

## 2023 TRAVEL TIPS & IMPORTANT TRAVEL INFORMATION

Please, Read the Following & View Your Provided Itinerary for Bus Times & Roommates' Names

- ✓ **Bus Travelers** - You must arrive at the pickup location and check-in a minimum of 30-MINTUES BEFORE the designated departure time on your itinerary.
- ✓ You must have a **valid Photo ID**, to check-in with GradWeek Staff, and board the bus.
  - *\*If you still have a balance due on your account, you will be DENIED boarding and hotel check-in.*
- You must board the bus number listed on your itinerary. No exceptions.
- ✓ **Bus Baggage Allowance:** 1 suitcase to check-in and 1 very small carry-on, per traveler.
- ✓ **No traveler can leave the trip early without checking out with one of the on-site GradWeek Managers and/or Staff Members.**
- ✓ **Travelers cannot go to their hotel first! All travelers (bus and hotel only) MUST check-in** with GradWeek Staff and go through the Welcome Orientation, located at **The Barn (10025 Hutchinson Blvd, Panama City Beach, FL 32407)**.
  - **Once check-in and the Welcome Orientation are completed, GradWeek Staff will instruct you on what to do and where to go next.**
- ✓ No later than **3-Days PRIOR** to arrival, all guests (bus travelers or hotel only) are required to fill out the hotel's required Credit Card Authorization Form for hotel/room incidentals, **and submit the form online via the link >> <https://form.jotform.com/231234523890049>** along with a copy of their Photo ID and Credit Card (front and back). *\*If you experience an issue with the online form, then please download the PDF provided in your EMAILED Departure Packet.*
  - If no damage or cleaning fees are reported by the hotel for your room, then the pre-authorized amount of \$75.00 will be released back to the card provided upon check-in.

### **SPECIFIC INFORMATION FOR THOSE WHO ARE HOTEL-ONLY TRAVELERS (NO BUS):**

- ✓ All travelers arriving by car **cannot** follow any of the buses to the destination and will be required to check in with GradWeek Staff and go through the official Welcome Orientation that ALL students must attend before receiving the keys to their room.
- ✓ **\*DO NOT go to the hotel first! Check-in starts no sooner than 3pm and no later than 6pm.** All travelers must go to **The Barn (10025 Hutchinson Blvd, Panama City Beach, FL 32407)** for hotel check-in with GradWeek Staff and go through your Welcome Orientation.
  - If you miss the check-in timeframe, you MUST call GradWeek On-site Staff at (225) 505-1214 or (225) 505-1214 to make special arrangements. If you try to bypass the check-in and Welcome Orientation procedure, your parents will be notified and will be responsible for your return home.
- ✓ **Mandatory Student Driver Waiver** – Make sure that you have **submitted your signed copy of this form** (previously emailed to you and can be accessed online by clicking here >> <https://form.jotform.com/230606785062153>), **BEFORE your departure date** or you will be denied check-in.

**Bus Companies – Restrictions & Expectations** - Everyone is on the GradWeek trip to have a great time, but please be respectful of those around you. Especially the people of the city that you are visiting and the resort/hotel that you are staying at. Every year several travelers never make it to their destination or leave early due to their behavior prior to or during their trip. Misbehaving at the bus pick-up location could lead to being denied boarding. Rude or poor behavior during the bus trip will also not be tolerated and may necessitate removal from the program, your parents being notified, and being responsible for your return home. **No eating sunflower seeds, gummy snacks, or gum chewing is allowed on the bus. No smoking of any kind including vapes, e-cigarettes, or any other product. In addition, no coolers/ice chests are permitted on the bus. ONLY resealable twist-top drinks are allowed.** Travelers must stay seated unless moving to/from the bathroom. Violating any of the bus rules will result in termination of the bus portion of your trip and it will be the travelers' responsibility to find their own transportation.

**Getting Ready!** – To help you decide what essentials to pack, check [Panama City Beach, Florida's](#) weather forecast online a few days before your trip.

