



**The Island School**  
ELEMENTARY LEARNING CENTER

**Parent Handbook**  
**2021-2022 School Year**

Dear Elementary Learning Center community,

Welcome to the 2021-2022 school year! We are filled with great expectations for a year of new learning, hands on experiences, and tremendous growth. We are committed to making the ELC experience enriching, challenging, engaging, and inspiring for each of our students! As we embark upon another year, the challenges and nuances that COVID-19 have presented have us continuing to be nimble and ready to engage our students in person, in a hybrid model and virtually throughout the year as necessary. Learning together in person is our aim and as government restrictions and local conditions allow, we will plan to be together on campus whenever it makes sense to do so.

The Elementary Learning Center is a school like no other. At the ELC, we provide students with experiential learning opportunities that focus on the development of the whole child: intellectually, physically, socially, and emotionally. The ELC models The Island School's educational philosophy for our youngest learners. Students are asked to do real work and to take personal responsibility. Instruction and activities are carefully planned to fully meet the needs of each student at their individual levels. Our teachers, Bonnie Drost, Dan Evans, Angelica (Jelly) McKinney and Brenda Olariaga will facilitate a fun and engaging curriculum that utilizes our exceptional outdoor classroom and the benefits of a multi-age learning environment.

We believe strongly that the Elementary Learning Center is a community of teachers, parents, and students working together to promote each child's cognitive, social, physical, and emotional development. We are excited to work with you to create the best year possible for our youngest learners. No matter the learning medium, we have high expectations for all members of the ELC community and encourage students to challenge themselves and grow. We expect and encourage students to demonstrate respect for one another, adults, the classroom space (virtual or physical), and the community, and to always put forth their best effort in everything they do. Our teachers are here to guide, support and encourage that growth.

This handbook will provide families with information that should help answer many questions. It is intended to increase your knowledge and understanding of the activities, routines, systems, expectations and curriculum of the ELC. If reading through this handbook brings to mind questions, ideas, or suggestions, please share them! We want to maintain an open dialogue between school and home, and to work together as partners for the benefit of our students and their community.

With Warmest Regards,

Ben Dougherty  
CEO/Head of School  
Cape Eleuthera Island School

**Welcome! We are so happy that you and your child are joining our family at The Island School's Elementary Learning Center. This handbook can be used as a resource to understand the philosophy of our program and the policies that will guide our teaching.**

**Our Purpose:** The Island School's Elementary Learning Center's goal is to nurture the social-emotional and academic development of students through a rich, stimulating, hands-on learning environment that encourages students to use their creativity, curiosity, and intellect to explore, grow, and think critically about the world around them.

**Philosophy and Rationale:** By incorporating the works of Montessori, Reggio Emilia, Waldorf, and others who have dedicated their life to understanding young learners, we create a positive and meaningful learning environment for the children in which each student is appropriately challenged at his/her developmental level. We aim to develop respect by learning to care for ourselves, each other, and the world around us. With a strong emphasis on the natural environment, we extend our classroom to the outdoors, where we spend many hours exploring and learning. Students in our program benefit from experiential education in a place based environment.

**Organization:** The Elementary Learning Center is a program within the Cape Eleuthera Island School and collaborates with partners across the organization including the Cape Eleuthera Institute, the Semester and Summer Term, and the Deep Creek Middle School. The Island School programs share a vision for *leadership effecting change*, and the Elementary Learning Center models our educational philosophy and experiential teaching and learning models with our youngest learners.

**Curriculum:** At the Elementary Learning Center, teachers use an inquiry-based approach to actively engage students in purposeful, meaningful, and authentic learning. Both the process and outcomes of learning are valued for their contributions to developing deep understanding and critical thinking. Students are actively involved in the learning process as individuals and by working collaboratively. Teachers use students' interests and curiosities to guide the creation of the units of inquiry and to facilitate the inquiry process of questioning, exploration, research, creation, presentation about their learning, and reflection.

