Summit Achievement

Where Hope and Healing Meet

Parent Handbook

Mission Statement

To foster lasting change for students and families through personalized clinical support, accredited academics, and adventure therapy in a model designed to build resilience, restore connection, and prepare students and families for life beyond treatment

Program Overview

Summit Achievement helps adolescents facing anxiety, depression, and neurodivergence through a unique blend of clinical support, academics, and adventure, offering hope when nothing else has worked. Summit Achievement is a fully licensed, residential treatment program located in the White Mountains region of the state of Maine. Summit's innovative program provides short-term treatment options for adolescents of all genders ages 13 – 19.

Summit Achievement does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, handicap or disability in the administration of its therapeutic or educational programs, admissions policies, employment practices, or financial procedures.

Summit Achievement offers rolling admissions, year-round, as space permits pending review of appropriateness for the program and the current milieu.

One Program, Two Phases: Venture and Traverse

Venture is Summit's entry phase, where students start the work of understanding themselves, building new skills, and creating the foundation for lasting change. Over an average of 6-10 weeks, students progress through six stages, each focused on a different aspect of personal growth.
Through a weekly rhythm of personalized clinical support, accredited academics, and adventure therapy, students move from acceptance to transition, gaining insight and confidence along the way.

Progress through Venture isn't about checking boxes. It's about genuine growth, demonstrated through both internal shifts and concrete actions. Students advance when they're ready, and each stage builds on the last.

Traverse is Summit's transitional phase, where students apply what they've learned, practice skills and prepare for independence.. It's a flexible-length therapeutic boarding school that combines personalized clinical support, accredited academics, and a comprehensive residential life curriculum. Designed for students who are ready to step down from a higher level of care, Traverse offers the structure and support needed to practice new skills in a less restrictive setting while preparing for home, traditional boarding school, or another environment.

Over a period of two to six months, students move through two stages — Action and Maintenance — practicing autonomy, navigating setbacks, and building the confidence they need to sustain their growth beyond treatment.

Program Goals

Summit Achievement's overriding goal is to facilitate cognitive, emotional and physical growth in each student by:

- *Building self-confidence and discipline*
- *Fostering emotional growth and maturity*
- *Eliminating self-destructive and self-defeating behaviors*
- *Improving communication*
- *Recognizing cause and effect of behavior*
- *Enabling academic achievement*

Distinguishing Program Features

Program Design

- Innovative therapeutic program that combines personalized clinical support, accredited academics, and adventure therapy
- Flexible length of stay (6-10 weeks average in Venture and 2-4 months average in Traverse) is based on the student's progress.
- Stages provides students and parents with a visible measure of their progress along with a framework for goals.
- Campus provides a beautiful setting for residential services.
- Residential component allows students to practice skills learned in a more traditional environment, manage transitions, and assists in preparing to return home or transition to a boarding school setting.
- Program is fully licensed by the State of Maine as a Residential Treatment Center with Mental Health and Substance Abuse Certification as well as an Intensive Outpatient and Partial Hospitalization licences.

Therapeutic Services and Program Planning

- Summit Achievement utilizes an ally-based counseling approach that focuses on the importance of establishing a connection with each student; staff approach students in a respectful and affirming manner, offering caring support for their efforts.
- Students engage in individual and group therapy each week with their therapist. In addition, students participate in daily group processing sessions where they can discuss their experiences, thoughts and feelings while receiving staff and peer feedback and support.
- Weekly family therapy sessions take place with student, parents and therapist via video conference, by telephone or in person.
- Therapist coordinates each student's treatment program including provision of discharge recommendations.
- Documented treatment plan and discharge summary are provided to parents.
- Weekly progress reports provided by therapists via telephone to parents and referring professional.
- Parents participate in a minimum of 6 parent coaching sessions with our Director of Parent Services and complete our parent curriculum.