**Spending Money** - We recommend using a debit card and taking a small amount of cash. It is always advisable to let your bank know where you will be traveling before your departure. You can walk to many locations but if you want, you can take Uber, Lyft, or a Taxi (so plan to have cash on hand for Taxis). Traveling in groups is the safest and most economical way to go. How much money you take is up to you, but \$300 to \$500 is recommended for souvenirs, Action Pac events, transportation, and meals.

**Day of Departure** - **Do not be late! You are 100% responsible for your own transportation to your bus pick-up location and must arrive at the location a minimum of 30-minutes prior to your scheduled departure time to check-in with GradWeek Staff.** We recommend checking the directions to your pick-up location online in advance, to ensure you arrive with plenty of time.

**Hotel Only Package Travelers** – Your trip package DOES NOT include the bus transportation, so if you purchased a HOTEL ONLY package you are responsible for arranging your own rides/transportation to and from your hotel in Panama City Beach.

**At Your Destination** - You will be given a full Welcome Orientation by a GradWeek Staff member. They will check you in, explain any events or activities that may be held during your stay, and go over some basic guidelines and rules to make your trip great and worry-free. Enclosed in your Departure Packet you will find an Action Pac flyer that lists the various activities and price options as well as the application form (required to be filled out to purchase). Action Pacs are available for purchase on-site only at the Welcome Orientation by CASH ONLY. Once you arrive at your hotel, make sure to retrieve any of your luggage from the bus and look for a GradWeek Staff member wearing GradWeek shirts & ID Badges, and they will direct you where to go next.

**GradWeek Staff** – While our staff is available at your destination 24/7, the Hotel Staff can help you with daily requests, such as more towels, more

pillows, and any questions about the hotel, rooming, nearby shopping, restaurants, etc. GradWeek Staff are NOT chaperones! The GradWeek Staff are at the student hotel and available to travelers on-site 24/7 to ensure the program is running smoothly, which includes, coordinating transfers for all the arrivals and departures, Welcome Orientation, going over rules, providing a Destination Guide with an area map, and most importantly, will assist with any serious emergencies **or** roommate/hotel situations. If a traveler needs assistance while on the hotel property, please reach out to on-site staff, and be patient with both GradWeek and Hotel Staff, as rude behavior will not be tolerated.

**Calling Home** – Parents want to know you have arrived safely. Making a quick call or sending a text, d.m., or email home to say you have arrived and provide them with your room number is **highly recommended**. It is very expensive to make calls from your hotel room and is not recommended.

**In-room Security Box and Room Inspection** – Once you check-in to your room, we strongly recommend that you **use your in-room safety deposit box** to store your documents, cash, and other valuables including cell phones, cameras, etc. This will ensure that the items are securely locked away when not in use. Take a few minutes to check that everything in your room is in good shape and working order. Please **contact the GradWeek Staff or the Hotel's Front Desk personnel IMMEDIATELY IF you see anything broken, damaged, or not working properly,** to ensure you will not be held responsible for preexisting damages. If the hotel reports any room or property damage from your room, ALL travelers in the room will be responsible for paying for those damages regardless of who in the room was at fault. Room doors should NOT be left open and unsecured. Please be aware that the travel insurance **DOES NOT** cover you for loss of personal items such as cell phones, tablets, etc. If **ANY** incidences of theft occur on-site, it MUST be reported to the **hotel first, and prior to departure home!** While GradWeek will help assist any local authorities if theft or loss occurs, we are not responsible for the cost of any cell phone replacements or other personal items.

**Ahhh...Paradise!** – This is your time to relax and have a fun time. **This does not mean you can do anything you want!** All local laws are strictly enforced in and outside of the hotel, and they **will not tolerate illegal activity, disorderly conduct** (including underage drinking), or property damage. Travelers caught doing any of the above will be required to pay for any incurred damages and are at risk of being evicted from their hotel at their own expense, with no exceptions! GradWeek is not responsible for travelers that lose all or a portion of their vacation due to their behavior issues, violations, illegal actions, or damages and will not be entitled to a refund. Be smart, behave appropriately, be respectful to the locals and other guests, and stay safe by traveling in a group whenever leaving your hotel. **We highly recommend using the buddy system!** Please go out in groups, especially when going back to your hotel at night. Always remember that there is safety in numbers, and it is best to always tell a friend if you are leaving the hotel and/or activity before everyone else.

