



Open House Questions

1. Could you tell us a little more about the speciality classes and resources to support those classes?

Our specialty classes are designed to provide learning spaces tailored to their intended uses, for example, our Arts room is equipped with 4 sinks for messy artwork, and our music area has a sound-proof wall which is set up for easy access to our suite of musical instruments. We are very excited to be the only school in Cayman to also have a full sensory room, to help those who might benefit from time to time for a space designed to calm.

Our specialists will also be coming into the classrooms though, as we very carefully considered the footprint of the school building, and how each space would be used so that rooms wouldn't be sitting vacant for large periods of the day. The ability for our specialists' teachers to join the classes throughout the day also helps further cement learning between areas of study.

Our PE program will be phenomenal, with our own football field, tennis & pickleball courts, and extensive supply of specialized PE equipment. Our two PE staff have extensive experience and are looking forward to kicking off!

2. Could you tell us more about what sporting activities will be available, and will these be on site, or will children travel to them?

The school will have a regulation sized U12 football field, complete with a wide array of field sports equipment to allow us to explore a multitude of sports. We are also excited to have a hard-court tennis/pickleball/basketball court on site to further develop those sports in our own backyard, and an indoor space suitable for non-ball related but equally important PE activities such as movement, dance, yoga and more.

Beyond what the school has on site, our PE team we will be working with sport specific coaches and experts in fields such as swimming, rugby, cricket, sailing and more, to not only expand our student's involvement in a larger range of activities, but to also further develop strong community links and our extracurricular offering.



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3. Please tell us more about how the students mental, emotional and social wellbeing will be supported in school.

PSHE, which stands for Personal, Social, Health and Economic education is the foundation of our Learning Means the World curriculum and underpins our daily activities within the school. Our values and ethos lie heavily in promoting community, belonging, support and embracing our diversity and differences

Our teaching team are heavily supported not only through their dedicated learning assistants in the classrooms with them, but also through our school counsellor who will be a leading figure in the school. Our students and staff are also supported by having two SENCo's (Special Education Needs Co-Ordinators) in the school, one dedicated for our younger students, and the second for our older juniors. The doubling up of SENCo's is something not seen in many schools, however we felt strongly that to properly support our students and staff, this was an area of focus for us.

Our SEND programme is also developed to support children with a variety of needs, and we are absolutely thrilled to be the only school in Cayman to provide a full sensory room to provide a specially designed space for our students. Along with the sensory room, our school has 6 breakout rooms, which are incredibly useful spaces for small group work, 1:1 work, quiet spaces and places for external support providers to work with children without having to remove them from the class area. Our breakout rooms connect directly with our classrooms with glass doors, so that students remain connected to their classes even when doing small group or individual work.

In addition to all of this is how we promote our Student voice and leadership through our school houses, student council, peer to peer work and more.

This is such a large topic, and one impossible for us to cover in a single bullet point, so I encourage you to visit our website for more information as this is such a large part of our learning journey, and as always should you have any questions, please contact us anytime.



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4. Are you able to share any information about Aftercare provision?

Our aftercare programme will run from 3:00 – 5:30 daily and will be staffed by two regular school assistants and joined by a rotation of our students learning assistants. The programme will offer a variety of activities to suit a range of interests, weather, age levels and more, and students will also receive a late afternoon snack.

5. Can you tell us who the staff are?

We appreciate that folks are eager to know, and whilst it's a small island, we must respect that some staff wish to remain quiet for the moment, and also respect that some of our staff will require work permits which are at the discretion of the Work Permit Board which we respect. As such we will hold on announcing names for the moment, but we can tell you that of the 35 staff, approximately 12 nationalities are represented (although several have multiple nationalities, so I suppose in reality we have quite a few more countries represented)! Our average age is 35, with the youngest staff member 22, and the oldest (well, that would be rude!). We have 6 joining us from overseas, although 3 of those are returning Caymanians which leaves 3 newcomers to our shores.

Perhaps however, is this fact: Collectively, our team has 394 years of experience in their fields, and bring a wealth of knowledge, experience, and experiences to our school to share with our learners.

6. Can you tell us how big the classes are, and how many teachers are in each class?

In our first year many of our classes, particularly in our older year groups will be half full with 15-20 per year group, however when the school is full, ideally by our third year, our classes will have a maximum of 25 students per class (reception will have 24).

Our Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 classes will each have a teacher and learning assistant in the classroom, supported by our specialist subject teachers in PE, Music, Computing, Language and Arts, as well as our SENCo's, Assistants, Counsellors and Leadership Team. Our Year 3 – 6 classes will each have a teacher, and each year group will share a learning assistant between the two rooms. Again, these classes are also supported by our special subject teachers, SENCo's, Assistants, Counsellors and Leadership Team.



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7. Will there be extracurricular activities? Clubs and sports for example after school?

Absolutely! We will be providing a variety of interesting clubs although we can't tell you exactly what they are just yet, as these will be determined by our staff who will run them, along with what the students decide! Sports and Arts will play a large role at Island Primary, and we can't wait to become involved in many of Cayman's intra-primary sporting leagues, the Cayman Natural Cultural Foundation and more.

8. How will nature be incorporated into the school day.

From the moment you enter the school you'll see that every room opens to the fresh air, and we are surrounded by trees, plants and birds. Our school's 'heart' is our central open-air courtyard where we will come together as a school community for class work, PE, assemblies and more.

Each ground floor classroom also has a dedicated outdoor learning deck, fitted with shade, sinks, tables, benches and materials made for the outdoors. Our lunch hall is also designed to be open all day, taking advantage of the breezes that blow through the school to keep us naturally cool. On rainy days, when we need to close up, our external lunch hall doors are all glass, so that we still remain connected to the outside.

