct teacher supervision, and within the capabilities of the existing technology at our school (i.e. on their Chromebooks). Students will not be able to use personal technology for online tests. Students must be in good academic and community standing. Please reach out to the Director of Teaching and Learning before registering for these exams to determine whether it is feasible for your student to take them while at school.

SSAT

Students applying for admission to independent secondary schools are sometimes required to take the Secondary School Admission Test (SSAT). Not all schools require SSAT scores, so it is important to check secondary school websites carefully. The paper "Standard" version of this test is administered at NCS in October and December, and a "Flex" test is offered to eighth graders during the Spring Term. Students in eighth grade usually take the SSAT Flex test in April and then take the SSAT again in October and/or December as ninth graders. If there are questions about standardized testing, please contact the Testing Coordinator, [Meredith Hanson](#).

TOEFL

Students for whom English is a second language often need to take the Test of English as a Foreign Language, or TOEFL, test as part of the secondary school admission process. It is important to check secondary school websites carefully, as their policies regarding who must take TOEFL often vary. We offer opportunities in fall and spring for eighth- and ninth-grade students to take the TOEFL at a regional testing site. TOEFL availability is extremely limited in our area, and we do not permit students to take the at-home, online version of the exam on our campus. For more information, contact International Student Program Coordinator & Testing Coordinator, [Meredith Hanson](#).

Tutoring

Access to online tutoring must be limited due to the dynamic nature of our programming. If additional enrichment is desired, we encourage families to seek opportunities for students to participate in asynchronous work that can be completed during Study Halls or Catching Up. If you would like to register your student for online tutoring while school is in session, please contact the Director of Teaching and Learning. Synchronous online tutoring can only be scheduled on Sundays between 9:30-11:30 AM, 1:00-2:45 PM, or 2:45-4:30 PM (all times EST). Students will only be able to participate in tutoring during one of the previously listed times. We are only able to accommodate students participating in online tutoring if

they are able to do so without direct teacher supervision, are in good academic and community standing, and are able to access the tutoring platform within the capabilities of the existing technology at our school (i.e. on their Chromebooks). Students will not be able to use personal technology for online tutoring.

Residential Life

Our residential life program houses eight to ten children with three to four houseparents per house. This low student-to-adult ratio allows our houseparents to get to know your student and their personality while patiently handling their needs and the needs of other children. Each house team works closely together to create a safe space for students to have a “home away from home,” while teaching children to respect residential life rules. Houseparents take on many roles for the young people in our care—counselor, disciplinarian, teacher, academic advisor, role model, and mentor.

More on our Houses

There are six residential houses on our campus: Algonquin, Bramwell, Cascade, Clark, Mountain, and Woods. Sharing the daily routines of morning wake-up, late-afternoon free time, evening study hall, and bedtime creates strong relationships among children and those who care for them. Houseparents, the first adults to see students every morning and the last to see them at night, provide the consistency and security that make every house a place of safety and comfort.

Boarding students live with a roommate in our houses, and there are twelve or fewer children in each house in total (day students are also assigned to houses). Many of our traditions and celebrations involve activities by house groups. At Thanksgiving and holiday dinners, for example, the community is seated at banquet tables by house. For Saturday evening activities, or all-school jobs like Potato Harvest, groups are organized by house. Throughout the year, there are many events that build house camaraderie, adding to the family-like atmosphere of a true home away from home.

Staying in Touch

Letters/Email

Students enjoy mail a great deal and are excited to receive it. Given this, we encourage you to maintain close contact with your child. Nothing that your student receives in the mail means as much as a letter from home. Email is available, too. Shortly after the start of school, your student will be provided an email address, which will be forwarded to families. Though we provide time during study hall for students to access email, your student may be busy with other activities, and responses may be delayed accordingly.

Packages

Packages are primarily a way to send needed supplies to your student. There are times when students will need new things. If you hear from your student that they have a need, a houseparent must confirm this with you and then the item can be sent. This will ensure that the item will fit your growing student and be useful for seasonal programming. When you send clothing or other items, remember to label them beforehand with your student’s name. With many students living in close quarters, belongings are more easily returned to owners when labeled. All packages are opened in the presence of a houseparent. If you are sending food, please keep in mind our commitment to healthy foods and contact houseparents before sending food. If food is sent without communication, there is a chance that it will not be distributed, but instead, stored away safely and returned when your student departs campus for school breaks.

