MIDDLE SCHOOL INTRATERM

November 11-13, 2026

Introduction

Intraterm is a three day long program led by faculty and staff during which all 6th-8th grade students choose a course of study designed to enrich the traditional curriculum and the students' intellectual curiosity. All other classes are put on hold, giving students the opportunity to participate in intensive explorations of subjects beyond the regular curriculum and, perhaps, beyond their normal scope of interest. All courses are based on our experiential learning model and include a real world component. This might include conversations with experts, field trips to businesses, or problem solving a real world issue. Faculty often teach outside of their primary discipline and share personal passions or areas of expertise with students. We believe Intraterm adds a unique element to our school vision of providing a robust experiential education program for our students. Intraterm is an opportunity to try something new and delve deeply into one single subject or issue. This program is directly tied to the mission of Vail Mountain School and every student is required to participate.

Course Selection

Students will receive an email with a link to a Google Form where they will indicate their top five course choices.

FAQs

Q: How do you choose who gets to go on what course?
A: We ask students to choose their top 5 courses, and place them in one of their choices. A variety of factors come into play: we look to see if the student has participated in this type of experience in the past, we look at what year the student is, and we look at the dynamics of the group.

Q: What are the times for the local Intraterm courses?
A: Each Intraterm will be scheduled to run during the normal school day (8:15 a.m.- 3:15 p.m.) unless otherwise indicated by the course leader. There are some Intraterm courses that will have a travel day as part of the course, which may have an earlier/later arrival and departure time. A trip may have an overnight component and this will be noted in the description of the course.

Q: Are there fees associated with any of the courses?
A: All of the Intraterm experiences are based in Colorado and do not have additional fees associated.

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Outdoor Leadership



Location: VMS, Point Breeze, and Continental Divide Hut

Basic Itinerary:

Day 1:

- On campus learning First Aid skills, preparing for hut trip
- Food planning and shopping

Day 2:

- Gear check and preparations for hut trip
- Lunch on campus
- Hike to Point Breeze and Continental Divide Huts
- Evening learning and activities at hut

Day 3:

- Hut cleaning and reflection activities
- Meet with Lee Rimel for service project and leadership reflection
- Hike out and return to campus

Purpose of the course:

Gear up for an immersive experience designed to unlock your inner leader! In this action-packed course, you won't just participate in backcountry hut trips—you'll master the art of running them. Working side-by-side with seasoned instructors, you will dive deep into every element of trip planning and backcountry execution. Along the way, you'll earn skill badges in trail and group management, backcountry cooking, fire building, and snow and water management. Your ultimate goal? Earn your VMS Outdoor Leader certification and step up to mentor and guide future Middle School hut trips when you reach Upper School! *This course is tailored specifically for motivated 7th and 8th graders ready to step into leadership roles and refine their outdoor capabilities.*

Character: *Step outside comfort zones through reflection, connection, and applying new learning.* **|** ***Community:*** *Share hut chores, cook meals, enjoy downtime together, and explore ways to contribute as Outdoor Leaders.* **|** ***Knowledge:*** *Learn hut trip planning and implementation, along with basic first aid skills.* **|** ***Leadership:*** *Define Outdoor Leader badge requirements and practice outdoor leadership skills on a hut trip.* **|** ***Environment:*** *Connect with nature in varied weather conditions and reflect on outdoor experiences throughout the year.*






Chain Reactions: Girls on Bikes, Bike Art & Youth Stewardship

Location: Eagle County, Colorado

Basic Itinerary:

Day 1:

- Morning Gratitude Circle and Intention Setting
- Intro to Women in Adventure Sports and Biking
- Creative Time: Using Bikes for Beautiful Art
- Lunch at VMS
- At the Bike Shop: Workshop on Bike Maintenance

Day 2:

- Travel to Eagle, CO, for trail maintenance & stewardship with VVMTA
- Lunch at the Eagle Bike Park
- Outdoor Bike Maintenance

Day 3:

- Intro to Riding with Soul Dirt at the Eagle Bike Park
- Lunch in Eagle at Red Canyon Deli
- Afternoon Ride Around Eagle Trails with Soul Dirt

Purpose of the course:

Get ready for an action-packed Intraterm exploring the world of mountain biking, trail stewardship, and outdoor adventure, specifically for women! We'll dive into inspiring stories and films featuring trailblazing women in action sports, unleash our creativity with bike-part art projects, and learn some essentials of bicycle mechanics. Then, we'll head to Eagle to put our skills to the test. With the help of local bike coaches from the VVMTA Soul Dirt program, we'll learn techniques while riding at the bike park and soft-surface trails, as well as learn hands-on trail maintenance to become local trail stewards. Together we will learn firsthand how youth can lead the way in caring for our public lands while having a whole lot of fun together! *This course is designed for Middle School girls who are new or beginner mountain bikers.*