Academic Services

- Summit uses a blended learning approach that utilizes Summit's experienced teachers facilitating student-centered and NEASC (New England Association of Schools and Colleges) accredited web-based curriculum.
- Academic Center provides students with a structured academic setting and assists in the transition to traditional public or private school settings following discharge.
- We have available: text-to-speech and speech-to-text software, kinesthetic tools to enable attention and focus, and noise-cancelling headphones to limit distractions.
- Following program completion, parents are provided with an academic summary. If students complete their courses, they earn 0.5 credits per course which can be sent as a transcript.

Support Services

- Medical services are coordinated and managed by the program nurse. The program nurse is on campus two days per week to provide initial health assessments and routine medical care as required. The program's Medical Director (NP) is on campus one day per week to oversee medication management and any larger health concerns. . Our Medical Director is also on-call 24 hours-a-day to respond to medical emergencies or advise staff in the handling of medical situations.
- Complete food service is provided on campus, serving nutritious, wholesome meals to students and staff, focusing on the latest research between food and mental health. Absent are fried foods, sugar-laden sweets, red meat, pork and junk food.
- Neuropsychological and educational testing can be offered at an additional cost. Summit has relationships with several testers that can either come to campus or test virtually, able to complete testing and their write-up within a few weeks.
- We can provide transportation to and from the airport or bus station for an additional cost. We also will provide transportation for any emergency medical issues. We cannot always accommodate transportation for routine medical appointments.

Daily Routine and Weekly Schedule

Students attend school on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. On Thursday each week students depart for a 4 day/3night expedition returning on Sunday afternoon.

Monday-Wednesday Campus Schedule

6-6:30am: wake up

6:30-7am: Morning exercise or showers

7-7:30am: Cabin Chores and getting ready for the day (making bed, etc.)

7:30-8am: Breakfast

8-8:30am: Community chores

8:30-noon: Academic classes (with students being pulled for individual and family therapy)

12-12:30pm: Lunch

12:30-1pm: Community chores

1-3:30pm: Academic classes (with students being pulled for individual and family therapy)

3:30-5pm: Gear or food pack out in preparation for expedition

5-6pm: free time

6-6:30pm: dinner

6:30-7pm: Community chores:

7-8pm: Study Hall

8-10pm: Group therapy, free time, check-in with guides

10pm: lights out.

*Stage Movement Ceremony is on Tuesday from 11:30-noon

Expeditions: Venture Phase

Thursday morning students depart for expeditions after breakfast and chores. Expeditions may include hiking, backpacking, camping, canoeing, climbing and/or rappelling. Expeditions itineraries are finalized on Wednesday of each week to allow time to account for weather and group functioning.

*On Sunday the groups return from their expeditions in time for showers, dinner and study hall.

Professional and Direct Care Staff

An extraordinarily talented and experienced group of direct-care staff, therapists, teachers, medical director, nurse and service providers work alongside the above administrative team in shaping and delivering the Summit program.

Our clinicians hold a minimum of a master's degree in Counseling, Social Work or a related field, are licensed to in the state of Maine, and have expertise in depression, anxiety, and ADHD. Our clinicians are skilled at working with clients with learning challenges, substance use, social skills deficits, autism spectrum disorders, parent-child conflict and trauma. Our clinicians have training in CBT, DBT, EMDR, motivational interviewing, Family Systems, Brainspotting, ERP, art therapy, and other treatment modalities.

Academic staff have a degree in Education and/or extensive teaching experience, along with a wealth of experience working with students from a variety of backgrounds. Focused on viewing students from a strengths-based perspective, our teaching staff is skilled in working with students who have learning disabilities, ADHD, or different learning styles. Our Academic Director has a master's in education and a special education endorsement from the State of Maine.

The guides (direct care staff) all have a minimum of a bachelor's degree or extensive experience in a field related to the program. The guides/direct care staff are required to hold an approved wilderness first aid/medical certification.

