Vail Mountain School
FLEXIBLE TUITION PROGRAM
A Handbook for Families

Vail Mountain School's commitment to economic diversity means that not all families pay the same tuition. Through our Flexible Tuition program, families who apply and qualify for flexible tuition will pay an amount based on what they can afford.

The school does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, gender or sexual identity when administering educational, athletic, admission, or tuition assistance policies or programs.

PHILOSOPHY

- Vail Mountain School aims to honor each family's investment in their child's education and is committed to aligning tuition to meet the needs of each family.
- Vail Mountain School strives to be generous and supportive with Flexible Tuition while maintaining the belief that all families are expected to contribute to the educational costs of their child's education to the extent possible.
- Use of the Clarity application is designed to help the school understand all financial resources that a family can use, access, and leverage in order to support their child's education, as well as their expenses, debts, and other obligations.
- Vail Mountain School acknowledges the significant cost of living in our valley and takes this into consideration when calculating tuition.

POLICY

- Individualized tuition levels vary based on the unique financial circumstances of each family.
- Families participating in the Flexible Tuition Program may request additional assistance for school related fees and programs.
- Vail Mountain School commits significant resources toward supporting Flexible Tuition. Each year, the Board of Trustees reviews the financial impact of the Flexible Tuition program on the overall budget, with the goal of increasing affordability and accessibility to a VMS education.

CORE VALUES OF THE Vail Mountain School FLEXIBLE TUITION PROGRAM

CONFIDENTIALITY

- The identities of all families receiving Flexible Tuition are held in confidence from other family members, Vail Mountain School faculty/staff, and board members.
- In certain circumstances, select senior administration and faculty may be made aware of Flexible Tuition status, but only as necessary to support the needs of the student.
- Financial documents and records are collected and securely stored by the third party, Clarity.

TIMELINESS

The timeliness of your application's submittal and associated required documents (W-2, tax returns, etc.) is essential to the efficiency of the process.

- Priority status is given to families whose applications are completed by the priority deadline. This is **February 1.** Applications submitted by the priority deadline are more likely to have tuition needs met by Vail Mountain School.
- Our goal with Flexible Tuition is to ensure that tuition is fair and reflective of each family's ability to pay. However, our resources are limited, and there may be instances where we reach our capacity for adjustments in a given year.
- Late applications, even for those who have participated in the Flexible Tuition Program in the past, are not guaranteed to be accommodated.
- The right level of tuition for a family cannot be determined without a completed application by all parents/guardians.

DURATION OF COMMITMENT

- Every family's financial situation is evaluated on an annual basis.
- Unless or until the family's financial situation changes significantly from year to year or over time, the school anticipates supporting their students with similar flexible tuition levels throughout their time at Vail Mountain School.

WHAT IS INCLUDED IN TUITION

- Academic books required for classes
- Required summer reading books
- Lunch
- Orientation/class/Intraterm trips inside the state of Colorado
- Most athletics travel inside the state of Colorado
- Technology device (iPads, Chromebooks, through grade 8)
- Athletic uniforms (MS/US)
- Yearbooks

WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED IN TUITION

- Extended Care (LS)
- After School Academy (LS)
- Athletics Fees (MS/US)
- Vail Mountain School Bus Transportation

- Tickets to Vail Mountain School plays/musicals, dances, and prom
- Standardized Test and AP exam registration fees
- Core Transit (Eagle Valley Regional Transportation Authority) bus pass
- Ski pass

In some circumstances, Vail Mountain School may be able to provide additional assistance toward these fees. Request consideration by clicking this Google Form or through the digital version of this handbook on our website.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR GRANTING AWARDS

EXPECTATION OF FULLY WORKING PARENTS/GUARDIANS

- Vail Mountain School expects that **all** parents/guardians applying for the Flexible Tuition program are working to their maximum earning potential, unless there is a documented disability, or if a parent is caring for siblings who are too young to attend school.
- Exceptions are assessed on a case by case basis.
- Vail Mountain School strives to provide similar tuition levels for multiple children attending Vail Mountain School from the same family, provided the family's financial situation has not dramatically changed from year to year.
- When all children in a family are of school age, the appropriate tuition level is reassessed.
- When other siblings are no longer incurring educational costs (i.e., other private school or college tuition), the appropriate tuition level is reassessed.

