Open doors, Open minds
A note to students

If you want a school where your ideas will be heard; where you can actually get to know your teachers; where you’ll be accepted for who you are, and for who you choose to become: then Maybeck is the right place for you.

Every student and teacher here is an important part of our open, supportive community. We learn from each other, exploring our differences, our similarities, and the qualities that make each of us our own inimitable person.

Maybeck requires effort and a commitment to academic curiosity. The good news is that the work will inspire you. Every day is an opportunity to pursue your passions and deepen your understanding. When you graduate from Maybeck, if you choose to go to college, you will be ahead of your peers from day one. You’ll be a better writer than most, with confidence in your ability to analyze complex concepts and to draw your own conclusions. You will have a strong, clear voice. You will be confident in who you are.
Philosophy

Maybeck is a community dedicated to learning, where diversity flourishes amid mutual support, respect, and responsibility. Through our small classes, high expectations, and spirit of exploration, our students prepare for college and acquire the tools to engage actively and creatively in the wider world.

A small community. Our seminar-style classes, camping trips, and off-site programs foster close relationships between students and faculty. Teachers know every student by name, and meet weekly to discuss their progress.

Dedicated to learning. Our faculty teaches with passion, exposing students to a wide range of methods, study skills, and academic subjects. Round-table class discussions encourage students to fully engage with their learning.

Diversity flourishes amid mutual support, respect, and responsibility. Maybeck provides a safe environment for all forms of diversity; students can be themselves and express themselves fearlessly.

High expectations, academic excellence. We expect our students to be responsible, thoughtful, and personally invested in their educations. Students are pushed to think critically and independently about challenging material.

Programs outside the school. Twice a year we guide a whole-school five-day retreat that allows students and staff to learn together in small groups from questions and topics that arise from our summer readings and evening lectures and films. We gather under trees, by rivers and around tables to create outdoor classrooms of writing and conversation that bring us into the work of the academic year. In the spring, we hold two-week Special Programs, during which students intensely pursue a focused area of study.

Engaging actively and creatively in the wider world. All of our students have the opportunity for international travel, regardless of their economic backgrounds.
Academics

As a college preparatory school committed to academic excellence, Maybeck designs its curriculum to allow each student to reach their highest level of achievement. Teachers provide detailed personal feedback, and gain a focused perspective on their students’ skills and needs. Students collaborate to help each other succeed, and work across grade levels inside and outside the classroom.
Learning Objectives
The schoolwide curriculum achieves five broad learning objectives for each student. These objectives provide a central structure for our classwork—and also recognize and embrace the learning that happens outside classroom walls.

In addition to meeting University of California entrance requirements, all classes are designed to help our students to become:

Academically Engaged and Sophisticated
• Strong writing, discussion, and public speaking skills
• Sustained and thorough independent research
• Mastery of note-taking, organization, and time-management skills
• Self-direction in learning
• Comfort with a range of perspectives and interpretations
• Ability to look for deeper meaning
• Creative, complex, and logical reasoning

Independent, Confident, and Inspired Individuals
• Leadership skills
• Contribution to shaping the school’s program
• Resourcefulness and risk-taking
• Strong communication skills
• Distinctive voices and expression of their own views
• Sense of self-confidence
• Self-reliance, self-discipline, and responsibility
• A strong work ethic

Explorers of Places and Ideas
• Domestic and international travel
• Comfort with the outdoors and an urban environment
• Political awareness and understanding of current events
• Academic curiosity
• Innovative thinking and problem-solving
• Willingness to participate in activities beyond the comfort zone

Active and Respectful Community Members
• Involvement in and commitment to community service
• Respect for differing viewpoints and compassion for others
• Embrace of diversity and cultural differences
• Collaborative learning and teamwork
• Exposure to non-hierarchical governance
• Dedication to environmental conservation

Well-Rounded People
• Physical and emotional well-being
• Participation in and appreciation for the visual and performing arts
• Engagement with hands-on activities
• Pursuit of individual passions

Classroom without walls
We supplement in-classroom learning with a wide range of hands-on learning experiences. Each year, our Special Programs allow teachers to craft innovative and intensive learning experiences for small groups of students. During these two-week intersessions, we immerse ourselves in eclectic adventures, which change each year based on student and faculty interests and current events. Some programs, such as the History of the Bay Area, the Study of Fear, Murals, and Worldbuilding, remain local. Students also get the chance to travel. Recent programs have taken students to New York, Guatemala, Italy, and Mexico, where they’ve had the chance to explore other cultures in depth. Our Special Programs build life skills, expose students to exciting and diverse subjects, and foster deep connections between students and faculty.

Maybeck in the Philippines
In a recent Special Program adventure, 16 students took a 12-day journey to the Philippines. Led by two teachers—one a former Peace Corps volunteer in the region, one a former instructor with UC Berkeley’s Underwater Scientific Research Diving program—the kids visited the gorgeous 2000-year-old Ifuagao rice terraces, learned to scuba dive, and explored the biodiverse tropical waters around the archipelago.