Location and Facilities

Location and Setting

The campus is located along the western border of Maine adjacent to the spectacular White Mountain National Forest. The scenic beauty of the rushing streams, wide-open fields and secluded woodlands creates an ideal setting for this innovative program.

Facilities

The Cold River Lodge is the hub of the Summit Achievement campus. Built in 1981 and completely remodeled in 1996, the 5,500 square foot lodge contains a commercial kitchen, community dining room, meeting rooms and living room. The second floor of the Lodge provides space for administrative offices and a personal space for Guides. The basement provides a place for the storage of expedition gear and dry food along with a laundry room. This classic New England dwelling provides a comfortable setting for both staff and students. The Academic Building contains four classrooms and is the site of all academic instruction, therapist offices and medical offices.

A short walk from the Lodge are several modern cabins utilized as dormitories. Each cabin houses up to eight students, with two students sharing each of four bedrooms. A common area in each cabin serves as a gathering place where students may socialize, play games, learn or practice skills, etc. Bunks in each common area also provide a place for staff members to sleep and supervise the cabin at night. Each cabin is equipped with an alarm system which is turned on at bedtime. In addition, each cabin has a video camera that monitors the common areas.

Admissions Process

Summit Achievement accepts students year round on a rolling admissions basis with enrollments typically scheduled for Monday or Tuesday each week. The admissions process is comprehensive, consisting of several steps designed to ensure that the program can adequately meet the applicant's needs.

Who We Serve:

Summit Appropriate Student: Summit Achievement serves students of all genders ages 13 to 19 who are experiencing anxiety, depression, and neurodivergence as well as difficulty within their family, school and/or personal lives. The typical student may exhibit any number of the following characteristics:

SUMMIT APPROPRIATE STUDENTS:

- Low self-esteem
- Depression
- Anxiety
- ADHD
- Autism Spectrum Disorder, level 1
- Non-verbal learning disorder
- Academic underachievement/failure
- School refusal/truancy
- Poor decision making and/or impulsive
- Poor social skills
- Executive functioning issues
- Alcohol or marijuana use and/or abuse
- Computer/social media misuse/abuse
- Defiant toward authority
- Refuses or avoids responsibility for behavior
- Adoption and/or Identity issues
- Difficulty grieving the loss of a close friend or family member

CAUTIOUSLY CONSIDERED:

- Significant history of self-harm

· Significant history of suicidal ideation
· Significant history of eating disorder
· FSIQ below 90
· Physical aggression only in the home
· Significant learning issues
· Some aggressive behavior, but not indicative of a long-standing pattern
· Prodromal psychiatric disorders

Student Profiles Not Suitable for Admissions

The clinical team understands that there are teens whose problems require forms of treatment different than what is provided by Summit Achievement, either due to the nature or severity of the students' problems, their resistance to seeking help with those problems, or because they present a danger to themselves or others. For that reason Summit Achievement, has determined that students with a history of any of the following conditions or disorders are not appropriate for enrollment:

EXCLUSIONARY CRITERIA:

· Actively suicidal
· Significant history of assaultive conduct or bullying behavior
· Substance dependence with the likelihood for development of acute withdrawal symptoms
· Sexual predatory behavior or victimization of others
· Active psychotic disorders to include schizophrenia, current severe depression or mania
· Dissociative disorder or panic disorder, poorly controlled
· Eating disorders not in remission
· Medical conditions or disorders which are difficult to manage in the field
· Physical conditions that substantially restrict program participation
· Refusal to enroll or comply with programming
· Student is not a good fit for Summit's current population (determined by Clinical Team)

Program Tuition

Information regarding the tuition is available from the Admissions Department. The initial tuition payment for the first 14 days is due at the time of enrollment. Summit bills every 14 days. All outstanding tuition is due at the time of the student's discharge. There is also a one-time enrollment fee.

NOTE: If 14 days of payment upfront is a barrier for your family, please speak with our Admissions Director about it.

