

OJAI VALLEY SCHOOL

VIEWBOOK
UPPER CAMPUS





EXPERIENCE YOUR EDUCATION

On a hilltop overlooking the Ojai Valley is a special place where outgoing, intellectually curious students come to live and learn. It is a place where students make lifelong friends in a warm family environment, a place where students learn inside and outside the classroom, whether experimenting in the chemistry lab or testing their confidence on the climbing wall. It is a place where students develop the character and critical thinking to excel in college and beyond.

As a student at Ojai Valley School, you will meet experienced teachers with a deep understanding of the subjects they teach and a passion to share their knowledge with students who care about learning. Our academic program offers an array of college preparatory and Advanced Placement courses, as well as unique interdisciplinary and hands-on classes such as Equine Science, Journalism, Robotics, and Environmental Justice. Beyond academics, students have the opportunity to participate in athletics, equestrian, clubs, community service activities, outdoor education, adventure sports, and much more.

Our graduates attend some of the finest colleges and universities in the country. But they also leave with qualities that don't show up on a high school transcript: a strong work ethic, a sense of integrity and responsibility, an appreciation of cultural diversity, and a respect for the natural world.

“

I'm off to Stanford to study earth systems, Spanish, and film. All things that I developed a passion for at OVS.”

Ben Manning (L20, U24)
Stanford University





Multiple cultures. One community.

W E L C O M E TO O V S

Ojai Valley School offers a distinctive place for learning — a coeducational, boarding and day school serving students from preschool through high school — on two campuses in the beautiful Ojai Valley. It is a home-away-from-home for students from around the world, and a tight-knit community as evidenced by the warm greetings teachers and students exchange and the life-long friendships they form.

Academically, the curriculum provides an intellectually challenging experience for students as they prepare for college and beyond. They learn to participate, to be respectful, to work both collaboratively and independently, to love challenges, to reach beyond limits, to strive for excellence, to try again if they fail and, ultimately, to value themselves. They graduate with character and a sense of responsibility, but even more so, with a feeling of confidence that they can make a positive difference in a rapidly changing world.

There have been many changes to our high school in recent years, including new classrooms and science labs, an expanded curriculum, renovations to our dormitories, and construction of a spacious new dining hall and library complex, the Littlefield Student Commons. But the sense of family that pervades our Upper Campus remains unchanged, as does our belief that every student has potential — and in our environment that potential can be realized.

We hope that after reading this viewbook you will want to visit and see for yourself the energy, spirit and love of learning that thrives at Ojai Valley School.



Hiking in Sespe Wilderness, circa 1960

HISTORY AND TRADITION

In the early part of the 20th century, a distinguished Eastern couple settled in the beautiful Ojai Valley and opened a small private school. Little did they know it would be flourishing more than 110 years later.

Edward Yeomans, a Chicagoan educated at Phillips Academy and Princeton University, had written a series of articles in the *Atlantic Monthly* on the need for educational reform. The articles caught the eye of a wealthy businessman, Frank Frost, who persuaded Yeomans to move to Ojai and create a school that would embody his very modern ideas. At the core of Yeomans' beliefs was the concept that children learn best through experience. Yeomans considered his own education to have been dull and stifling, and wanted to establish a school that would emphasize experiential learning and a love for the outdoors. He envisioned a place where music, art and woodshop would be taught alongside math, history, and languages. Yeomans declared that "Integer Vitae" – meaning the wholeness of life, symmetry of life, soundness of life, and, therefore poise and strength of life – would become the school's motto and philosophy. "The truth of every subject taught," he wrote, "is the emotion and the music at the center of it; and the fact of life is that we miss it all if we miss the joy."

Today, the breadth of learning experiences offered at OVS is Yeoman's legacy. The school has grown from a one-room classroom serving 12 pupils to a boarding and day school on two campuses for 300 students in Pre-Kindergarten to 12th grade. But its values, spirit and pursuit of joy remain the same.

“

My education at Ojai Valley School began as a boarding student at the Upper Campus. Back then, as now, many of the most important lessons were taught outside the classroom, and learning was reinforced by the examples my teachers set and the experiences in which I was a participant.”

Craig Floyd (U83)
Interim Head of School





Study session in the Student Commons

ACADEMICS

At Ojai Valley School, you will find an academic program that is both challenging and engaging. We know that a competitive world waits for you beyond high school. An OVS education will give you the academic edge, individual attention, problem solving, and critical thinking skills you need to succeed.

During your freshman and sophomore years, you will develop study skills and a solid academic foundation in English, math, science, foreign language, social science, and visual & performing arts. As a junior and senior, you will choose from a variety of Advanced Placement and interdisciplinary courses. Ojai Valley School's location, adjacent to the national forest and a short boat ride from the Channel Islands National Park, provides the ideal setting for hands-on field studies and distinctive Land and Climate courses such as Environmental History, Marine Science, and Literature of the Wilderness.