Along the way, they developed the habits of seasoned travelers, learning to orient themselves to the culture, customs, history, and geography of another country—and to pack light and travel healthy. Each student became the ‘resident expert’ on a topic of regional importance and presented their discoveries to the group in between excursions.
At Maybeck, each student and teacher is valued for the individual contributions they make to our community. Whether under the redwoods, around the table in a seminar class, on the basketball court, in a science lab, or on the stage, each student has the chance to share their talents with their peers. We explore our differences and commonalities as we learn, grow, and deepen connections.

Our community is intentionally small. Our students form close bonds with each other and with staff as we work together, from the beginning-of-the-year camping trip to graduation. The 5:1 student-to-faculty ratio ensures that each student is known and included, and provides the opportunity for strong mentoring relationships.

We value our community, and make it a point to come together as a school. Each week, the whole school meets to share news, hear student performers, and participate in a range of talks and discussions. Talent shows, a wide variety of clubs, and student governance roles are open to all.

Further, we ask our students to take responsibility for how our school runs. Our main disciplinary body is the Rules Committee, which consists of two faculty members and two students, elected by the student body. When our students have a problem, academic or behavioral, they’re asked to meet with Rules Committee to discuss the situation and find a remedy. Throughout, the process is collaborative: each member of Rules Committee has an equal voice and an equal vote.

Maybeck’s mission statement calls for mutual support, respect, and responsibility. This can only be achieved with the wholehearted involvement of our entire community which is the principle we value most.

Our History

Maybeck was founded in 1972, when four teachers at a local high school began to use seminar-style discussions to teach history, science, and literature through current events—including the Vietnam War. The school’s administration objected, and the long censorship battle that ensued crystallized the four teachers’ belief in teacher autonomy. They were inspired to create a school with academic freedom at its core. Thus, from the very beginning, Maybeck has been run by teachers for students.

With an enrollment of fewer than 15 in the first year, Maybeck began its life nomadically, with classes run in empty rooms at Cal. Three years later, the school had more than 60 students and had settled into the educational wing of a church across the street from Cal. Maybeck grew quickly to its current size—but has always remained small by design. The founders felt that the entire community should be able to travel anywhere together in two buses and set up camp to learn from the environment. We still believe in a classroom without walls, and still go camping together at the beginning and end of every school year.

Stan Cardinet (the instigator of the four founders) and Dave Kinstle (who joined in the school’s first year) continue to teach at Maybeck, more than 40 years after its founding.
“There is something about this place, or maybe it’s just humanity, but I’ve never been surrounded by such unadulterated passion in my life.”

— Maybeck Student Graduation Speech

Beyond Maybeck

At Maybeck, the college admissions process is about finding the right fit, whether it’s a large university close to home or a small liberal arts college in an as-yet-unexplored part of the country. Students partner with our dedicated college counselor to develop timelines for standardized testing, get feedback on essay drafts, complete applications, conduct mock interviews, participate in resume workshops and navigate the financial aid process. Strong relationships between students and teachers mean that Maybeck students receive insightful and personalized letters of recommendation. Each fall, over 50 college recruiters from around the country visit Maybeck; our students are highly sought-after as well-rounded, passionate learners and skilled scholars.

Our recent graduates have gained admission to (partial list):

- Amherst College
- Bard College
- Beloit College
- Bennington College
- Brown University
- California College of the Arts
- Cal Poly
- Cal Tech
- Carleton College
- Cleveland Institute of Music
- Colorado College
- Columbia University
- Cooper Union
- Culinary Institute of America
- Eckerd College
- Emerson College
- Evergreen State College
- Hampshire College
- Howard University
- Johns Hopkins University
- Kenyon College
- Lewis and Clark University
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- McGill University
- Middlebury College
- Mt. Holyoke
- New York University
- Oberlin College
- Occidental College
- Parsons School of Design
- Pitzer College
- Pomona College
- Reed College
- Rhode Island School of Design
- Sarah Lawrence College
- Stanford University
- UC Berkeley
- UC Davis
- UC Irvine
- UC Santa Barbara
- UC Santa Cruz
- UCLA
- University of Bristol (UK)
- University of Chicago
- University of Puget Sound
- University of Southern California
- Vassar College
- Wesleyan University

94% of graduates attend a 4-year university
Average graduate’s SAT score: 1850
10% of graduates commended by National Merit Scholarship Program
“We’re poets, artists, musicians, scientists and just good people.”

– Maybeck Student Graduation Speech

Applying to Maybeck: We’ve tried to keep our application process simple. For us, the most important thing is getting to know our potential students. The best way to learn more about Maybeck is to visit the school. We invite you to sit in on our classes, meet a few of our teachers, and see what we’re all about.

Give us a call or send us an email today to schedule your visit: admissions@maybeckhs.org.