Please do not send medications or supplements in the mail. Please understand that the houses are packed with the belongings of at least ten students. Excessive packages place a burden on the student, the space, and the houseparents. Birthdays or other important life events should be celebrated and are the best time to send a wanted and school-appropriate item to a student.

All mail being sent to your student should use the following address:

North Country School
[Your student's Name]
4382 Cascade Road,
Lake Placid, New York 12946

Homesickness

Every year, some students go through periods of homesickness, a few acutely. There are no predictors as to who will be affected. A nine-year-old may not be homesick at all, while a twelve-year-old who is mature in other ways may be very sad. Homesickness is not something we take lightly, as the feelings are real and can be difficult to navigate. We help students deal with homesickness by making sure they become involved in activities, giving them emotional support, listening to and acknowledging their feelings, and assuring them that homesickness is only temporary. Most students recover within a few days to a week. During that period, the student is usually most sad at bedtime. It may be helpful to send along a small security item with your student—something that will help make their new home feel familiar. This can be a pillow and pillowcase, a comforter, a stuffed animal, a picture of the family, or all of the above.

Receiving frequent communications from home can help alleviate homesickness. It is not helpful, however, if these communications describe how terribly you miss them, how lonely the dog is without them, or the exciting things you are doing in their absence. What is helpful is asking what your student is doing at school and responding in a positive and encouraging manner.

We are also aware that a student's first time away at boarding school can be very difficult on families. We know how hard it is when you get a letter or a phone call from a homesick student. Feelings of guilt can obscure why you wanted your student to come in the first place. Be assured that a consistent, positive response to your student during this time will be rewarded by growing confidence and independence as they transition to life on our campus.

Let us be helpful. We've had lots of experience with homesick children, and even student-sick family members. Call or email someone here at school—our Dean of Students, a houseparent, your student's advisor, our school nurses, or our school counselors—to discuss your student's homesickness.

Phone/Video Calls

Boarding students have two, twenty-minute phone calls per week with their family. Students have access to a telephone and iPads in their houses to make their calls. During the first week of school, houseparents will reach out to families to schedule a regular day and time each week to call your student. As a general rule, all students are available to receive phone calls Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday nights. Students in grades four and five are available on those nights from 7:30 pm until 8:15 pm, students in grades six are available from 7:30 pm until 8:45 pm, students in grades seven are available from 7:50 pm until 8:45 pm and grade eight and nine are available between 8:10 pm and 9:15 pm.

Money

There is no need to send money with your student. As part of your comprehensive tuition, we allocate funds to each house for entertainment expenses, such as movies and recreational outings. Our intention is to allow students to be on as equal a financial footing as possible.

Birthdays

Birthdays are often celebrated with a cake or treat in a student's house. Our own version of "Happy Birthday" is also sung in the dining room after a small group of students announce a student's birthday. During lunch at the end of every month, we celebrate all the birthdays in that month with a giant birthday

cake made by our kitchen staff. Families who would like to play a part in, or provide treats for, birthday celebrations should contact houseparents to coordinate. Please also feel free to send your student a present within the guidelines of the items permitted at North Country School. We do ask, however, that you do not provide money to houseparents for celebrations greater than what is outlined above.

Food

Our philosophy promotes the eating of nutritious food. In the dining room we serve well-balanced and varied meals. The main course is accompanied by fresh vegetables and salad, often from our garden, and when possible, homemade bread. Children get plenty to eat although they may have a period of adjustment as they get used to new food. Candy, soda, gum, and other highly processed foods are not a part of our diet, except on very rare occasions. Items of this sort purchased on a weekend with families must be consumed before the student returns to school. In case you fear that your student's sweet tooth will be neglected, rest assured we offer ice cream on Saturday nights and numerous home-baked cookies and other treats throughout the week.

Student Logistics

Visiting Times and Procedures

You are welcome to visit at almost any time of the year, but please be sure to call ahead to notify us. Otherwise, you might arrive only to discover that your student is away on a field trip or camping at the top of a mountain. We also ask that you allow your student to properly settle into school and house routines at the beginning of each term. Visits are discouraged during the first weekend and last weekends of each term. We ask that you limit your trips to see your student to a maximum of two per term, as too many may be disruptive, and appreciate having at least one week's notice. This helps to ensure that there are no conflicting events scheduled for your student on the day or weekend of your arrival. We're happy to make recommendations for where to stay in Lake Placid should you need them.