As students grow in their learning capacity, they strive to achieve progressively more challenging learning goals with the appropriate support and guidance of teachers. The scope and sequence of academic learning objectives and outcomes are integrated with social-emotional skills and a continued emphasis on place-based education.

Learning experiences happen within the classroom and beyond, with students interacting with educators, scientists, students and community members throughout The Island School edusystem. Many of the learning experiences also allow students opportunities to collaborate with classmates

of varying ages to explore the natural environment of Eleuthera. Other learning will occur with students grouped by age or developmental ability to better meet the unique needs of each individual.

Daily activities include structured and unstructured times for the exploration of art, music, imaginative play, nature, literacy, math, science, and social studies, and provide for the development of life skills, gross and fine motor skills, and address the emotional, social, physical, and intellectual development of the whole child. Students are encouraged to take care of themselves, others, and the world around them by eating healthy meals, creating friendships, helping around campus, and learning sustainable practices.

**School Calendar:** The ELC will observe Bahamian national holidays. We encourage you to plan family vacations around our scheduled breaks.

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Bahamian Holidays (No School)	Open House/ Conferences	First/ Last Day of School
Vacation (No School)	Teacher PD/ (no school)	Camp/ Summer Camp

### **Sample Daily Schedule (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday):**

This schedule is subject to change.

8:00am	Early Drop-Off // Breakfast
9:00am	Morning Meeting- School Begins
	Math // Structured Exploration at the ELC
	Snack
	Literacy and Writing // Structured Exploration at the ELC
	Exploration Time (various locations around campus including: Forest, Beach, Farm, Boat House, Bridge, Flag Pole, CEI, CSD)
	Lunch
	Reading // Nap Time
	Active Group Game
	Inquiry Time (Depending on the unit of inquiry this could include trips away from the ELC)
	Chores
3:00pm	Closing Circle // Pick Up Time
3:15pm	Snack // Unstructured Exploration Time at the ELC
4:30pm	Extended Hours Final Pick-Up Time

### **Sample Wednesday Schedule:**

8:00am	Early Drop-Off // Breakfast
9:00am	Morning Meeting
	Math // Structured Exploration at the ELC
	Snack
	Water Wednesday at Beach House Beach
	Lunch
	Reading // Nap Time
	Active Group Game
	Inquiry Time // (Depending on the unit of inquiry this could include trips away from the ELC)
	Chores
3:00pm	Closing Circle // Pick Up Time
3:15pm	Snack // Unstructured Exploration Time at the ELC
4:30pm	Extended Hours Final Pick-Up Time

**Homework:** Homework is not assigned on a regular basis, however it is the expectation that all students engage in meaningful reading activities after school each day. Options include listening to a story read aloud, reading to a parent or sibling, reading independently as appropriate (reading the pictures or reading the words), or retelling a story. We also encourage parents to integrate math talk

into daily activities. This can include counting, noticing patterns, measuring, talking about size and positions, etc.

**Admissions:** The Elementary Learning Center is primarily designed to serve children of our employees and admits students ages 3-10. Families outside of the organization are welcome to apply to attend the ELC and are accepted as space permits. We do not discriminate based on race, religion, creed, ethnicity, or ability but open our doors to all children of CEIS employees who can benefit from our services provided they meet the eligibility requirements. Admission will also depend on current enrollment and student to teacher ratios in order to ensure the safety of all students.

Transitioning to school can be difficult for young children, especially for those who have limited experiences outside of the home. To ensure that all students are fully benefiting from the school experience, no student will be admitted until s/he is determined to be ready.

Enrollment is contingent upon demonstrated school readiness which will be determined by:

1. Meeting minimum age requirements of at least 3 years old
2. Developmental history completed by parent/guardian
3. Student and family interview
4. Visit to the school

**Toilet Training Policy:** Students enrolled at the ELC must be potty trained before attending. Students must be wearing underwear with few accidents. Please note that wearing pull ups isn't considered being potty trained.

We understand that even trained children will occasionally have toileting accidents. In these instances, the teachers will help children to change their clothes, encouraging independence as much as possible. We remind our youngest students times throughout the day and always before nap time if they need to use the bathroom. A teacher will assist children as needed, but children should be able to complete toileting activities independently.