Character: *Building Confidence, Perseverance, & Responsibility |* ***Community:*** *Showcasing Civic Character through Stewardship |* ***Knowledge:*** *Understanding Mountain Bike Mechanics & Skills |* ***Leadership:*** *Breaking Barriers & Pursuing Passions Regardless of Gender Norms |* ***Environment:*** *Trail Maintenance & Etiquette*

Yoga & Meditation

Location: Vail Mountain School, Vail Valley and Denver



Basic Itinerary:

Day 1:

- Morning at VMS Introduction and Session with Yoga/ Meditation Master Elena Georgouses
- Lunch on Campus (VMS)
- Afternoon Salt Cave and Sound Bath experience in West Vail

Day 2:

- Travel to Denver/Pack a Lunch
- Tour of Buddhist Temple and Meditation Session at Kadampa Meditation Center
- Aerial Yoga Session at Air Aerial Fitness
- Overnight at a house in Denver: dinner, reflection and relaxation

Day 3:

- Early AM Sunrise Meditation Session
- Drive back to Vail
- Aerial Yoga Session at the Barn in Minturn
- Lunch on Campus (VMS)
- Afternoon reflection and wrap up with Yoga/Meditation Master Elena Georgouses

Purpose of the course:

Yoga, mindfulness, and meditation will be offered as a Middle School Interterm class with the purpose of providing students with lifelong skills to find calm and joy within themselves. We will be led by experts in meditation and yoga in both Vail and in Denver. Students will experience mindfulness and healing with a sound bath and a salt room in Vail, aerial yoga in Minturn and in Denver, and Vinyasa yoga and meditation. This trip will include an overnight in Denver on Thursday, November 12th, where students will visit a Buddhist temple and participate in community meditation. We will stay at an AirBnB where students will prepare food using Ayurvedic philosophies and participate in a sunrise meditation. Our goal is to provide students with a solid foundation to build confidence and calm within themselves.

Character: *Develop self-awareness within the broader community and use meditation to grow toward their best selves.* ***| Community:*** *Build connection through meditation, yoga, and practices that emphasize collective well-being.* ***| Knowledge:*** *Explore Eastern philosophies, meditation, and yoga while connecting personal well-being to the broader community.* ***| Leadership:*** *Recognize how personal growth and self-knowledge can inspire and guide others.* ***| Environment:*** *Use nature to ground and reconnect with themselves while cultivating responsibility and reciprocity with the natural world.*

Colorado Legends & Lore

Location: Vail Mountain School, local day trips



Basic Itinerary:

Day 1:

- Day trip to Leadville to explore the history of silver mining

Day 2:

- Day trip to a Breckenridge gold mine

Day 3:

- Day trip to Glenwood Springs following Doc Holliday

Purpose of the course:

Silver kings, gunslingers, lost fortunes, and ghosts that never checked out. In Colorado Lore and Legends, students leave the classroom behind and travel to three of Colorado's most storied mountain towns to uncover the true stories behind the legends.

In Leadville, once the richest silver camp in the world, students explore the National Mining Museum, walk the streets where Horace and Baby Doe Tabor made and lost a fortune, and hear tales from historic Evergreen Cemetery. In Breckenridge, they head 1,000 feet underground into a real gold mine, try their luck panning for gold, and meet characters like Barney Ford, who escaped slavery and became one of the town's leading businessmen. In Glenwood Springs, students follow Doc Holliday to the end of his trail, hike to his memorial in Linwood Cemetery, and learn why the historic Hotel Colorado is said to be one of the most haunted hotels in America.

Along the way, students will meet local guides and historians, ask hard questions about what really happened, and learn to sort fact from folklore. They will also see how mining shaped the land, the towns, and the people of the Colorado high country. Come ready to walk, dress for mountain weather, and keep an open mind about what might be waiting in the dark.