Weekday Visits

Our school policy is that all boarding students remain on campus overnight Sunday through Thursday, including during the last week of school before graduation. Therefore, please take your student for an overnight stay in town only if it is for Friday and/or Saturday evenings. Any exceptions should be coordinated with the Dean of Students.

Weekend Stays in Town

If you visit and take your student to town on a weekend, please be sure to adhere to the following procedure:

1. Call or email the Dean of Students to plan your visit at least one week ahead of time. They will notify your student's houseparents, teachers, the nurse, and weekend staff accordingly.
2. The Dean of Students will sign out students during the week. On weekends, the AOD will sign students out.
3. When you arrive on campus, please check in with the Dean of Students or an administrator so we know you have arrived by calling the AOD phone number 518 339 5018. If needed, please also be sure to check in with our school nurses to drop off or pick up needed medications.

Federal Holidays

As we are a boarding school, our students have classes on Federal Holidays that fall on a weekday, typically Monday. Although holiday weekends are often convenient for family visits, we ask that you do not extend time with your students beyond the Sunday evening 5:45 pm return time.

Transportation To and From Campus

We wish to facilitate the most efficient and practical travel to and from school for our students. We chaperone trips to and from 7 East 96th Street, at the corner of Fifth Avenue in New York City (\$320), JFK Airport (\$460), and Albany International Airport (\$190) on designated travel days ([see school calendar](#)) during the school year.

If transportation is required for your student on a day other than the designated travel days, you must get approval from the NCS Administrative Assistant. If approved, there will be extra charges posted to your account (Albany International Airport—\$420; Adirondack Regional Airport (SLK)—\$125; JFK—price varies and is subject to change).

Please note: All domestic flights must arrive and depart from Albany International Airport. International flights should arrive and depart from John F. Kennedy International Airport or Albany International Airport.

Business Office

Chief Financial Officer, Keith Rosser is available to discuss your account with you. Our fees are comprehensive, and you will not receive extra bills for art supplies, science materials, laundry, music lessons, riding lessons, field trips, or other components of our daily program.

However, there are some specific charges over and above tuition for which you might be billed, including:

1. Transportation to and from school including: Buses to and from airports, train stations, and to/from New York City, and taxis to airports and train stations. Fees for transportation can be confirmed with the Main Office or above in the [transportation section](#).
2. Necessary clothing and toiletries
3. ESL support and instruction
4. Learning Support Program fees
5. Items purchased at the School store
6. Ski or Snowboard Rentals
7. TOEFL and SSAT testing, as well as international health insurance
8. Purposeful damage, above and beyond "normal wear and tear" on the facility or its equipment
9. Day or five-day boarding students' overnight stays on campus
10. Spending money (\$25 per night) for in-town Friday night activity (grade nine students only)
11. Checked luggage exceeding 50 lbs. If the airline charges a fee, the school will be added to your bill.

Laundry & Housekeeping

Our housekeeping staff wash and sort student laundry once per week. Students collect and send down their dirty laundry weekly on Wednesday Homenights and receive clean clothes back at the beginning of Homenight the following week. Given this, each student needs enough clothes to last a two-week cycle. Due to the volume of laundry processed by our housekeeping staff, we cannot accommodate dry cleaning or individual garments that require hand-washing or drying. Please keep this in mind when selecting clothing items to pack for your student. Formal dress clothes are typically worn at end-of-term events, so if they need special care, you can take them home to clean over breaks. To best assist our housekeeping staff, please remember to sew in name tags to all of your student's clothing items. Laundry loads are run separately, but each item of clothing should still be labeled. Our housekeeping staff also clean student houses, including common areas and student bedrooms.

Attendance at Religious Services

Although we cannot ensure weekly trips to religious services, we will do our best to facilitate attendance at local religious institutions when resources are available. Students may attend if it is the religious practice pursued at home and if this is the desire of both the family and the student. Please notify our Dean of

Students if you would like your student to attend. Please do not ask us to initiate new practices as this is a family prerogative beyond the range of our endeavor. It is also possible to prepare your student for a religious coming-of-age ceremony either in-person or virtually. Please contact the Dean of Students if you wish to make such arrangements.