**Napping:** Our youngest students will lie down and rest while listening to read alouds in the early afternoon. Some students may fall asleep and will be awoken before 2:30pm.

**Billing:** Tuition and fees are payable in cash, check or direct deposit to the Cape Eleuthera Island School and can be paid in a lump sum or monthly over 10 months from September through June, due on the 1st day of the month. Please include the child's name and ELC in the memo for the check or deposit. Additional financial assistance may be available for those with demonstrated need. Please contact the accounting office with any inquiries.

**Family Involvement:** Education takes place both in and out of school. The best education happens when there is communication and collaboration between home, community, and school. When information and expectations are shared, and skills, knowledge, and values reinforced, students learn in an environment of support and respect. Open and active communication between parents, students, the community, and the school is essential to ensure that our children have the best opportunity to learn.

Please note that sometimes young children have difficulty separating from their parents and transitioning into the school environment. A student's time at school is important for self-actualization and the development of independence. Please help your student by being mindful about the number of times your family may be separating during the school day.

Parents are asked to participate in the maintenance and development of the school during (up to) two parent work days each year. This collaborative effort is important to the wellbeing of the program and facility and models for our students the importance of community. In past years we have constructed new play structures or learning centers, landscaped or created shade areas, all while building community.

**Parent Teacher Conferences:** At a minimum, there will be one conference scheduled each semester to discuss student goals and progress. However, there is no limit to the opportunities to be in touch with your child's teacher. Parents are encouraged to arrange a conference whenever they feel the need, by calling or emailing the teacher and finding a time to meet.

**Reporting on Student Progress:** Teachers will facilitate parent meetings once each semester and will prepare written summaries of individual student development and progress at the end of each semester, which will be shared with families directly. Parents who have questions or concerns at any time of the year are encouraged to contact the Lead Teacher to schedule a time to meet.

**Arrival/Departure Procedures:** In an effort to make transitions as smooth as possible, parents are asked to arrive on time for drop-off and pick-up. The academic day begins at 9am sharp and ends at 3pm. Our Early Drop off program begins at 8am. Please arrive a few minutes early to allow enough time to establish a "good-bye" routine with your child. The school closes at 4:30 and all students must be picked up by that time. Keep in mind that only adults are allowed to open the gate and please ensure that it is latched when entering or exiting the school.

**COVID-19 Addendum:**

The following procedure will be undertaken for students arriving at the ELC:



- Staff members will greet each student at the gate and perform a daily health check, including taking temperature with a no-touch thermometer and answers to the daily health screening to be answered by them and their guardian.
- Staff and guardians should wear masks at the drop off location during any interaction
- Social distancing should be maintained between guardians during the drop-off
- Once permitted, students who arrive without a guardian (due to transportation circumstances ie. bus) will be greeted at the gate for a daily health check, including taking temperature with a no-touch thermometer
- Students will sanitize hands before entering the classroom at either the outdoor washing station or hand sanitizer station

In order to maintain a healthy campus, students should not leave home to attend the ELC if they are feeling unwell or experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19. Before entry into the ELC, students will undergo a COVID daily Health Screening ELC to ensure that students entering school are healthy.

These symptoms include the following:

- Fever (100.4 F or above)
- Cough
- Breathing Difficulties
- Headache
- Reduced Appetite
- Sore throat
- Body/ Muscle Pain
- New loss of taste or smell
- Vomiting or Diarrhea

If a student arrives at school experiencing any of these symptoms, the following steps will be followed:

- Based on an assessment by the on-call medic, it will then be decided whether or not to allow the child entry into the ELC
- Return to school will depend on the medical team's evaluation and follow up protocol.

