Updated August 2026

Semester & Summer Term

Student Life Guide

Students, please review the following information with a guardian and acknowledge with your initials in each section.

Dear Students & Families,

Congratulations on your acceptance and welcome to The Island School! Challenge, adventure, self-knowledge, and community connections await you on Eleuthera. You are about to embark on an expedition to a new and amazing world that will challenge you intellectually, emotionally, and physically. Our rigorous academic programs are designed to develop you into a more active participant in the discovery process. For example, you will be involved in authentic scientific research that will teach you how to investigate and effect solutions to real-world problems. Consequently, your work at The Island School moves far beyond the quest for a final grade. As a member of this small community, you will have an opportunity to lead others and to contribute to the ongoing development of our great school. At all times, you will be immersed in the environment, looking through the lens of your mask at the magical world beneath the sea, camping under the stars, or gaining an understanding of the development of Eleuthera and The Bahamas through connecting with local people and communities.

The Semester and Summer Term experiences have proven to be a catalyst for tremendous personal growth. You will come to learn as much about yourself as the world around you. There is much to be excited about, and we are very eager to meet you and learn alongside you. Please take the time to read through this guide carefully. Do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions. Once you arrive, we will discuss the materials presented to you in this guide. Again, congratulations and thank you for accepting the challenge!

Onward Together,
The Island School Team

Introduction

This guide is designed to introduce students and their families to life at our school. The Island School community depends on the pillars of respect, responsibility, integrity, and trust. Students are trained to act responsibly in a wilderness environment and to care for each other as a community. Safety is the top priority for everyone at the School.

What is The Island School Semester

The Island School Semester is a 100-day academic program offered to high school sophomores and juniors, ready to take on the island of Eleuthera in The Bahamas as their classroom. The Semester consists of the following central components: academic classes, outdoor and physical education programs, cross-cultural programs, and self-awareness and leadership development. Our programming covers a range of topics and courses. The coursework is supplemented by outdoor and physical education programming, including SCUBA diving and sea kayaking expeditions, community projects, and Down Island Trips. Time is also allotted for leadership training. Students live on campus in open-bay dormitory buildings. They learn to navigate close community living and are responsible for clean-up and campus duties. Life at The Island School is fast-paced and rigorous. Through academic, social, and physical challenges, students discover much about themselves, each other, and this remote, beautiful place where they are living.

What is The Island School Summer Term

The Island School Summer Term is a 6-week experience-based, academic program offered to rising high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors. Through a rigorous course of study that includes fieldwork in local ecosystems, explorations of local settlements, the socioeconomic impacts of development, and dynamic interaction with sustainable systems across campus, Summer Term students grapple with how communities, on an island in The Bahamas and beyond, can live most sustainably. Students live on campus in open-bay dormitory buildings. They learn to navigate close community living and are responsible for clean-up and campus duties. Life at The Island School is fast-paced and rigorous. Through academic, social, and physical challenges, students discover much about themselves, each other, and this remote, beautiful place where they are living.

About Eleuthera

We encourage you to learn more about our home ahead of your term and have provided an introduction to Eleuthera: The name *Eleuthera* comes from the Greek word eleutheros, meaning freedom. It is a narrow island, 110 miles long and rich with pristine beaches and stunning

natural beauty. Throughout your program, you will explore both the natural and cultural environments of Eleuthera. While you are here, we encourage you to meet and talk to the people who make up this vibrant and culturally diverse community. Living well in a place means taking the time to know the history and people of that place.