Technology

Television/Movies

It is the policy of North Country School to have a reduced-media campus. Age-appropriate movies and TV shows may take place during Friday night activities, and occasionally on Homenights. Our common practice is that only movies with G, PG, and PG-13 ratings are shown. Even so, faculty must be aware of the reason for the PG-13 rating in particular, as some of these films may not be suitable. We utilize Common Sense Media as a resource to gain a reputable "age" rating. On occasion, a faculty member may consult with the Director of School to determine the imperative of showing an R-rated movie to older students as an extension of their class studies.

Computers and Electronics

The school has enough computers and other electronic technology to meet the educational needs of every student. Therefore, students will not need, nor be permitted, to use their personal computers or other personal electronic devices for academic purposes.

Personal Technology

Music and Reading Devices

Boarding students may bring a media (MP3) player for use in their rooms. Personal electronic devices are restricted to student rooms as NCS seeks to preserve community spaces as places where meaningful interactions occur. The one exception to this rule will be for occasional off-campus trips. With permission of a supervising staff member, students may bring a personal music device on such a trip and will be subject to the rules established for the use of the music device on the trip. Only pre-loaded music and recorded books are permitted on personal electronic devices.

Devices containing movies, games, videos, or apps for anything other than playing preloaded music, audiobooks, and e-books are not permitted, and will need to be placed with the student's valuables if brought to school. This includes devices that have the potential for other capabilities, for example mobile (cellular) internet connectivity (iPod Touch, iPad, Kindle Fire, Surface, etc.), even if that capability is disabled. Likewise, students should not bring streaming only media players for platforms like Spotify, Apple Music, Amazon Music, etc., as there is no access to cell phones or WiFi for them to operate. Given this, we suggest to families that their student have a simple and "feature limited" player that has only music and/or recorded books already loaded—a "player for school" so to speak. Students do not have the ability to load music at school, so they should make sure they arrive with music already loaded on their media player, and bring it home during breaks to change or load new music. Similarly, e-book readers (e.g., Kindle) must be of the non-cellular variety, and may not contain movies, games, videos or apps. We appreciate that when traveling to and from school surrounding school breaks, a student may want to bring one or more types of devices that are not allowed for personal or academic use while here, including cell phones, tablets, and gaming systems. If this is the case, the device(s) will be held in a locked location with the student's valuables until they travel back home.

Headphones

Students may bring their own headphones to school, however, we urge students to bring a relatively inexpensive pair, as headphones are ubiquitous and hard to keep track of. Students should avoid bringing earbud or in-ear style listening devices such as AirPods. AirPods and similar in-ear style listening devices

can reach maximum volumes of over 100 decibels, which can potentially cause hearing damage. The World Health Organization recommends keeping headphone listening to 60 minutes or less, and to try to keep the volume below 70 dB.

During the academic day, headphones may only be used during study halls, and/or in some classes with the explicit permission of supervising teachers. We maintain a supply of headphones for student use in the Main Building for this use—personal headphone use is not permitted in this space.

Tablets

Many tablets are currently sold as e-book readers, but devices in this category are also capable of displaying video, playing games, and running apps or programs that extend the capabilities far beyond that of displaying reading material or playing audiobooks. If these types of devices are brought to campus, they will be taken and kept safely with a student's valuables.

Smartwatches

Any watches that have more capability other than basic watch functions, such as showing the time and date and alarms, are unnecessary and will not be permitted for use within the scope of our program.

Personal cameras

Personal cameras, including digital, film, or video cameras, may only be used with permission of a houseparent or teacher, and during special occasions and events. At all other times, cameras will be kept with a student's valuables.

Phones, media players, iPads, tablets, and other devices may not be used as digital camera replacements. Personal cameras generally stay at the houses, but can accompany a student on weekend trips and for special school events with the permission of trip and event leaders.

In summary, the following is a list of what personal devices are allowed:

- Media (MP3) players lacking cellular internet access and containing only music or audiobooks (no videos, movies, games, or apps)
- E-book readers lacking cellular internet access and containing only reading material, audiobooks, or music (no videos, movies, games, or apps)
- Film or digital cameras for special occasions
- Cell phones for travel only (except grade nine students)

If you have any questions concerning student technology use or the Acceptable Use Policy or Computer Use Agreement, please contact our Director of School, Director of Technology, or Dean of Students.