Through your academic journey, dedicated teachers will lead your classes — teachers whose knowledge and passion for learning is contagious. They will encourage you to engage in class discussions and empower you to reach your academic potential. Because our classes are small, averaging about 12 students, your teachers will come to know where you might need help and where you might be ready to take on a bigger challenge.

Beyond the classroom, you will be assigned a faculty advisor who will oversee your academic progress. Your advisor will meet with you regularly and be a point of contact for your parents. Our College Counselor will also work with you and your family to help navigate the university admission process and help you find the "right fit" college to continue your education.

“

The best part of my job is the people. I absolutely love the community, the family feel, getting to know the students, the families, the teachers — nobody gets lost like you would at a big school.”

Laurel Colborn

Director of Academics, AP Research, Government, Law & Society





VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Ojai Valley School's founding father Edward Yeomans once observed that some people believe you can get by without the arts. He also observed that you could get by being color blind, but you would miss much of the richness and beauty of nature. It is that belief – that a life without the arts misses much of life's richness and beauty – that drives the Visual and Performing Arts program at Ojai Valley School.

Ojai is known throughout the world as a Mecca for artists and musicians. Visitors are drawn here for the many art galleries and the annual Ojai Music Festival that brings world-renowned musicians to the community every spring. At OVS, our curriculum offers 22 courses in the Visual and Performing Arts, including Drawing, Ceramics I and II, Introduction to Music-Making: Composition, Mixing, and Production, Music Theory and Composition, Piano, Guitar, Photography, Media and Digital Design, Video Production I and II, Woodworking I and II, and Advanced Placement art courses.

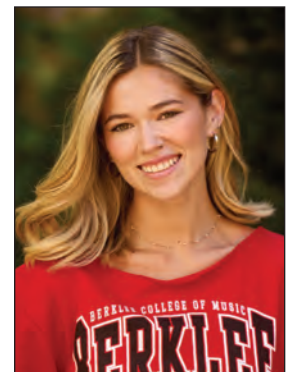
All students must complete one full year of an arts course as a graduation requirement. For those passionate about pursuing the arts in college, OVS offers a pathway that can lead to some of the finest arts schools in the country. Recent graduates have attended Rhode Island School of Design, California Institute of the Arts, Pratt Institute, Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising, and the Berklee College of Music.

OVS students also have the opportunity to participate in art exhibits, musical productions, and talent shows presented in our beautiful outdoor amphitheater. Video Production students produce a broadcast news show and AP Art students enjoy creative space for fashion design and other projects in our new art classroom, The Studio.

“

My OVS teachers were instrumental in helping me get into Berklee. So much of my musicianship came from them. I am grateful to have these connections and even into my first year at college they continued to motivate and help me as I navigated through the year. They have been like family to me.”

Alex Alvarez (L18, U22)
Berklee College of Music







A
ARAMONT SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY CENTER



Soccer game, Upper Campus

ATHLETICS

Grab your cleats and pack your tennis racket. At Ojai Valley School, a well-rounded educational experience includes participation in our athletic program. Here, sports give students an opportunity to learn how to push themselves, stay healthy and work as members of a team.

Students compete in the fall in volleyball, cross country, and flag football. In the winter, the primary sports are soccer and basketball. In the spring, offerings include baseball, track, volleyball, tennis and golf. Students can also ride horses as their sport all three seasons. OVS is a member of the Omega League, which competes with other independent schools in Southern California. OVS teams have won league championships and advanced to CIF playoffs in several sports in recent years. Athletic facilities include tennis courts, sports fields, and a pool for recreational swimming.

OVS also has access to stunning canyon trails for hiking, running, and mountain biking – and the Dawn Patrol surf club takes advantage of world class surf breaks and spectacular Pacific Ocean views. Every student participates in some way in the athletic program throughout his or her time at OVS, whether as a player or a team manager. You may have never touched a golf club or played football, but here you will have an opportunity to give it a try. By the time you graduate, you will have participated in a variety of sports and physical activities and gained a lifelong respect for teamwork and the benefits of exercise.

“

I got involved in everything from running cross country and playing volleyball to knitting and building bird houses. OVS has given me the opportunity to do all of these things, and I'm incredibly lucky.”

Eugene Fisher (L19, U23)
New York University





Surfing at Ventura State Beaches

OUTDOORS

Outdoor Education is a core part of the educational experience at Ojai Valley School as students learn how to respect and care for our fragile environment. It is truly a distinctive program that combines hands-on field studies, environmental conservation initiatives, and multi-day adventures to explore the mountains, canyons, deserts and beaches of the West.

High school students participate in a minimum of two outdoor trips each year that include backpacking, rock climbing, river rafting, surfing, mountain biking, and more. Destinations typically include Yosemite, Joshua Tree, the Channel Islands, the Los Padres National Forest, the Eastern Sierras, and the Colorado, Kern and Rogue rivers. OVS alumni often say it was the experiences shared on these trips that they remember most from their time at the school.