Core Values of our Community

We strive to nurture an intentional community that ranges from pre-K to PhD, all held to the same standards and core values at The Island School:

- We are all teachers challenged to share work, culture, and passion with others.
- We encourage open communication, especially transparency, when it comes to risk and safety. We assume goodwill, not ill-will intent.
- Our emotional safety is founded on mutual respect and awareness. Ethnic and/or racial jokes and use of foul language have no place in our community.
- We strive to be upstanders and not bystanders. Hearing or seeing something wrong requires respectful and timely feedback.
- Build trust and solve challenges and differences directly with peers and community members.
- Our actions aim to prioritize the well-being of the community over our own interests.
- We live in an intentional community where we have to learn how to share limited resources and minimize adverse impact on our environment.
- We encourage all to be self-sufficient, working hard to fix a problem before passing it along to someone else.
- We are an open and welcoming place that reaches out to embrace diversity and visitors.
- We want to encourage risk-taking and be tolerant of failure in pursuit of meaningful outcomes.
- We celebrate challenges that lead to growth.
- We support and encourage working alongside and serving our larger community.
- We understand that our collaborative effort across teams is far more successful than any solo team performance.
- We embrace and live by the manners of our host country; greeting before making an ask, initiating a greeting when entering another’s workspace, dressing respectfully, etc.

Community Life

The Island School community depends on the pillars of respect, responsibility, integrity, and trust. These same concepts, along with our commitment to the physical and emotional safety of our community members, guide our rules and expectations. All school rules apply to all students at all times during their term, whether on or off campus. Enrollment in the Semester or Summer Term constitutes acceptance of all school rules and the consequences of their violation. Our

community expectations are considered central to our safety and success.

Program Engagement— It is expected that students will attend and engage with all aspects of The Island School and their programming to the best of their ability. This includes dish crew duties, community chores, and morning exercise. It is expected that students will attend all classes and complete all assignments on time and to the best of their ability.

Community & Relationships— Much of what transpires during our programs focuses on building a community. We encourage students to develop close and lasting friendships. Exclusive relationships, however, have the potential to harm the community by creating boundaries between people. For this reason, we encourage inclusive relationships so as not to disrupt the cohesiveness of a positive and productive community. Intimate contact, public displays of affection, and sexual relationships are prohibited for the reasons stated above, as well as for health considerations.

Cell Phones & Internet— During the Semester and Summer Term, students disconnect from the distractions of electronics, social media, and the associated 'noise' of pop culture. This paves the way for the unique and special opportunity to create a community where students are fully immersed in the surrounding environments and build close relationships with peers and faculty without the daily distractions of cell phones or the internet.

Therefore, upon arrival to Eleuthera, students will be **required to turn in their cell phones** and **any other devices with Internet connectivity (including personal laptops and tablets such as iPads and iPods)** to faculty for safekeeping until the end of the program. **All students are provided with an Island School laptop for the duration of the program**. **Please note that students are held accountable for the associated cost if a school laptop is broken or damaged while in their care.** If students wish to bring a personal music-playing device, this device ***cannot*** connect to the internet. Compact MP3 players (e.g., iPod Nanos) that do not have touch screens are acceptable.

Signing Out— Students must sign out to leave campus for any reason other than sanctioned and faculty-facilitated Island School activities. Students may not be off campus unaccompanied after dark under any circumstances. When signing out for school activities, students are agreeing to follow all the rules outlined.

Dormitory Rules and Expectations— Students may not enter a dormitory that is not their own at any time. Check-in is at 9:30 PM every night. Lights are turned off in the dormitory at 10:00 PM every night. After this time ("lights out"), students may not leave their dorm, and it is expected that students will not be on devices or be disruptive to others. The dormitory space is the responsibility of all occupants, and it is the expectation that dormitories remain neat, clean, and tidy. The dormitory must remain clear of food. Food should never be consumed or stored in dorm space. All dormitory rules and expectations are strictly enforced.

We have two barrack-style dormitories on our campus. Each dormitory has two wings and two bathroom areas with toilets and shower stalls. Our female-identifying students have predominantly been assigned to live in our 'Tree House' dormitory, and male-identifying students have predominantly been assigned to live in the 'Beach House' dormitory. While we are limited to these two housing areas for students, we strive to support students of all gender identities safely and comfortably within our dormitory housing. Please reach out to enrollment@islandschool.org prior to the start of the semester if you have any concerns or questions regarding our living assignments.

