



## **VMS Orientation Trip Preview**

We are eager to bring back the cherished VMS tradition of beginning the school year with orientation trips. Each orientation trip focuses on building community and forging new friendships before the start of the academic year. In addition, these trips provide students an opportunity to enjoy and appreciate the natural environment in which we live. Through many team-building and creative challenges these trips set a positive, friendly, and supportive tone for the school year.

**Upper School** students will set off on ten separate camping adventures this year. Older students serve in leadership roles to welcome our younger and newer students into our school community. Students demonstrate inclusivity, caring, and kindness by reaching out to make new friends across grade levels. In the water, students will raft, canoe, duckie, kayak, stand up paddle, and fly fish through spectacular stretches of river in Colorado and Utah. On land, the mountain bikers will travel to the Fruita area where they will explore many single track trails. On foot, the backpacking trips will hike with llamas into the Gore Range mountains in our backyard and the rock climbers will ascend walls in the Camp Hale area with their basecamp at a 10th Mountain Division Hut. Considering the incredible impact of these trips on the student experience, and in order to set a positive tone at the start of the school year, we expect all students to attend orientation experiences. Often, if a student is injured, we can make some accommodations to ensure they can attend. The Upper School orientation trip is a two night and three day trip, August 23-25. Students' first day on campus at VMS will be on Thursday, August 26.

At the **Middle School** level, the 6th grade students will have two days of different orientation trip activities. The class will hike to Booth Falls behind VMS, climb at VMS, and challenge their teamwork skills on a Ropes Course with the Breckenridge Outdoor Education Center. The 7<sup>th</sup> grade class will go on a one night rock climbing and camping trip at Turtle Rock outside Buena Vista. The 8<sup>th</sup> grade overnight will be on the river with Timberline Tours guides. Rafts and duckies will be used to introduce the students to class II and III rapids on the Upper Colorado River. The Middle School will begin on

campus on Monday, August 23 and then their orientation days are Tuesday and Wednesday, August 24-25.

The **Lower School** will start with a half day orientation on Monday, August 23 from 8:15 am - 12:00 pm. The day is devoted to team building activities, orientation to a student's new classroom and Homebase teacher, setting clear expectations, and developing the sense of joy and belonging for the school year ahead.

**Trip placement, equipment lists, and waivers will be emailed to Middle and Upper School students on August 13. Please stay tuned to email for further information specific to your students assigned trip.**

**Upper School Important Dates:**

- **Friday, August 20, 2021 - 1-2 pm**
  - Pre-Orientation Trip meetings for students in grades 9-12 with their trip leaders. Students will gather in the theater before breaking into their groups.
- **Monday, August 23, 2021**
  - Upper School trips depart at various times and locations between 6:00 am - 8:30 am. Depending on where trips are headed students will meet from Edwards up to East Vail.
- **Wednesday, August 25, 2021**
  - Upper school trips return home at various times and locations between 2:30 pm - 6:00 pm.

**Middle School Important Dates:**

- **Monday, August 23, 2021**
  - Middle School students have an orientation day on campus 8:10-3:15 pm
- **Tuesday, August 24, 2021**
  - 6th grade day trip 8:10-3:15 pm
  - 7th grade overnight trip departs after Homebase
  - 8th grade overnight trip departs after Homebase
- **Wednesday, August 25, 2021**
  - 6th grade day trip 8:10-3:15 pm
  - 7th grade trip returns by 3:00 pm carpool
  - 8th grade trip returns by 3:00 pm carpool