Ancillary Fees

Parents or financial sponsors are responsible for the following ancillary fees in addition to the program tuition:

- Medical expenses — The expense of all medical care other than the admission physical examination and services provided by the program nurse and doctor is billed to the parents' or financial sponsor's insurance company. These expenses may include emergency medical care, emergency dental care, or prescription medications. Any charges not covered by health insurance are the responsibility of the parents or financial sponsor.
- Transportation — Transportation services provided by the program
- Additional Academic Courses: Summit provides up to $650 for academic curriculum. If curriculum costs exceed $650, parents will be billed the remaining amount.

- Lost or destroyed gear: Students are issued top of the line expedition gear as part of the enrollment fee. Families will be billed for any lost or damaged gear that needs to be replaced during the course of treatment. Also, families will be billed for any destruction of Summit or staff property caused by their child.

Methods of Payment

Accepted forms of payment include cashier checks, personal checks, bank draft (wire transfer), and ACH. Summit Achievement also works with financial institutions that provide educational or healthcare loans. Summit Achievement is also partnered with a grant fund program called the Sky's the Limit Fund, which can provide partial grants to qualified families. Additional information regarding loans and grants is available from the Admissions Department or by contacting the financial institution.

Prescribed Medications

Prescribed medication is administered daily by direct care staff who have completed our state approved medication curriculum. All medication is overseen by our program nurse and Medical Director. Medications can be reviewed at the request of the student, family, therapist, or will be reviewed automatically every four weeks. All medication is ordered through our pharmacy. Families are responsible for any medication not covered by their insurance.

Liability for Personal Property

Summit Achievement cannot accept liability for the belongings students bring to the program. To avoid loss or damage, students should not bring items of value to the program. Items of value include, but are not limited to, money, jewelry, expensive articles of clothing, electronic devices, expensive camera equipment, personal sporting equipment or other personal items. We recommend that these items be left at home. If they are brought to the program, they may be sent home or be placed in safe storage provided on campus. If, for any reason, the items remain at the facility and are not placed in safe storage, Summit will not be responsible for the loss, damage or destruction of the property.

Parent Coaching & Parallel Process Curriculum

Each family receives six sessions of parent coaching with our Director of Parent Support. These sessions help parents and caregivers reflect on parenting patterns, develop new skills, and plan for visits and their child's transition home. Coaching is designed to support the parents' growth alongside their child's.

In Traverse, parent coaching continues to help with visit and discharge planning and to discuss strategies as they come up in real time during family visits.

Upon admission, families receive a digital copy of the Summit Achievement Parallel Process Curriculum and the book *The Parallel Process* by Krissy Pozatek, MSW. Just as students move through six stages in Venture, parents and guardians move through their own six stages of growth.

This curriculum was developed by renowned parent coach Krissy Pozatek, and our clinical team has been trained to integrate these concepts throughout the program.

Campus Visits

Venture:
Parents are strongly encouraged to visit campus three times during the Venture program: on enrollment

day, approximately midway through for an overnight visit, and on discharge day. During most visits, their child's therapist facilitates a face-to-face family therapy session. These in-person connections are essential milestones in the work of healing and reconnection.

Traverse:
In Traverse, families have at least one, and often more, week-long home visits to practice skills in real-time and then be able to debrief with their therapist and parent coach for continued learning and growth as a family system.

Making Travel Arrangements for visitation and/or Graduation

Airline Reservations

The nearest commercial airport to Summit Achievement is in Portland, Maine, approximately 65 from the program. It is serviced by most major airlines. Some parents may prefer to fly into Boston, MA (approximately 160 miles) or Manchester, NH (approximately 120 miles).

Lodging

Comfortable accommodations can be found in either North Conway, New Hampshire (approximately 40 minutes drive from Summit Achievement) or in Fryeburg, Maine (about 20 minutes from the campus).