But beyond the building, football field, tennis courts, expansive gardens with a huge number of trees, plants, real grass, amphitheatre, tree houses and more, our desire is to let this evolve with the children, staff and parents' input, to see where this can take us and what other aspects of learning we can discover.

9. How many children are you expecting in the first year, and do you intend to be full? And are there spaces still available?

We expect, based on current numbers, that we will open in September with approximately 200-250 students. The school's capacity is 350 students, so our first year will give us a lot of room to spread out, find our feet and begin to build on an exciting future. We have spaces currently in all our classes and encourage people to come chat with us to learn more if they are interested or have questions.



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10. I've heard there will be a strong IT provision for students, can you tell us more about that, and will children be doing homework online?

We recognize that the world is changing quickly thanks to technology, and while we work to strike the right balance, we also want to ensure our students have access to IT resources to support their learning. The school will have tablets provided to our younger students in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2, with 1 tablet for every 2 children which is an optimal ratio based on the usage expected.

In our older year groups of years 3 to 6, each child will be provided with a laptop for use in school. These devices will remain at school, however if, for any reason, the school is required to move to remote learning, we will be able to quickly pivot and send devices home with students to provide a seamless transition if needed.

The use of tablets in our infant program allows us to access enhanced curriculum provision and provides a fantastic forum for children to record their work and take an active role in creating their learning journal.

The school also has a dedicated Computing Specialist teacher who will work with teachers, assistants and students to not just teach about the device and basic usage, but more widely how to incorporate technology and learn how it can support the learning. Embedded in this is also the element of age-appropriate coding lesson which extend to support our STEM and STEAM learning.

11. With regards to homework, what is the volume expected, and is it at the teacher's discretion?

When considering homework, we start by asking ourselves 'is it purposeful, and is it helpful?' Homework will be discussed as a whole school teaching body so that we may ensure our rationale behind why we assign homework is strong, and determining our central purpose and the benefits of it will be. As we come together as a team, we will discuss this in greater detail, and we will of course share this with you as we set to open.



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12. Is there any thought yet on how parent communication might be managed?

Communication is key. Ensuring it is timely, appropriate and well managed in its delivery. We are all bombarded with emails, texts, What's apps, social media pings and more in our daily life, so it's a topic we are currently giving a great deal of attention to develop a streamlined solution that serves to reflect the need, purpose and content of our messaging.

We are currently looking at a number of ways of achieving this and way in which school communication can be effectively connected to provide efficient internal communications which lead to clear and timely external communications.

13. Can you tell us a little about lunch and snack?

First and foremost is a focus on health and nutritious food, and to support this the school has installed 4 chilled water bottle fillers so there is an abundance of access to fresh chilled water all the time, supported by coolers in the younger classrooms.

Students will be asked to provide their lunch and snack; however, the school is pleased to be partnering with a lunch provider who will offer precooked meals available for purchase online directly through the provider through their website or App. These meals will be individually wrapped and delivered to the school each morning and kept cold or hot (depending on the meal) in our heated and cooling large purpose designed cabinets in our prep kitchen.

As our school garden grows, we hope to incorporate our own garden fruits and vegetables into our day, although this is more about teaching children the value and benefits of growing our own food, and how we care for the plants and trees so that in turn they care for us.

We are also very mindful that some children will be joining us with allergies, some severe, so we are ensuring that our school stays nut-free, but will also communicate with class groups if there are any additional allergies present that we can be aware of.



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14. Is the building on schedule, and how is it looking for classes to start in September?

It's probably one of the most common questions, but rightly so. The short answer is yes, we are absolutely on track, and we check in with the construction team weekly if not more often. We have achieved some huge milestones recently and the pace seems to get quicker with each day. Our News page of the website has an update posted which shows the progress and details the specific developments in greater detail so please visit the page to learn more.

When we set out to start this project, we were acutely aware of the risks ahead of us – hurricanes, shipping delays, container shortages, and more. So, we took each risk and looked at them individually with a view to understanding how each could impact us, and if so, how we could mitigate it. It was quite an undertaking, and required some heavy lifting at the very outset, but it paid off and as a result we have all of our materials ready for installation, and are on track with our staff, furniture installations, resources and materials.

15. Do you have any more information on the uniforms, and will parents need to purchase overseas from sources like Land's End like most schools in Cayman?

The full details of our uniforms will be available on the website from March 31st, however in a nutshell, the school has worked closely with a local Cayman company to source almost all elements of our students' new uniforms, to make it as easy as possible for our families.

The school will have available for purchase our school shirts, PE shirts and shorts, and hats. We simply ask parents to provide the uniform khaki shorts or skorts, black shoes (not leather please! Sneakers or trainers are best) and black socks.

Our focus on our uniforms is practicality, performance, presentation and protection. But behind that we also looked to ensure that our uniforms were easily sourced, sustainable (they contain an element of recycled material), priced sensibly, comfortable, breathable and unisex in nature.



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16. Are there plans for a middle school?

We're aware there are a few parents joining us whose children are in their last or penultimate year with us who are looking ahead. First and foremost is our priority to get the school open in September, although we are already discussing a further Year 7 or 8 program, but these options are heavily contingent on financing as it will require a second block to be constructed. We have purposely designed the site to allow for a second building, and we are at this point keeping all options open.

17. This looks like a huge project, is there anything parents can do to help?

Please share the good news! We have spaces and would love to have more families join us. Aside from that, we would love assistance as we draw closer as we will have a boat load (literally) of books, materials and more to unwrap and could use as many hands as possible. If you have an interest in putting together libraries or class toys and materials, please reach out to us anytime.