Safety and Security

Emergency Action Plan

Safety concerns are of the utmost importance. Administration and faculty will use best practice to safeguard students at all times according to our Emergency Action Plan. Please contact us if you have any questions.

Communication During and After an Emergency

In the event of an emergency situation, we will make every effort to communicate clearly with families regarding the health and safety of our students. Timing and delivery of information will vary based on individual events and will be dictated by the impact of such communication on student and community safety.

School Rules And Policies

Dress Code

Our campus Dress Code is representative of how we lead our daily lives. Clothing must support life in the classroom as well as non-academic time. Students will, however, be asked to return to their house or locate an appropriate piece of clothing in their locker if they are not in dress code or if their choice of clothing falls outside of what is deemed appropriate. A staff member may request that a student change their clothing if needed.

1. *Basic Principle:* Certain body parts (chest, genitals, buttocks) must be covered for all students at all times. Clothes must be worn in such a way that private areas are covered with opaque material at all times. All items listed in the “must wear” category must meet this basic principle.
2. *Students must wear:*
 - Shirts
 - Bottoms: pants/sweatpants/shorts/skirt/dress/leggings
 - Footwear: activity-specific footwear may be designated by an adult or by location (for barn, kitchen and outdoor activities)
3. *Students cannot wear clothing or accessories with:*
 - Violent language or images
 - Images or language depicting drugs or alcohol (or any illegal item or activity) or the use of the same
 - Hate speech, profanity, pornography
 - Images or language that creates a hostile or intimidating environment
 - Clothing designed to be underwear as outerwear.

Dress Code For Specific Program Areas

- Barn: Long pants and boots are required at all times. Once “Winter chores dress” has been announced, students should wear snow pants, snow jackets, insulated winter boots, and have their insulated gloves and insulated hats in their possession at barn chores until “Spring chores dress” is announced by the Barn Manager.
- Kitchen: Closed-toe shoes and socks are required to be worn in the kitchen.
- Out-times and Trips: Outdoor activities are likely to have specific requirements for clothing, footwear and gear. Activity leaders will determine appropriate dress for trips and communicate it to students accordingly.

Students may be sent back to their houses to change into proper attire with the permission of the Dean of Students or a primary houseparent.

Dog Policy

All visitors are expected to have their dog on-leash or in their cars at all times while on campus.

Student Acceptable Use Policy

Although North Country School is a media-reduced environment, we appreciate the educational value provided by appropriate use of technology. As a boarding school, we also seek to provide ways for healthy communication and connection between students, families, and friends. At the same time, we also acknowledge the potential mishaps and inappropriate use of these forms of technology.

Therefore we have an Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) that is written with our community’s basic Code of Conduct in mind. [You can see a copy of this policy and agreement here](#). Families receive the AUP to review with their student, sign, and return prior to the start of the school year. These forms are reviewed as part of students’ technology orientation, during which they will be provided an opportunity to ask clarifying questions.

Language Policy

NCS Expectations and Practices Regarding Language Use

When responding to students' language use, our first goal outside the ESL classroom is teaching community behaviors, not correcting their grammar.

Inside and **outside** of classes, use of any language is acceptable in settings where a semi-private conversation would normally be appropriate, except when:

- The conversation's content is inappropriate
- The conversation purposely excludes others or distracts from the activity
- When it impedes students' own participation in the activity (e.g. students speaking another language are also not following safety protocols, or refusing to participate in groups with non-speakers of that language)

Sometimes, our expectations are different during classes than outside of classroom settings (see chart on next page).

Use of a student's native language for quick clarification during class or Council is encouraged where feasible, but if adults feel this is excessive they will consult with the student and ESL faculty. English (except in world language classes) should be the primary language used in academic and artistic group projects, unless otherwise specified by the class teacher.

In classes	Outside of classes
• When the objective of a class activity is to demonstrate conversational and academic skill in English, students are asked and expected to use English.	• Students are expected to use English at the table during meals, as this space is specifically intended as a place for conversation outside one's normal social circles, with the following exceptions: ◦ Affinity tables/spaces ◦ When <u>all</u> individuals at a table can speak the same non-English language ◦ During free seating on weekends

Inviting Boarding Students off Campus

Extending Invitations to other Boarding Students

When you are visiting your child on a weekend, they may invite a friend along for daytime activities on Saturday or Sunday. It is important that an invitation to take another student off campus is extended by the Tuesday prior to the off campus visit to allow adequate time for such visits to be accounted for in our weekend planning. A boarding student guest may be picked up after breakfast (Saturdays at 8:30 am and Sundays at 9:30 am) and should return to campus by no later than 8:00 pm on Saturday night and no later than 5:45 pm on Sunday evening. The Dean of Students will communicate any specific scheduling needs based on student schedules. Boarding students are still responsible for completing homework when off campus. Boarding students invited to be the guest of a day student family for an overnight stay will be approved on a case-by-case basis by the Dean of Students.