Communication

Summit Achievement believes strongly in the power of connection and the importance of building rapport within our therapeutic community. This has required us to look at our use of email and electronic communication within our residential setting and the type of connection we are trying to create. To that end, we ask that our clinicians spend as much time as possible engaged in face-to-face therapy with clients and participating in our milieu. This means that therapists are asked to only respond to emails at certain times during the day, and to use the weekly family sessions to provide up to date content and answers to questions. We also want our clinicians to practice what we teach and spend time outdoors taking care of themselves. To that end, we ask clinicians to try to avoid emails after hours or on weekends whenever possible.

Please know that if you email your clinician, you may not receive a response for up to 24 hours (during the week), and likely not until Monday if over the weekend. It is possible their response may simply be that they will address your question/concern in your weekly call.

If there is an emergency or you feel you need a more immediate answer, you can always reach our Director on Duty by calling Summit at 207-697-2020 and following the prompt for an after-hours-emergency. If it is during business hours you can contact our Clinical Director and CEO, Nichol Ernst, at extension 20 or our Executive Director, Anson McNulty, at extension 16.

Please know that we operate on the premise of "no news is good news". This means that if your child is doing something way outside of normal programming expectations we will contact you as soon as possible. This would include:

- A serious physical injury or sickness
- Suicidal ideation that requires hospitalization
- Aggressive or violent behavior
- An extended shut down or refusal to participate
- Walking away from the program

We also want to take this opportunity to remind you of all the services you will be receiving, and contact you will have with your child:

- A weekly family session with your child's clinician for one hour
- Six sessions of parent coaching with our Director of Parent Support
- An update from the academic department every two- three weeks on how your child is doing academically.
- We offer a monthly parent webinar with our Director of Parent Support on the third Wednesday evening of each month at 7pm.
- We have two parent-led peer-to-peer support groups run by alumni parents that takes place on the second Wednesday of each month and third Thursday at 7pm. *Subject to change, please stay subscribed to the Parent Newsletter for all updates
- You also will see your child on an overnight visit approximately halfway through Venture, and approximately every four weeks in Traverse.
- If your child is in Traverse, they have the ability to call you during their free time for up to 30 minutes per week.
- You can send mail to your child anytime and your child can send mail to you anytime.

You and other immediate family members can email your child anytime at students@summitachievement.com and we will print it out and give them the email during afternoon/evening free time.

Contact Information

The entire Summit community works diligently to provide an emotionally safe environment for our students. The following list of contacts has been developed to help you contact staff directly, as needed.

Main number: (207) 697-2020

Anson McNulty, Executive Director	ext. 16 anson@summitachievement.com
Nichol Ernst, Clinical Director, CEO	ext. 20 nichol@summitachievement.com
Shannon Palentchar, Admissions Director	ext. 35 shannon@summitachievement.com
Doug Dobkowski, Academic Director	ext. 34 doug@summitachievement.com
Jenn Donaldson, Nurse	ext. 17 medical@summitachievement.com
Monique Britt, Business Manager	ext. 10 annie@summitachievement.com
Nick Faraldi, Director of Parent Support	207-256-0105 nick@summitachievement.com
Barb Lang, Marketing Director	917-929-0939 barb@summitachievement.com

Mail:

Summit Achievement
69 Deer Hill Road
Stow, ME 04037

If shipping packages via UPS or FedEx, please be aware that Stow shares the same zip code as Fryeburg, ME 04037. Please note that no outside food is allowed and you should check with your child's therapist on what is appropriate to send.

E-mail:

Only family members are preferred to send e-mails to students. Please put your child's name in the subject line and send it to students@summitachievement.com

*Emails are printed out and dispersed mid-late afternoon on the days students are on campus.

Website:

www.summitachievement.com

We encourage you to follow us on social media.

https://www.facebook.com/SummitAchievement/

https://www.instagram.com/summitachievement/