

SAAS OUTDOOR & TRAVEL BACKCOUNTRY SKI & SPLITBOARD

February 17-23 (+ Weekend in January), 2025
8-20 Upper School Students **Cost: \$3500**
TRIP LEADERS: Martin Brakke, Will Hinman, Hannah LeBlanc

The Backcountry Ski/Board Trip is held on Mt. Baker, and participants will stay at the Mountaineers Baker Lodge and work with professional guides from Cascade Mountain Ascents. Trip attendees will participate in their AIARE Level 1 Avalanche course, the first step in Avalanche awareness, assessment, and rescue, in January, and follow up with our Backcountry experience over mid-winter break. Students will learn skills in outdoor leadership, decision-making, team building, risk mitigation, and resource management, and will meet with our guides to discuss hazard assessment, snow conditions, weather, and tour plan each day. We will utilize the vast Backcountry terrain that the Mt. Baker Backcountry has to offer. No lifts for us! We earn some of the best turns in North America as each day consists of 4,000+ feet of human-powered vertical gain in “tour mode,” and an equal amount of descent in “ski mode.”

Prerequisites: Students will need to be interviewed by the trip leaders before acceptance to ensure preparedness. Students interested in signing up for this trip should consider themselves a proficient skier or snowboarder, fit enough to climb for several hours with enough left in the tank to safely ski/board a black diamond level run in varied conditions. There are no lifts in the backcountry; participants must carry their avalanche safety gear and manage their touring equipment, energy, and food intake. While helpful, students do not need “out of bounds” experience in the backcountry, or prior exposure to avalanche safety or ski/board touring equipment to participate. SAAS will provide avalanche safety equipment (beacon, probe, shovel) and assist in coordinating any ski/split board touring.



Other Notes:

AIARE Level 1 course completion is required before the February portion of the trip. For most, this will be completed in January as a part of the trip cost. For students who have already earned their AIARE Level 1, they may skip the January weekend. For those with a scheduling conflict in January, they may schedule and pay for their own AIARE course through an established guide service, but must provide proof of completion before the trip date. For both circumstances, the trip cost will reduce by \$750.

Seattle Academy has a set of avalanche beacons, probes, and shovels for each student to use and will coordinate the rental of backcountry-specific ski/board touring equipment as needed. Rental costs range from \$250-\$500 for the trip (covers both January and February portions) for skis, boots, skins, bindings, and poles.

Goals:

Outdoor leadership, decision-making, team building, risk mitigation, and resource management.

Build confidence in the backcountry balanced with a healthy respect for the dangers of winter travel.

Education in route planning, navigation, snow science, and avalanche rescue.

Study avalanche safety and mitigate risks associated with winter travel.

Complete AIARE I course, the first step in avalanche awareness, and Backcountry Pro I course.

Guide Company:

Cascade Mountain Ascents (CMA)
www.cascademountainascents.com

January Schedule:

AIARE Level 1:

We'll spend a weekend split between classroom education and two full days in the field covering snowpack observation and rescue skills, moving with the group, terrain recognition, and communication. We will implement a tour plan and practice our group management during up and downhill travel. The weekend will conclude with a debrief and feedback to help students keep learning beyond the course close.

NOTE: For students that have already earned their AIARE Level 1, they may skip this weekend of the course. If this weekend doesn't work, students may schedule and pay for their own AIARE course through this guide service or another but must provide proof of completion prior to the trip date. For both of these circumstances, the trip cost will be reduced by \$750.

February Schedule:

This seven-day, six-night experience will be weather and guide dependent. We have tons of flexibility as we will be staying on site at the Baker Lodge. The trip will include four guided tour days from CMA. On these tour days, students will participate in snow pack assessment, avalanche mitigation, route-planning, navigation, decision making and outdoor leadership skills. The trip will also include one day skiing in bounds at Mt. Baker Resort and another day of flexible scheduling.

Contact Information:

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To register for the trip, complete any necessary trip surveys and find more information, please visit our SAAS trips page by following the link here:



www.seattleacademy.org/student-life/outdoortravel



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