Dress Code and School Uniform— Our Dress Code reflects the productive, professional, and academic setting we are in. Please abide by these guidelines and show respect for our community. *Our Dress Code can be found in the packing list on the Enrolled Students page*.

Sustainability

The Island School teaches students, through classes and particularly through their expeditions, the "Leave No Trace" ethic of living. While leaving no trace is important when camping on beautiful beaches, it is also an important philosophy for all of our time on Eleuthera. When packing to come to The Island School, we ask that our students and their families take into consideration our Leave No Trace ethic of living.

All waste on Eleuthera is brought to local dumps, which are situated on the outskirts of settlements, often close to wetlands or the groundwater table. These dumps do not have stringent regulations; they are places for garbage to be brought temporarily before it is burned. Because Eleuthera is a small island, few options exist for waste disposal or recycling. Waste must either be burned in local dumps or shipped off the island.

While we have facilities to help manage the waste we produce on campus, external additions from our many students and visitors overburden our system and the systems around us. Please consider this when packing.

Communication

We disconnect from technology to intentionally be present. Our programs are currently on the following schedule: **During academic weeks, Semester students receive weekly 20-minute phone time to call home. During the Summer Term, students are allotted two phone calls home over the course of the six weeks.** There may be times during a term when the phone schedule is interrupted due to expeditions or special programming. Student advisors will share updates with families throughout the term. Outside of this, our team can assist if there are urgent

matters that need to be communicated between students and families. Letters are recommended as a form of communication.

In order to remain mission-aligned with sustainability practices and to avoid disparities amongst students, **we do not allow care packages**. Our packing list has been carefully refined over the years and is the best resource to turn to as you prepare for your term. Part of the learning is living without unnecessary luxuries. Our team can assist if there is something your student needs to excel in their program.

Letters Only via US Postal Service
Send To:
Recipient Name
c/o Cape Eleuthera Island School
PO Box EL-26029
Rock Sound, Eleuthera,
The Bahamas
Time to arrive: 3 to 5 weeks

Academics

The educational philosophy of The Island School is based on students asking and often answering their own questions. Our educational philosophy sees students out doing real work through a place-based experiential model. The Island School coursework is rigorous. Students spend six days a week in academic programming and are expected to complete coursework and projects during the designated evening study hours. Students should anticipate spending one and a half to two hours a night on their assignments. All students receive a transcript with final grades and a final written report with comments from teachers and advisors, which is **sent to their sending school following the end of the term**. For more information on specific courses, please refer to our Semester Curriculum Guide or Summer Term Curriculum Guide.

Pre-term assignments, including scuba e-Learning, program-related readings, and belonging reflections, will be shared in advance of the program start and should be completed before arrival day. These assignments are intentionally selected to support student transitions into our community and programs.

Standardized Testing— We do not offer any standardized testing while at The Island School. Please plan accordingly with your sending school to arrange alternative testing dates outside of your term.

Learning Support Needs— If a student has specific learning needs (documented or otherwise), families are required to share information in advance of the program start date to allow us to prepare to support them during their academic journey. We review IEPs and Learning Plans,

though given the nature of our program, we **cannot guarantee** that all accommodations can be met. Our program is not legally required nor designed to support highly specialized needs.

Our Mission of *Leadership Effecting Change* supports the expectation that students are capable of ownership and responsibility for their learning and managing their time. While teachers are frequently available for support, and under the guidance of an advisor, students are expected to work independently and self-advocate as needed.

Outside Coursework— We are not able to support students with coursework from their sending school while at the Island School, as this can put additional stress on the student and take away from their experience here. Any outside coursework should be done before or after their Island School term.

Schedule

It is expected that students participate in all programming to the best of their ability. If a student is consistently refusing or unable to participate in programming despite staff support, we may not be able to facilitate their remaining in the term. We are unable to accommodate students arriving late, departing early, or leaving the island once the program is in session (except for unforeseen or emergency circumstances).