Any potential exposure to COVID-19 must be communicated with the school:

- If anyone within the household has been exposed to COVID-19 and is self-isolating, the ELC should be informed and the student should not attend until a negative test of the contact person is confirmed
- If someone in the household has tested positive for COVID-19, the student should not attend the ELC. They should isolate if possible from the infected person or they may be required a prolonged quarantine period prior to being allowed to attend the ELC (i.e. 14 days after last contact with the positive person or 14 days after the positive person symptoms have fully resolved and are able to exit self-quarantine)

Any possible contact with COVID-19 should be discussed with the on-site medical team for further input and decisions related to the length of quarantine period required.

**School contact information:** During school hours, the teachers' attention will be focused on the children so responses to emails or WhatsApp messages will be limited. Please limit calls during school hours to emergencies only. If a child will be absent or late, please text/ WhatsApp or email that information in a timely manner so that we can account for the child's absence. If a child will be leaving early, please let the teacher know at drop-off. We maintain open communication with parents and are happy to correspond about non-immediate issues outside of school hours. Parent/teacher conferences will be held semiannually to discuss progress and goals for each child. Any questions or concerns about the school, staff, or children should be raised with the ELC Lead Teacher in accordance with the Cape Eleuthera Island School communications guidelines.

**Clothing:** Every child is expected to come to school dressed in the ELC t-shirt and their own shorts/skirts/pants. Each child will be provided with one t-shirt each school year and families will be expected to purchase additional requirements. Footwear is required. Please send a change of clothes (pants, shirt, and underwear) labeled with your child's name to keep in your child's cubby and check to make sure that it is there each day. Please also be sure that your child has a sweater or jacket when the weather requires it.

**Heat, Sun and Insect Protection:** Living in Eleuthera, we are very conscious about the damage that can be caused by exposure to the sun. Hats are always required when outdoors. Please apply sunscreen and bug spray before coming to school each day. Teachers will reapply sunscreen to children after lunch and as necessary throughout the day in order to ensure their health and safety. Children should wear lightweight pants and long sleeved shirts when necessary to minimize sun and insect exposure. Every child should also bring a water bottle, labeled with the child's name which will be refilled throughout the day as we closely monitor children's hydration levels.

**Nutrition:** As part of the academic program, children will be served one well-balanced meal and two nutritious snacks each day. Students who attend early drop off (8-9am) will also be offered breakfast. Water is the only drink that will be served at school, and every child is required to bring a water bottle. If your child has any special dietary needs, the teachers should be made aware of them. We will work to accommodate any dietary restrictions or requirements but may require that a student bring food from home in the event that we cannot accommodate all needs. Please do not send other snacks or drinks unless it has been approved in advance with the teacher (ie: birthday treats).

**Severe Weather:** We are aware that weather changes quickly and storms can be a threat. We will follow all Cape Eleuthera Island School procedures in the event of severe weather and will keep the children indoors during any extreme or adverse conditions. In the event of severe weather warnings

(eg. hurricanes) we may be required to close the ELC and we will communicate this information as soon as possible.

**Emergency Plans and Medical Care:** We take every precaution to avoid emergencies. In the unlikely case of any emergency on campus, teachers will take every step possible to ensure the children's safety. When necessary, we will follow the emergency procedures set out by The Cape Eleuthera Island School in conjunction with local healthcare providers. Parents and guardians will be notified by phone as soon as possible in the event of any emergency.

Parents are responsible for accurately completing the health forms in the registration packet at the start of the term and promptly updating these forms with any new medical information as necessary. Parents must have evacuation coverage for children enrolled at the ELC and copies of insurance cards must be provided annually with registration paperwork. Parents must also provide copies of both their own and their child's passport. The Cape Eleuthera Island School is not responsible for any bills associated with a child's medical expenses and parents are required to pay.

**Sick Policy:** For reasons of infection control, sick children will not be permitted to come to school. If sick, your student may not return to school until s/he has been symptom free for 48 hours without the aid of any medication.