Character: *Respect historic sites, distinguish fact from legend, cite sources, and recognize overlooked stories, including those of child miners, Barney Ford, and the Ute people.* | ***Community:*** *Interview local historians, compare towns from booming Leadville to abandoned Gilman, and collaborate in travel teams with assigned roles.*| ***Knowledge:*** *Explain how mining shaped local economies, test a ghost story against historical evidence, and write an original legend grounded in local history.* ***Leadership****: Lead a short stop with researched information, prepare questions, write thank-you notes, and help the group stay on time and prepared.* | ***Environment:*** *Examine mining's effects on land and water, connect towns to their landscapes, and practice Leave No Trace at historic and outdoor sites.*

Wolves in Colorado: Weighing All Sides of a Wild Debate



Location: VMS, Day Trip to Divide, CO

Basic Itinerary:

Day 1:

- Students explore how bias shapes opinions, learn the story of wolves in Colorado, and begin looking at the issue through the eyes of different people involved.

Day 2:

- A full-day trip to visit wolves at a wildlife sanctuary in Divide, CO, and talk through what we see. We will leave early in the morning and return late in the afternoon or early in the evening.

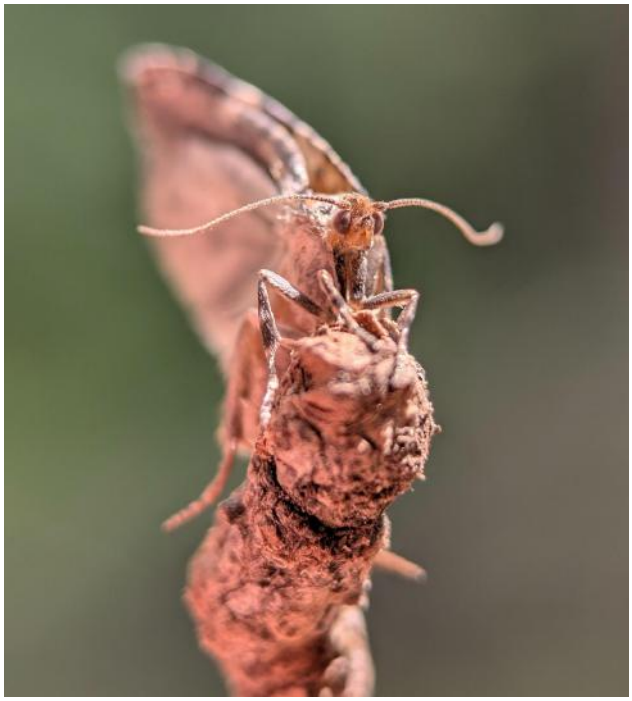
Day 3:

- Students hear from guests with different viewpoints, practice presenting and defending perspectives in a mock hearing, and finish by reflecting on what they think and why.

Purpose of the course: This three-day course uses Colorado's wolf reintroduction as a live case study for learning how to think through controversial issues. Students will hear the perspectives of ranchers, wildlife biologists, environmental advocates, state agencies, and rural communities to understand why reasonable people disagree. By the end, students will be able to recognize their own biases, weigh competing evidence, and explain an informed stance of their own, whatever that stance is.

Character: *Practicing honesty and humility about their own assumptions, and respect for people who disagree.* | ***Community:*** *Seeing how groups with conflicting interests can still talk productively, through structured discussion and a mock hearing.* | ***Knowledge:*** *Learning wolf ecology, Prop 114 history, and ranching realities, plus how to weigh multiple sources.* | ***Environment:*** *Studying a real Colorado land-use and biodiversity issue.* | ***Leadership:*** *Defending a considered stance and leading small-group discussion.*

Photography in Nature



Location: VMS, Vail, and a hiking trail (TBD - dependent on weather and snow)

Basic Itinerary:

Day 1:

- **Classroom Session:** Photography Basics and Using a Camera
- **Classroom Session:** Composition and Art in Photography
- Local walk, take photos, practice using the camera

Day 2:

- Travel to a nearby hiking destination (TBD - dependent on weather and snow)
- Take photos in nature!

Day 3:

- **Classroom session:** Basics of Editing Photos
- Photo review, selection, and editing
- Present portfolio to peers

Purpose of the Course:

The purpose of this course is to give students new skills related to photography and allows them to explore the artistic nature of photography. Students will produce a portfolio that attempts to tell a story or highlight features of their local natural environment.