The daily Semester and Summer Term schedules change often. We start our days at 6:30 AM to gather as a community - students and staff - at morning circle, we transition to “AMX”, our morning exercise program. We find that this activity helps jump-start the day, waking our minds as well as our bodies, and allows more time later for work, play, and reflection. Exercises vary daily, building endurance, strength, and confidence in a variety of activities. Students come back from AMX to clean/organize their personal space and are responsible for maintaining a clean dormitory. After this, students get ready for breakfast at 8:15 AM. Students rotate dish crew and general cleanup after meals.

Classes are held throughout the morning and afternoon, with lunch happening every day at noon. Students have “exploration time” a few afternoons per week from the end of classes until dinner, usually 4:30 - 5:45 PM. At 5:55 PM, the community gathers for a dinner circle, at which time we share announcements and reflect on the day. After dinner, this time is mostly dedicated to study, downtime, dorm meetings, and night classes. On-duty faculty are present to assist with issues as they arise. Students are expected to be in their dorms every day between 9 - 9:30 PM. As our days are long and start early, lights-out is by 10:00 PM.

Semester Program— study hours are typically from 7:15 PM - 9:30 PM, Sunday through Friday. It is expected that the atmosphere throughout campus during study hours remains conducive to productive study. There are designated workspaces for quiet, individual study and group work. The dining hall is open for study breaks and snacks during these hours. Students, with the

guidance of their advisor, are expected to take responsibility for managing their time. Students should expect to be engaged in classes on Saturdays. Sundays are typically “down days” for students.

Summer Term— Summer Term Students will have academic classes from 7:15 PM - 9:00 PM during the three academic weeks of the program. During these hours, outside of the three academic weeks, students will have on-campus downtime, dorm meetings, and other community activities. Students should expect to be engaged in classes on Saturdays. Sundays are typically “down days” for students.

Advising & Student Support

Each student is assigned a faculty advisor. The advisor serves as a point person for the students and monitors overall student progress at school. The student's advisor is their go-to faculty member, and that faculty member will work with them on personal growth throughout the program. If an issue arises, the advisor works in collaboration with an administrator, the student, and the student’s parents or guardians to bring about positive change. In our community, we have many resources to support students. Students can expect to have weekly check-ins with their advisor. In addition to providing email updates throughout the program, this faculty advisor is also responsible for providing a written report on the student’s progress at the term’s end.

Community Projects

Throughout the term, there are opportunities for students to participate in community projects in partnership with peers from local schools and organizations. These projects aim to serve and support the surrounding communities in South Eleuthera. Students will have the opportunity to opt in and contribute to local projects and initiatives, and log community service hours throughout the program.

Outdoor Education

The outdoor leadership and physical components of our programs are designed to challenge students to push themselves through difficulty and gain confidence in a new environment. Students learn to persevere and move outside of their comfort zones, support one another, and celebrate accomplishments as individuals and as a community.

Expeditions— Both Semester and Summer Term students participate in a “Down Island” expedition to further explore the island and its history. These excursions are car-camping trips that allow students to spend time in larger settlements like Governor’s Harbour and Spanish Wells, explore sites of historical or natural interest, and gain a wider perspective of the tourism industry on Eleuthera. In the Semester Program, sea kayaking expeditions are a key facet of our

place-based education model, during which students interact with the coastal environment of South Eleuthera. Expeditions provide students the platform to learn essential hard skills involved in sea kayaking and leave no trace camping while building the soft skills associated with leadership. Students take turns leading their pod through the day's route, selecting and setting up a campsite, cooking meals collaboratively, and learning about themselves and each other through various activities.

Wilderness Solo Experience— Students participate in a ~48-hour wilderness solo experience. This experience is not designed to be a survival test; however, it is a time for students to engage in reflection and spend time alone with their thoughts. The ability to reflect on our thoughts and critically analyze our actions and decisions is a fundamental aspect of experiential education. While each student will have a unique solo experience, all students undergo this journey, ultimately strengthening community bonds.

