

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. How is the 5-day learning expedition structured?

20 students of the same sex and age range (usually 13-14 years-old) are accompanied by 3 staff members from their own school, 3 trained, experienced Watch Leaders (usually 17-30 years old), and 6 permanent crew aboard the Spirit of Bermuda, a regulated, global class, purpose-built, 88 foot sailboat for 5 days cruising the coastal waters off the shore of Bermuda. Students typically depart Monday morning from Dockyard and return at noon on Friday to Albouy's Point, Hamilton. Once aboard, students are divided into three watch groups of approximately 7 students each. Each watch group is directly supervised by a watch leader as well as one of the ship's officers, as they learn to handle the various aspects of the ship's functioning.

2. What kinds of safety precautions will you be taking?

The crew of *Spirit of Bermuda* are fully qualified and licensed under UK regulations. The ship meets ABS standards and is equipped with all the standard safety equipment required by law including life jackets, appropriate ship lights, emergency life rafts, VHF radio, GPS, and sonar/radar capabilities. Students receive a full safety orientation prior to setting sail. While under sail, students are required to wear safety harnesses at all times. In rough weather or when working on or near the bowsprit (or at any other time at the discretion of the Captain, First Officer or any other member of the permanent crew), students are directed to be "clipped in" or attached by their harness to a load bearing part of the ship. The Captain and First Officer, are certified with Ship's Master Medical training.

3. How far out does the boat go?

During the 5-day middle school voyages the boat is required by law to remain with 20 miles of shore. This is far enough for us to be out of sight of land for some periods of the voyage, but close enough to ensure rapid return to shore in the event of an emergency.

4. What happens in the event of a medical emergency?

The ship's Chief Officer, Colin Kinsella, has extensive training and acts as the ship's medic. In the event of major medical issues, the Spirit of Bermuda has 3 doctors on call 24 hours a day during every voyage. Emergency medical transport from the ship to the shore can be quickly arranged by the Captain at any time by VHF radio and/or cell phone.

5. How are meals provided? Do we need to pack food for our child? What if my child has special dietary needs?

Participants are provided three full meals a day along with a morning and afternoon fruit break. The preparation of all meals is coordinated and supervised by our Catering Officer, Michael Scott. Participants are not allowed to bring any additional food, drink, or snack items. Special dietary requirements or restrictions can be easily accommodated by the Catering Officer given appropriate notice prior to the voyage.

6. What will my child be doing while he or she is on board Spirit of Bermuda?

All participants are expected to actively engage in the daily operation of the ship including sail handling, navigation and steering, meal preparation, and daily cleaning and ship maintenance. Additionally, students participating in school-based learning expeditions will be involved daily in hands-on educational activities and written reflections.

7. What about personal hygiene?

Fresh water is a precious resource on board Spirit of Bermuda. Participants and crew are restricted to 1-minute showers using spring-loaded shower hoses located in each head (bathroom). These allow students to wet down, turn off the water, soap up, turn the water back on, and rinse within the time allotted. In addition, manual pump faucets are always available to provide fresh water for students to brush their teeth and wash their faces. Everyone is expected to maintain their level of personal cleanliness for the general health and well being of the rest of the ship's company.

8. Will my child have to share a bed with another child?

There are 26 bunks on Spirit of Bermuda but we often sail with up to 32 people on board. This means that participants do not have a designated bunk assigned just to them. Instead, we employ a practice called "hot bunking" in which bunks are rotated according to shift. Students DO NOT sleep in the same bunk at the same time in this system.

9. Will I be able to get a hold of someone in the event of a family emergency?

Emergency contact numbers will be provided by the school. If necessary, the school will have the ability to contact the Captain of the ship via VHF radio or cell phone.

10. How will I know that my child is O.K. during the voyage?

Parents can elect to register on Spirit of Bermuda's facebook website to view daily uploads of voyage pictures and comments by the students. Simply check the "yes"

box on the application form and provide your e-mail address to be included or search for “Spirit Sloop” if you are already a facebook user. This is a great way to experience the voyage vicariously and share in the exciting adventures of your child.

11. Will my child be sailing at night?

The decision to sail at night is based on several factors, weather conditions and crew readiness being the most important. Every effort will be made to circumnavigate the island with an overnight sail on the final evening of the voyage.

12. What, if any, special equipment will my child need to bring?

Students must bring two pairs of closed toe and heel shoes, one for wet use and the other for dry use. Sandals and flip-flops are prohibited on deck. All other specialized gear, such as foul weather suits will be provided to them on board. If they already own them, students may want to bring their own mask and snorkel, however if you do not already own them, you should not buy them for this trip. Snorkeling equipment will be provided for any in-water activities. Additionally, students are encouraged to bring their own sleeping bag or blanket. We do have several spare sleeping bags and other sets of linens in the event that a student does not have their own. We will provide pillows for all bunks.

13. My child has a medical condition, does this prohibit him/her from participating?

With advanced notice and collaboration between the ship’s crew and the student’s parents, there are very few medical conditions that cannot be accommodated. We will make every effort to ensure that your child can participate in the voyage experience in a safe and fun manner. If you have specific questions regarding your child’s condition, please contact First Officer, Colin Kinsella at #747-9373 or by e-mail at: Colin.Kinsella@bermudasloop.org

14. Will my child get seasick and what will you do if she/he does?

There is no way to predict who will get seasick. If your child is prone to motion sickness, you may want to consider consulting a family physician or purchasing an over-the-counter seasickness preventative. Our best advice to those who get seasick is to go ahead and throw-up (you will really feel better afterwards) and then avoid going below deck until the ship is in calmer water. The First Officer does have a supply of seasick tablets if case of emergency.