Character: *Explore photography as a tool for art, documentation, self-expression, and appreciating the natural world.* ***| Community:*** *Photograph and edit images together to gain new perspectives on local communities.* ***| Knowledge:*** *Learn photography techniques, including ISO, focus, exposure, shutter speed, and composition.* ***| Leadership:*** *Create self-directed portfolios, collaborating and sharing leadership when working in groups.* ***| Environment:*** *Explore their surroundings and use photography to tell a story about the local environment.*

Adventure Mindset



Location: Vail, Eagle, Colorado Springs

Basic Itinerary:

Day 1:

- Classroom session: What is sport psychology? What does having an "Adventure Mindset" mean?
- Travel to Eagle Climbing Gym; "*Climbing Mindset Challenge*" with climbing instructors

Day 2:

- Travel to Colorado Springs
- Visit the US Olympic and Paralympic Museum and Training Center,"*Olympic Mindset Challenge*" with interactive simulations
- Bowling, games, and community time at Main Event, Colorado Springs
- Overnight at Holiday Inn Express, Colorado Springs

Day 3:

- "*Elevation Mindset Challenge*", Manitou Incline
- Travel back to VMS, arrive by dismissal time

Purpose of the course:

This course will act as an introduction to sport & performance psychology for middle schoolers. Students will learn mental skills which they can use to regulate their emotions, as well as leadership skills which they can use to become better teammates, friends, and leaders. We will be visiting several sites during this course, including the Eagle Climbing Gym, the US Olympic and Paralympic Museum in Colorado Springs, and the Manitou Incline.

Character: *Step outside comfort zones physically and socially through reflection, connection, and applying new learning.* | ***Community:*** *Set goals, support peers through mindset challenges, and build connections through shared activities.* | ***Knowledge:*** *Explore how athletes prepare for intense training and competition and apply mindset strategies to personal experiences.* | ***Leadership:*** *Lead mindset discussions and challenges while practicing ways to support others.* | ***Environment:*** *Connect with nature in varied settings and explore how outdoor challenges, such as elevation gain, influence mindset and goal setting.*

Voices for the Voiceless: Horse Service Course

Location: Mountain Valley Horse Rescue and Summit County Animal Shelter



Basic Itinerary:

Day 1:

- Learning about Mountain Valley Horse Rescue
- Lunch on site
- Tour of Mountain Valley Horse Rescue and meet some horses

Day 2:

- Service project with Mountain Valley Horse Rescue
- Lunch on site
- Deeper learning about equine nutrition, veterinary care, and exercise/enrichment, including leading and grooming MVHR horses



Day 3:

- Demonstration from local farrier on hoof care
- Lunch at VMS
- Tour of Summit County Animal shelter and service project
- Return to VMS and reflection activity

Purpose of the course:

The purpose of this course is to equip students with the knowledge and skills to serve as stewards and advocates for the animal members of our community. Students will learn how to care for animals in need and the mission and work of rescues and animal shelters in our valley. Through hands-on learning and service, students will develop knowledge and skills while growing as leaders for animals and one another. Students will engage in discussions about the broader challenges of animal care, why rescues and shelters are an important part of our community, and how we can support their mission through service, leadership, education, and empathy. This course seeks to cultivate compassionate, responsible, and engaged students who understand the importance of caring for vulnerable animals and contributing positively to our community.

Character: *Understand the needs of vulnerable animals and the responsibility to care for, advocate for, and support them.* ***| Community:*** *Explore how animal welfare organizations collaborate to provide education, service, and support.* ***| Knowledge:*** *Learn from industry professionals about the daily operations of animal shelters and the community members who sustain them.* ***| Leadership:*** *Build animal welfare awareness and understand the role shelters play in supporting animals and the broader community.* ***| Environment:*** *Partner with outdoor-focused rescues to understand the year-round preparation and resources needed to care for animals.*

Science of Skydiving

Location: VMS and iFly in Denver



Basic Itinerary:

Day 1:

- We will be in the classroom where we will be observing demonstrations and participating in activities to increase our awareness of our atmosphere and its properties.

Day 2:

- We will travel to iFly in Denver, meet with their STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) instructor to prepare and guide us in our flight. There is a possibility of an early departure or late return in order to accommodate our activities at iFly in Denver.

Day 3:

- Day three we will work on projects related to air, atmosphere and flight in the lab at VMS. A video demonstration will be created to show at a future town meeting.

Purpose of the course:

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to fall out of a plane? In this course you will have a similar experience and investigate it from a science perspective. We will explore the properties of fluids, surface area and the forces involved in a skydive. We will be doing mathematical calculations and graphing in making predictions for our flight.

Character: *Step outside comfort zones physically and socially through reflection, connection, and applying new learning .* ***| Community:*** *Set goals, support peers through challenges, and build connections through shared experiences.* ***| Knowledge:*** *Explore and understand the science, physics, and mathematics behind skydiving.* ***| Leadership:*** *Lead small group discussions and activities with peers.* ***| Environment:*** *Connect experiences and knowledge with skydiving and the atmosphere.*