Scuba Diving— The SCUBA program is instrumental to the Semester and Summer Term journey because it provides students with an opportunity to explore the beautiful underwater environment that surrounds Eleuthera. Treated as a class, students must complete book work and demonstrate proficiency in a number of underwater skills. The SCUBA program supports our academic curriculum, where students use SCUBA as a tool to access and better understand our marine environment. By the end of the term, most students acquire PADI's Open Water Diver certification and log additional dives.

Morning Exercise— The morning exercise program is a rigorous physical education experience. The entire community—students and faculty alike—spends at least one hour participating in a variety of workouts five days of the week. Most exercises include a combination of swimming, running, and calisthenics; other offerings center on team sports such as water polo, volleyball, or ultimate Frisbee, while yoga and snorkeling opportunities develop mental fortitude and wellness. Semester students train for a culminating event: a half-marathon or a 4-mile open ocean swim. Summer Term students train for a culminating "Monster Run-Swim." The goal of our regular morning exercise program is to promote teamwork, foster camaraderie, and challenge ourselves both physically and mentally.

Health, Wellness & Safety

You can review our student safety and risk management policies on campus here.

Our programs are focused on healthy living; five days a week begin with morning exercise. Our goal is for students to return from their term strong in body, mind, and spirit. In the event of illness, we have medically trained staff on our campus to handle day-to-day medical issues that arise. Teachers and staff members are trained in advanced wilderness first aid, and there is always a staff member with a wilderness first responder (WFR) certification on call at the campus and on all wilderness expeditions. Our Wellness Team includes a Registered Nurse as

well as Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs). In addition, there is an experienced and competent doctor, along with nurse practitioners, on call 24 hours a day at a clinic in Rock Sound, located twenty miles from campus. More serious illness or injury that requires evacuation off the island is coordinated through The Island School staff. Definitive care (a hospital with an ER, diagnostics, and specialists) is located in Nassau or Miami, requiring a helicopter or plane flight.

Given our remote location and residential setting, it is our policy to review each student's medical history and any wellness needs with them before the start of the term. It is essential that The Island School has complete and up-to-date health information for each student as required and completed during the enrollment period. Accurate information about a student's health is necessary for The Island School to appropriately care for students during their term.

Prescriptions & Medications— The Wellness team checks all student prescriptions and over-the-counter medications upon arrival at The Island School and must be kept in the medical office and dispensed by the medical team. If a student feels ill, they should notify a faculty member who will make a judgment as to their care. By placing great emphasis and importance on training, health, and safety, we hope to prevent the occurrence of illness and accidents.

In addition, as you prepare to embark on your journey to Eleuthera, please be aware of the following information regarding prescription medication, the advanced preparation that is required before arriving on campus, and information on student medical care. We do not recommend sending medications by mail, given the lengthy and often unreliable shipping process. We carry most OTC medications; however, if your student uses these often (ibuprofen, acetaminophen, etc.), it may be beneficial to send these to ensure enough supply.

If your student has a prescribed psychotropic medication (**this includes medication for ADHD and ADD**), we ask that they continue with their normal regimen at The Island School. If a student chooses to discontinue these medications for the term, such decisions should be reviewed in collaboration with your health care provider and our medical team.

For any medication sent to the Island School with PRN (as-needed) instructions, the decision to administer a medication must be in accordance with the instructions provided by the parent and the student's healthcare provider. School staff will not determine whether the medication is needed, nor prompt the student to take the medication, provide advice or recommendations regarding its use, assess the necessity of administration, or provide recommendations based on staff observations, perceptions, or judgments regarding the student's academic performance, behavior, or condition.