Visits may happen when:

1. The guest boarding student's family has signed a permission form allowing for such visits or provides permission via email/phone

2. Our Dean of Students finds both students to be in good community standing

When another student is under your care, it is assumed that they are under direct supervision by a parent or guardian at all times. If at any point during the visit you are not able to provide this level of supervision please contact the AOD to return the student to campus.

Your student Receives an Invitation to Leave Campus with an NCS Friend

If you wish to give permission for your student to go off campus with another student's family, you must sign the permission form in the Family Portal. In addition, if an invitation is extended to your student, we will make every effort to contact you prior to any specific permission being granted by North Country School. If you have any questions, please contact Joe Shapiro or the Administrative Assistant.

Absences

Excused/ Unexcused Absences:

Excused absences include illness, unexpected family events, and health/wellness needs. They are based on a student being pulled from programming due to a need rather than by choice. During excused absences, faculty will attempt to ensure the continuity of learning to the best of their ability. For excused absences that span more than a few days, some degree of flexibility may be needed upon return to programming in order to help students complete missing assignments. Participation in "Catching Up" on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday afternoons may be assigned to students until they have completed missing assignments. Examples of modified supports available for unexpected excused absences may include providing a review of essential material and/or planning a check-in time to go over material being covered, but will more likely take the form of providing an alternative or modified assignment.

In the past, teachers have modified existing assignments to be completed independently or provided alternative projects to support students who are on extended, approved planned absences. If assigned work is incomplete upon return from this type of absence, students will be assigned to "Catching Up" Study Hall and should expect to earn "N"s in their Friday Feedback for work that is not completed until it is turned in.

Excused (documentation may be required):

- Illness
- Medical/dental procedures and appointments
- Death or serious illness in the family
- Religious observance
- Approved school-sponsored activities
- Approved planned absences

All other absences are considered unexcused.

Planned Absence

The school calendar provides for extended vacations throughout the school year. Families are encouraged to schedule trips or family outings during these times to minimize/eliminate the interruption to their student's learning.

If unavoidable, please prepare for planned absences of three or more days by communicating via email with the Director of Teaching and Learning at least two full weeks prior to the planned absence. Planned

absences are considered on a case-by-case basis. Many factors are considered including, but not limited to: current academic standing, current attendance rate, reason for planned absence, and academic enrichment opportunities provided at school during the planned absence. A planned absence that is not communicated and approved is considered unexcused.

Missed Work Due to Absence

If the excused absence is unplanned (due to illness or bereavement), students are responsible for making up missed assignments upon their return to school within a reasonable amount of time to be determined by the Director of Teaching and Learning.

If the excused absence is planned and students have been provided modified work assignments, students are responsible for completing those assignments by the time that they have returned to school.

In the event of an unexcused absence, the Director of Teaching and Learning will work with the family to determine reasonable support within the parameters of our programming.

Appendix

Faculty & Staff Directory

Senior School Leadership & Key Contacts

Name	Position	Email	Phone
Todd Ormiston	Executive Director	tormiston@northcountryschool.org	(518) 523-9329 ext. 6505
Ashley Waldorf	Director of School	awaldorf@northcountryschool.org	(518) 523-9329 ext. 6504
Joe Shapiro	Dean of Students	joeshapiro@northcountryschool.org	(518) 523-9329 ext. 6525
Caroline Hlavacek Perry	Director of Teaching and Learning	cperry@northcountryschool.org	(518) 523-9329 ext. 6577
Administrator on Duty ("AOD")			(518) 339-5018
Catherine Bemis	Director of Admission	cbemis@northcountryschool.org	(518) 523-9329 ext. 6503
Keith Rosser	CFO	krosser@northcountryschool.org	(518) 523-9329 ext. 6506
Main Office	Administrative Support & Travel Logistics	info@northcountryschool.org	(518) 523-9329 ext. 1000
Jess Jeffery Alex Jacone Margaret "P" Viscome	School Nurses	nurse@northcountryschool.org	(518) 523-9329 ext. 6508
Abby Swint, Mental Health Professional	Counseling Office	counselor@northcountryschool.org	(518) 523-9329 ext. 6510