**Policy on Alcohol Consumption** - The legal drinking age in Florida is **21!** GradWeek does not promote or condone the use of alcohol by its travelers! Students caught drinking on the hotel premises will be evicted by the hotel immediately with **no refund**, and your parents will be notified, and you will be responsible for making new hotel accommodations and arranging your own transportation home! Each participant chooses whether to follow the rules. All local and federal laws are strictly enforced, and you will be held responsible if caught violating those laws.

**Returning Home** - GradWeek Staff will post when you need to be ready to board the buses (or leave the property for Hotel Only travelers) for your return home in the hotel lobby the night before departure. Before leaving the hotel, your room must be picked up and cleared of all trash. **All registered guests in that room must wait until GradWeek Staff or Hotel Staff have inspected the room for any damage.** Should there be any hotel/room damage, you and your roommates will need to proceed to the hotel front desk immediately to take care of the damage costs and pay for any other incidental charges not included in your package price. Before checking out of your room, take a quick look around to make sure you have all your belongings. Once this is done, you will be given the "Ok" to board the bus for home. Make sure all your luggage gets loaded on your bus and always keep your valuables with you. **GradWeek is not responsible for any items left behind.** Double-check that you have all your belongings before deboarding the bus once you arrive at your drop-off location.

**How to use the Emergency Medical Coverage** - Even though over 95% of our travelers do not encounter any sickness or injury, it still may occur. If sickness or injury occurs that requires medical attention, GradWeek or Hotel Staff can direct you to the medical facility at your destination. The travel insurance plan through Cultural Insurance Services International (CISI) does assist U.S. destination (domestic) travelers with trip interruption, however, it does not provide coverage for medical sickness, security evacuation, or personal property/financial instrument. Travelers will need to use their primary medical provider if medical care is needed. **For policy questions or to receive assistance while traveling, you must call (800) 303-8120, or email [claimhelp@mycisi.com](mailto:claimhelp@mycisi.com) and provide policy # GLM N18660234-DT.** The insurance agent will guide you through the policy, and if needed, help you file a claim for reimbursement for qualifying costs up to the limits of the plan.

**Money Wire Transfers** – Should you run out of money at your destination, GradWeek provides a money wire transfer service for those students who may need additional funds on-site. This service is only available Monday through Friday from 8:30 am–3:00 pm (PST), and the required form can be accessed from our website at [www.gradweek.com](http://www.gradweek.com). The Wire Transfer Authorization form is under the ABOUT US section of the website, and then click **RESOURCES**. Please complete the form and EMAIL it to [info@istours.com](mailto:info@istours.com) before **3:00 PM** Pacific Standard Time (PST), Monday through Friday. The traveler receiving the money on-site can pick up their cash with their photo ID from our 24-hour GradWeek Staff **after 7:00 pm (Florida local time)**. The wire limit is \$300.00 and there is a \$25.00 service charge per wire transfer.

**Parents Wishing to Contact Their Son/Daughter** – **PLEASE READ THE HIGH IMPORTANCE INSERT INCLUDED IN YOUR DEPARTURE PACKET!** 

**Informational Documents** – Please visit our website at [www.gradweek.com](http://www.gradweek.com) under the **ABOUT US** section, then click on **RESOURCES** to view all of our valuable travel information and forms we provide including Preparing for Travel Letter, Travel Tips, Destination Guide, Action Pac, and Travel Protection Insurance. **\*REMEMBER** – If you misplace your itinerary, you can always reprint a copy of your Trip Itinerary by logging in to your online account at [www.gradweek.com](http://www.gradweek.com) and clicking on TRIPS >> TRIP ITINERARY.

## **HOTEL CONTACT INFORMATION**

### **Shores of Panama Resort**

9900 S Thomas Drive  
Panama City Beach, FL 32408

Phone: (888) 402-5155, press 3  
Website: [www.shoresofpanama.com](http://www.shoresofpanama.com)