In our setting, we are limited in the care we can safely provide regarding psychotropic prescription medications. Please note the following:

- Students should be adjusted to any psychotropic medication and dosage for at least 30 days prior to the start of their term.
- We are unable to facilitate students discontinuing psychotropic medications during their term.
- We are unable to facilitate students restarting a psychotropic medication during their term.
- We are unable to facilitate a student beginning a new psychotropic medication during their term.
- We are unable to facilitate a student changing the dosage of their psychotropic medication during their term.

Therapy— We recommend that students who are currently seeing a mental health therapist at home continue this routine virtually while at The Island School. We currently do not have a mental health counselor on campus. While teachers and advisors provide care and support, we can also work with students and families to coordinate sessions with virtual mental health professionals throughout the term, should you be interested in this option. Please reach out to our team, and we can assist you in facilitating this.

Physical Safety— We are located in a remote location on the island of Eleuthera. Arrangement for medical evacuation to definitive care (a hospital with an ER, diagnostics, and specialists) requires a minimum of 4 - 6 hours to coordinate. The Island School has a comprehensive Risk Management Manual, and students are expected to take risk management seriously. Given our location and the nature of our programs, general risk management rules for our students include, but are not limited to, asking students to wear shoes at all times except for indoors, on decks, and on beaches, not climbing trees above students own height, not doing inversions (flipping) or head-first diving into water, wear a helmet while riding a bike, and not give body modifications such as piercings or tattoos which pose a risk of infection. These expectations are implemented to increase safety in our remote location and minimize incidents from occurring. Everyone, including students, is asked to embrace a culture of safety while at The Island School.

Kitchen & Dining

Three meals a day and intermittent snacks are served in the dining hall. Food options can be described as a fusion between Bahamian influences and American preferences. As this is a change in diet for most students, it's worth noting that it takes some people, particularly those with food sensitivities, a while to adjust to the food. We ask students to consider the following recommendations and guidelines in preparation for this change: We encourage students to keep an **open mind** when it comes to food on Eleuthera and learn about local foods and cuisine. We have found, from our discussions with many students, that **probiotic supplements** are very effective for those with food sensitivities, and **soluble fiber supplements** are helpful for those who require high-fiber diets. Please consult your primary care physician for dietary advice. We can accommodate **vegetarian, gluten-free, and dairy-free diets**. We are not equipped to

accommodate paleo or vegan diets. If you identify as paleo or vegan, coordinate with our team to plan which supplemental foods to bring. We have a limited selection of specialty foods and supplements on campus and/or available on Eleuthera. Individuals with **severe food allergies** should be attentive to and responsible for managing their diet. Please note any food/dietary issues during your medical onboarding call with our Wellness Team before the term.

School Store & Student Accounts

The Campus Store operates at designated times throughout the day. Students can purchase Island School clothing, replacement uniform shirts, and other items such as reef-safe sunscreen and water bottles. All students will have an account with our Campus Store. Families can choose to add money to the account by submitting a credit card authorization form, or students can travel with a credit/debit card or cash to add to their account (USD accepted). Students may also draw cash from their accounts for trips to town or other incidentals. Parents/guardians will be billed at the end of the term before students return home. Typical charges to the store account are about $300 - $500 for the term. If you would like to add funds to a school store account or set a specific limit, please notify us.

Laundry

Laundry is sent out once a week. It is usually returned the following day. Laundry costs are included in tuition. Students should bring two sets of standard twin sheets.

Family Weekend

Parents/guardians and immediate family are invited to The Island School for a long weekend during the term. Exact dates and details for Family Weekend are shared in separate communications.

We have an intentionally structured and full program. We help and encourage students to be present in all activities. Being away from home and gaining independence is a major aspect of the personal growth our program is designed to facilitate. We kindly and respectfully request that family visits occur only during Family Weekend so as not to disrupt intentionally designed programming. If you are unable to visit during Family Weekend, please contact our team to discuss alternative arrangements that might be available to you.

Thank you for reviewing this guide. Please reach out if you have any questions. We look forward to welcoming you to campus soon!