Academic Calendar 2026–2027



2026–2027 Academic Calendar

Key: ■ Breaks ▲ Boarder Travel Days ● Family Events ● Beginning of Term ★ Special Sessions

September 2026

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12 ●
13 ●	14 ★	15 ★	16 ★	17 ★	18 ★	19
20	21 ●	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

October 2026

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

November 2026

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20 ●	21 ●
22 ■	23 ■	24 ■	25 ■	26 ■	27 ■	28 ■
29 ▲	30 ●					

December 2026

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16 ▲	17 ■	18 ■	19 ■
20 ■	21 ■	22 ■	23 ■	24 ■	25 ■	26 ■
27 ■	28 ■	29 ■	30 ■	31 ■		

January 2027

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1 ■	2 ■
3 ▲	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24/31	25	26	27	28	29	30

February 2027

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22 ★	23 ★	24 ★	25 ★	26 ●	27 ▲
28 ■						

March 2027

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1 ■	2 ■	3 ■	4 ■	5 ■	6 ■
7 ■	8 ■	9 ■	10 ■	11 ■	12 ■	13 ■
14 ■	15 ■	16 ■	17 ■	18 ■	19 ■	20 ■
21 ▲	22 ●	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

April 2027

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

May 2027

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23/30	24/31 ★	25 ★	26 ★	27 ★	28 ●	29 ●

SEPTEMBER

September 12 & 13: Welcome Weekend
September 14–18: Orientation Week (Introsession)
September 21: Start of Fall Term

NOVEMBER

November 20: Fall Term Ends, Family Weekend Begins
November 21: NCS Thanksgiving Celebration, Thanksgiving Break begins
November 29: Boarders return from Thanksgiving Break
November 30: Start of Winter Term

DECEMBER

December 15: Last day of classes before Winter Break
December 16: Boarders depart for Winter Break

JANUARY

January 3: Boarders return from Winter Break
January 4: Winter Term classes resume

FEBRUARY

February 19: Winter Term ends
February 22–26: Intersession, with presentations on the 26th
February 27: Boarders depart for Spring Break

MARCH

March 21: Boarders return from Spring Break
March 22: Start of Spring Term

MAY

May 21: Spring Term ends
May 24–27: Endersession
May 28: Start of Graduation Weekend
May 29: Class of 2027 Graduation

Questions about the academic year?

Contact info@northcountryschool.org

Friday Feedback Rubric

	Promptness & Preparedness	Citizenship & Class Norms	Homework & Classwork	
Independent (I)	☐ I came to class on time and settled in w/out teacher prompting ☐ I came to class with all of my supplies every day.	My actions consistently supported a positive learning environment for others in the following area/s: ☐ proactive contributions ☐ active listening ☐ class norms	☐ I exceeded academic expectations and/or demonstrated greater independence.	
Guided (G)	☐ I came to class on time and settled in most days. I usually did not require teacher prompting. ☐ I usually came to class with my supplies.	I sometimes needed guidance in supporting a positive learning environment for others in the following area/s: ☐ making proactive contributions ☐ active listening ☐ class norms	☐ I met all of the academic expectations.	
Unacceptable (U)	☐ I was regularly late and/or had difficulty settling in without significant teacher guidance. ☐ I was regularly unprepared for class with needed supplies.	☐ I detracted from the/my classroom learning environment.	Not complete (N)	☐ I did not meet the academic expectations.

Non-Discrimination Statement

Consistent with applicable law, North Country School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, age, national origin or disability, or on the basis of any other protected characteristic, in its admission, educational programs, or activities, including its educational policies, financial aid programs, or other school-administered extracurricular programs.

Learning Disabilities Statement

Ensuring the Ability of Students with Disabilities to Participate in the Program

Consistent with its policy prohibiting discrimination, the School is committed to ensuring that students with disabilities are provided with equal access to its programs. The School will provide accommodations and modifications to ensure a disabled student has equal access to the School's services. Should a student need an accommodation, the School will make an individualized determination of the student's needs and an accommodation plan will be developed.