Students enrolled in the AP Environmental Science, AP Biology, Environmental History and Environmental Justice classes participate in additional excursions to learn in the field. Recent trips include traveling to the California desert to learn about the ecological disaster unfolding at the Salton Sea and venturing to the Klamath River near the Oregon-California border to explore issues surrounding the largest dam removal project in United States history. Students also get to test their mettle on the climbing wall, learn wilderness first aid and CPR training, and participate in restoration projects with the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy and the Channel Islands National Park.

“

The honors rafting trip on the Colorado River is a favorite. What it lacks in whitewater, it makes up for in stunning rugged beauty, silent solitude and maze-like slot canyons. A highlight for me is the floating flotilla of music where students and faculty alike join in songs as they drift through the final miles of the canyon.”

Zach Byars
Outdoor Education Coordinator





Riding lesson at the OVS Upper Campus

EQUESTRIAN

Ojai Valley School offers one of the most comprehensive equestrian programs in the Western United States with students learning to ride in the elementary grades and advancing to competitive teams in middle and high school.

Every day after their academic classes, OVS equestrians walk to the stable to ride as their sport. Students are assigned a horse and are responsible for its daily care, grooming, and exercise. The school owns many horses and students are encouraged to ride different ones throughout the year as each mount teaches something new. Students also can arrange to board their own horses at OVS during the school year.

Working with horses requires patience, sensitivity, persistence and good judgment – qualities the school strives to instill in all its students. At OVS, our professionally trained instructors literally know how to ease beginners into the saddle, and they are equally skilled at teaching advanced equestrians how to maneuver a jumping course or a dressage test.

The goal of the Equestrian program is to teach self-confidence, responsibility, maturity and to cultivate an interest in horse sports. Many students achieve basic skills and ride only for recreation, while others choose to join the school's competitive Interscholastic Equestrian Association (IEA) teams, which advanced to the regional and national championships during the 2023-24 and 2024-25 school years.

“

My first year at OVS I did sports like cross country and basketball. But then I thought, most schools don't have equestrian, so I should just try it out for one semester. I didn't think it would turn into something I love so much ... Empathy, dedication, perseverance, and trust are the many things that the OVS horseback riding program have taught me, and I implement them into my everyday life.”

Ellen Hou (U18)

Savannah College of Art and Design, member of SCAD equestrian team





Dinner outside Commons, overlooking the valley

RESIDENT LIFE

Living away from home for the first time can be exciting and, maybe, a bit scary. Fortunately, you will quickly come to consider OVS your second home, a community where you will forge lasting friendships. It will start with your roommate. Some of the strongest friendships form when roommates are from different parts of the country or even different countries. These friendships form when you discover that no matter how different your backgrounds, you have much in common.

During the week, you will eat breakfast, lunch, and dinner in our spacious new dining hall. The dress code is casual, except for nights when we have formal Dress Dinner, which is sometimes followed by a student art exhibit or guest lecture. On most nights, you will have study hall and the opportunity to collaborate on assignments with peers.

On weekends, there are planned activities to add a little fun and relaxation to the school week. You might stroll around downtown Ojai or Santa Barbara, or visit the Getty Museum in Los Angeles. There may be an organized surf trip or a BBQ in your dorm. There also are school dances, karaoke parties, and down time to watch movies in the common room with friends. One thing is certain: as a resident student, you will make deep, enduring friendships that will last long after you have graduated from Ojai Valley School.

“

What OVS offered me was a home away from home. Not only the stunning campus but the amazing faculty and staff that embraces you with open arms, enlightening you with the ability to tackle any obstacles in the world!”

Joshua Hsu (U20)
Michigan State University





USA

California

SAN FRANCISCO

YOSEMITE

BIG SUR

SIERRA NEVADA MOUNTAINS

DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL PARK

Ojai

CHANNEL ISLANDS NATIONAL PARK

LOS ANGELES

JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL PARK

PERFECTLY PLACED

Ojai Valley School is ideally situated to take advantage of the best California has to offer – whether it's adventures in the big city or the backcountry. The OVS Upper Campus is located 90 minutes from Los Angeles, 30 minutes from the beach in Ventura, and sits on nearly 200 acres adjacent to the stunning Los Padres National Forest.

People travel from across the globe to see places in our backyard. Just a few hours drive will find you rock climbing in the rugged desert of Joshua Tree National Park or exploring redwood forests in Big Sur or taking selfies with Mickey Mouse at Disneyland.

At OVS, you can wake up early to go surfing before class, or stay up late to catch an NBA game in L.A. You can get inspiration for your AP Art class at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art or the Getty Center, and learn from teachers who inspire you and take you outside the classroom for science projects in the Ventura River Watershed or community service work at Food Share of Ventura County.

Contact the Admission Office at admission@ovs.org to learn more and to schedule a personal visit. We look forward to introducing you to our community!



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For more information, contact the OVS Admissions Office:
(805) 646-1423, Ext. 1259 | admission@ovs.org

WWW.OVS.ORG

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VALLEY
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- Edward Yeomans