ACADEMIC PROFILE 2026-2027

MAINE COAST SEMESTER at CHEWONKI

Life-Changing Learning in Nature

485 Chewonki Neck Road
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mainecoastsemester.org

Administration

Nancy Kennedy
President
Head of School

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Lynne Breen
Admissions, Enrollment and Financial Aid

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Registrar

Our Mission

Chewonki inspires transformative growth, teaches appreciation and stewardship of the natural world, and challenges people to build thriving, sustainable communities throughout their lives.

Accreditation

Maine Coast Semester at Chewonki is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges and is approved by the State of Maine Department of Education and is an associate member of The Association of Boarding Schools.

National Association of Independent Schools

CEEB Code 201-122

Chewonki Foundation is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

School Description

Located on a 400-acre saltwater peninsula, Maine Coast Semester at Chewonki is an academically rigorous, place-based school community, which is made available to a select number of 11th grade students for one semester (fall or spring). Recognized as a highly competitive program, Maine Coast Semester provides intellectually curious juniors and seniors with an engaging, interdisciplinary curriculum delivered through student-centered instruction, as well as field studies and residential learning experiences, which foster creative thinking and independent problem-solving. The curriculum at Maine Coast Semester is carefully aligned with established college preparatory coursework and serves to complement the program of study at a wide variety of sending schools. In addition to their academic studies, students participate weekly in a variety of work programs that introduce the principles of environmental stewardship and community building.

Our Vision

We choose to approach rigorous academics, physical work, and everyday living with responsibility and joy. Whether engaging in a spirited classroom discussion, harvesting tomatoes for our table, or planning Saturday night's activities, we live each day deliberately with an eye toward connecting the individual to a larger community. Our students leave Maine Coast Semester with strengthened ownership for their education, an awareness of their place in nature, and an understanding that they can make a positive difference in their world.

Goals for Graduates

Engaged Learning: Students learn in a holistic way and address complex issues with humility, critical thinking, and creativity.

Community Involvement: As responsible community members, students intentionally engage with a breadth of perspectives to promote social and environmental justice within and across communities.

Effective Communication: Students listen with openness and discernment and communicate ideas with clarity, creativity, and an awareness of impact.

Sense of Place: Students build an understanding of their reciprocal relationship with the natural world through focused observation and reflection.

Sense of Self: Students explore and affirm their identities, strengths, and areas for growth, and understand how these impact the various communities of which they are a part.

Sending Schools

More than 2,600 students from over 400 sending schools have attended Maine Coast Semester. In a typical semester, students come from 30+ high schools and 12+ states. Forty percent of students come from public schools and sixty percent come from private schools. Ten percent come from Maine. Some of our most common sending schools include:

West

Berkeley High School (CA)
Boulder High School (CO)
Crossroads School for Arts & Sciences (CA)
Crystal Springs Uplands School (CA)
Harvard-Westlake School (CA)
Lakeside School (WA)
Menlo School (CA)
Santa Fe Preparatory School (NM)
St. Margaret's Episcopal School (CA)
St. Paul Academy & Summit School (MN)
The Thacher School (CA)
Greenhill School (TX)
St. John's School (TX)
YES Prep Public Schools (TX)

East

Cambridge Rindge and Latin School (MA)
Charlotte Country Day School (NC)
The Dalton School (NY)
Ethical Culture Fieldston School (NY)
Francis W. Parker School (IL)
Greensboro Day School (NC)
The Lovett School (GA)
Milton Academy (MA)
The Nightingale-Bamford School (NY)
Noble and Greenough School (MA)
Princeton Day School (NJ)
Shady Side Academy (PA)
Sidwell Friends School (DC)
Waynflete School (ME)
Webb School of Knoxville (TN)
The Westminster Schools (GA)

Faculty

The Maine Coast Semester faculty includes eleven core academic teachers, four teaching fellows, three adjunct teachers, and four farm staff/educators.

School Calendar and Classroom Time

The fall semester is 14 weeks and the spring semester is 15 weeks in length. All academic classes meet for the equivalent of 3.5 hours per week except science, which meets for approximately 6-7 hours per week, and includes a weekly 4-hour field lab. Academic classes are held Monday through Friday. Maine Coast Semester embraces a phone-free, tech-light approach so students stay present, forge deeper connections, and nurture a strong, sustaining community.

Grading

Maine Coast Semester uses letter grades with the following equivalencies:
A (93-100), A- (90-92), B+ (87-89), B (83-86), B- (80-82), etc. F < 60 (Failing); P (Pass), NP (No Pass), PH (Pass with Honors)

Curriculum

Courses at Maine Coast Semester are taught at the honors and AP© levels. Most students take honors and AP-level courses at their sending schools, and all students are academically challenged while attending. The Maine Coast Semester registrar works closely with sending schools to ensure seamless credit transfer, with many Maine Coast Semester courses accepted as AP credits.

Students take 5 academic courses including Science, English, and 3 additional classes from the list of courses below:

Science	Natural History and Ecology of the Maine Coast*
English	Literature and the Land*
History	U.S. History AP® U.S. History
Mathematics	Precalculus Intro to Calculus AP® Calculus AB AP® Calculus BC
World Languages	French: Intermediate, Advanced Spanish: Intermediate, Advanced
Studio Arts	Art and the Natural World
Co-Curricular	Environmental Issues
Physical Education	Backcountry Expeditions and Outdoor Education*

* Required course

Community Service & Work Program

All students take part in daily chores and seasonal tasks to help maintain our farm, kitchen, and campus. Students earn a course credit and 40 hours of community service upon graduation.

Standardized Testing

PSAT© tests are administered in the fall semester to all students. In the spring, we coordinate registration and provide transportation for students to take the ACT© or SAT© at regional testing centers. AP examinations are administered during the spring semester for AP courses in which students are currently enrolled at Maine Coast Semester. Students are encouraged to speak with a counselor at their sending school before arriving.

Financial Aid

Need-based financial aid provides students with demonstrated need an opportunity for a high-quality academic experience that might otherwise be unavailable to them. We are eager to share in the cost of this education to the best of our ability.

We ask that all families contribute toward their student's tuition, as we believe shared investment enhances the experience. Financial aid awards range from $500 to $30,000+, with over 40% of our students receiving some form of aid. We work with families to find the best possible solution to meet their needs.

College Matriculation

Since our founding in 1988, Maine Coast Semester graduates have gone on to attend many of the nation's most competitive colleges and universities. To date, the total number of Maine Coast Semester graduates who have enrolled at the following:

60+
Bates College
Bowdoin College
Brown University
Colby College
Colorado College
Cornell University
Middlebury College
Oberlin College
University of Vermont
Wesleyan University

30-59
Carleton College
College of the Atlantic
Columbia University
Dartmouth College
Hampshire College
Harvard University
Kenyon College
St. Lawrence University
Stanford University
Tufts University
Whitman College
Williams College
Yale University

20-29
Bard College
Connecticut College
Haverford College
Lewis and Clark College
New York University
Northwestern University
Princeton University
Skidmore College
Smith College
University of Maine, Orono
University of Michigan
University of Pennsylvania
Vassar College

10-19
Amherst College
Barnard College
Bennington College
Boston University
Bucknell University
Colgate University
Davidson College
Duke University
Emory University
Georgetown University
Hamilton College
Johns Hopkins University
Macalester College
McGill University - Canada
Pitzer College
Pomona College
Reed College
Swarthmore College
Tulane University
University of California, Los Angeles
University of Chicago
University of Colorado Boulder
University of New Hampshire
University of Virginia
Vanderbilt University
Warren Wilson College
Wellesley College