SEPARATED/DIVORCED FAMILIES

The Flexible Tuition Committee works carefully to understand each student's custodial situation.

- Vail Mountain School must consider the financial means and personal circumstances of all (custodial and non-custodial) parents/guardians who are involved in the life of the applicant in any way.
- If separated, divorced, never married, or non-custodial, *all* parents must submit a Clarity application.
- Should a non-custodial parent be entirely absent from the life of the child, third party documentation is required as proof that said parent bears absolutely no financial, educational, or personal involvement with them. A letter of explanation from the custodial parent is also expected.

CHILD SUPPORT

- Vail Mountain School considers all child support dollars from all sources when calculating Flexible Tuition pricing.

AGREEMENT OF ALL PARENTS/LEGAL GUARDIANS

- When there is more than one parent with educational decision making power, Vail Mountain School expects that all parties have agreed to the applicant attending Vail Mountain School before applying for Flexible Tuition.
- A copy of the custodial agreement should be provided to Vail Mountain School as confirmation.

LOSS OR CHANGE OF EMPLOYMENT

- Vail Mountain School is sympathetic to the possibility that parents may find themselves suddenly unemployed. Such situations are carefully considered and require documentation and conversation between the Flexible Tuition Committee and the family before adjustments can be made to pricing.
- A written appeal detailing the change or loss will be required.
- Should a parent experience a dramatic increase of employment income (or other means) as evidenced on financial documents, the School must carefully consider whether said increase will move their family into an income category that affects their level of tuition.

FAMILY LIFESTYLE CHOICES

- Vail Mountain School recognizes that parents make many personal choices that affect their financial ability to afford independent school tuition.
- Staying at home to raise school-age children, choosing the type and number of family vehicles, making investments in vacation homes and real estate, funding advanced educational costs, discretionary recreation and travel, and engaging their family/children in specialty sports and hobbies are examples of these lifestyle choices.
- Vail Mountain School cannot subsidize these lifestyle choices using the limited Flexible Tuition budget.

HOME EQUITY

- Home equity and multiple property ownership are both considered.
- High home equity and additional properties owned typically indicate that a family has an increased ability to leverage assets and thus to contribute to tuition costs.

UNDERSTANDING OTHER SOURCES OF INCOME

- In the application, parents must disclose all sources of income that may be used to fund their students' tuition.
- Gifts by grandparents or relatives, foundations, investment income, student assets/income, as well as scholarships or financial aid received by siblings attending other schools are examples of other sources of income that must be disclosed.
- Failure to disclose other sources of income/tuition payments could disqualify the student from future flexible tuition consideration.

CHANGES IN FAMILY ENROLLMENT STATUS

- **Determination of Awards:** Please note that all Flexible Tuition grants are calculated based on the comprehensive financial profile provided in a family's completed application. These awards are unique to the specific household dynamic and the number of students enrolled at the time of the agreement.
- **Changes in Enrollment Status:** Flexible Tuition contracts are contingent upon the enrollment of all students listed in the application. Should there be a change in your family's enrollment status — such as a sibling joining or leaving the school — the current contract amount will be considered void. In such instances, the file will be returned to the Flexible Tuition Committee for reconsideration to ensure the award remains equitable and reflective of the new household circumstances.

Possible Example: If a family applies with two students and both are granted Flexible Tuition awards, those amounts are calculated based on the total cost of two tuitions. If one of those students subsequently decides to enroll elsewhere, the remaining student's award is no longer valid as originally issued. The application would then be re-evaluated by the Committee to determine a new award amount based on the family's updated educational expenses.

DISQUALIFICATION

Families may be requested by the Flexible Tuition Committee to supply additional information and/or have personal meetings. Failure to comply with such requests or falsification of documents can lead to the adjustment of or disqualification of flexible tuition decisions.

NON-DISCLOSURE OF AWARDS

Discussing Flexible Tuition decisions with others is prohibited and can result in the revocation of flexible tuition.

- Each family's personal financial information is highly confidential, as is their Flexible Tuition determination. Vail Mountain School expects that families will keep their Flexible Tuition confidential.

APPEALS

- Vail Mountain School has a formal appeals process by which a family can supply new and compelling information that may result in a change to their Flexible Tuition determination. The form can be found HERE.
- There is no guarantee that completing the form will result in a change to a family's tuition obligation.

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