Students should be kept home and will be sent home if they exhibit symptoms of any of the following:

- Temperature above 100.4 F
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Chickenpox
- Impetigo
- Conjunctivitis/Pink Eye
- Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease
- RSV
- Dengue Fever
- TB
- Thrush
- Ringworm
- Strep Throat/Scarlet Fever
- Head lice

If your child becomes sick while at school, we will use the following criteria to determine whether your child may be too ill to remain at school:

1. Your child does not feel well enough to participate in activities
2. Our teachers cannot care for your child without interfering with the care of the other children
3. Your child shows symptoms of a contagious disease or immediate need for medical evaluation (ie; fever, rash, vomiting)

If any or all of these criteria are met, and we are unable to care for your student, we will call you to pick him/her up as soon as possible. In a case where the student cannot be picked up immediately and poses an infection risk to other children, we may utilize an outdoor shade space or the Wellness Center on campus.

Please notify us if your child is sick or contracts any communicable diseases so that we can make a note of it and watch for symptoms in the other children. We will notify parents of any outbreaks on the Cape Eleuthera Island School campus.

For illnesses that are inconsistent with COVID-19 (after consultation with the on-site medical team), the following criteria must be fulfilled on return to ELC:

- Symptoms of nausea, vomiting and diarrhea absent for a minimum of 48 hours without medication
- Fever resolved for minimum of 24 hours without medication

**Medications:** If your child requires medication during the day, it must be clearly labeled with the child's name and dosing instructions. You must provide a signed permission form to the teacher in order for the medications to be administered. We will not administer any other medications while the child is at school with the exception of life threatening emergencies.

**Behavior:** We promote a positive behavior policy. Teachers are well trained to support children in settling disputes and making positive choices. Conflict provides us with teachable moments as the children learn important lessons about friendships, compromise, negotiation, and problem solving. We hold expectations that are developmentally appropriate for each child. The teachers will implement non-combative strategies including re-direction and logical consequences when needed. We will work with parents to encourage and develop positive behaviors in all children and will address any issues as they arise. Emphasizing communication, we will use consistent, individualized plans when necessary. Corporal punishment will never be used with the children in our care. Violent behavior (biting, kicking, hitting etc.) will not be tolerated.

In the event of disruptive behavior, an incident report will be completed and the parents of both parties will be informed if this occurs. We will work with the child to try to prevent further incidents. If the behavior persists, the student may be asked to withdraw from the program.

**Classroom Rules:** Students will be involved in helping to draft a code of conduct for our school and should adhere to all rules. There is an expectation that students will actively participate in the routines of the day including mealtimes and clean up.

We maintain high expectations for student behavior. We believe it is every person's right to be treated with dignity, fairness and respect. The lead teacher will set the guidelines for classroom behaviors and expectations along with the students.

**Withdrawal Policy:** If a child must withdraw from the ELC, it is recommended that they do so during a natural break (summer or winter) to minimize disruption of the class. We request at least 2 weeks notice before withdrawing the student in order to provide closure and ease the transition.

**Adult Supervision Policy:** Children will never be left unsupervised. A teacher will always be present when other adults are visiting including students and staff from other program areas. Students may occasionally be supervised separately by the lead or assistant teacher. The student to teacher supervision ratio during outdoor explorations will never exceed 8:1 for primary aged students and 4:1 for preschool students.

**Photo/Video Policy:** Teachers will occasionally use photo and video to document learning. These will be shared with the parents regularly and at parent teacher conferences as appropriate. As members of the greater Cape Eleuthera Island School community, photos and videos of the students may be used in publications and social media to promote the work of the organization.

**Transportation Policy:** Students will not be transported in school vehicles with the exception of emergency situations and field trips. Working car seats or booster seats must be provided by parents for field trip transportation. Anyone who drives with the children will be at least 25 years old, hold a valid driver's license, and will have passed the safe driving test administered by the appointed staff.

**Summer at the ELC:** During the summertime, the ELC operates a summer camp using a curriculum based on weekly thematic units, such as bugs, birds, pirates and oceans. The lessons are designed by the Lead Teacher and facilitated by a trained summer camp teaching team.

Please Detach and Return to the ELC Lead Teacher

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*I acknowledge that I have received the Elementary Learning Center Parent Handbook. I have read and understood the information provided. I agree to adhere to all policies and procedures and will address all questions or concerns with the Lead Teacher or Director of Education.*

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_