



YOGA RETREAT RULES AND POLICIES FOR Residential Study – Karma Yoga Program

OVERVIEW

The Sivananda Ashram Yoga Retreat (“Yoga Retreat”) is a non-profit organization founded by Swami Vishnudevananda who spread the universal teaching of H.H. Swami Sivananda. Our mission is to propagate the teachings of yoga and vedanta as a means of achieving physical, mental and spiritual well-being and Self-realization. We accomplish this mission by creating a safe and sacred environment, conducive to full immersion in the yogic practice, exploring a wide variety of spiritual practices and programs.

Our core values as concisely put by Swami Sivananda are:

- * **Serve** – Selfless service (karma yoga)
- * **Love** – love thy neighbor as thyself Ahimsa or non-violence in word and action is the negative expression of love. Devotional practices of chanting, puja, and prayer.
- * **Give** - develop a spirit of generosity through service.
- * **Purify** – including through the practice of yamas (rules of conduct; among which is **Ahimsa**, or non-injury to any living creature either by thought, word, or deed) and niyamas (yoga disciplines of cleanliness, contentment, tapas, spiritual study and worship), Asanas or postures, Pranayama or breathing exercises and yogic-vegetarian diet.
- * **Meditate** - twice daily group meditation or Satsang as well as self practice.
- * **Realize** – Realize the Self and be free - the goal of all Yoga practice

We share a responsibility to provide an environment that is supportive of deep inner work, and in alignment with the values taught by Swami Sivananda and Swami Vishnudevananda.

We are supportive and committed to the spiritual growth of those who practice with us and in turn hold our Residential Study Karma Yoga Program (RSKYP) students, whether short or longer term, to the highest degree of nonviolence, integrity and honesty.

The following policies are not intended to restrict the rights of anyone, but are intended to define and protect the proper atmosphere of the Yoga Retreat, as well as the right of all to an environment that is the most conducive to personal and spiritual growth.

You are welcome to consult with the Residential Study – Karma Yoga Coordinator (karmayogabahamas@sivananda.org), your karma-yoga supervisor, or any member of the Yoga Retreat’s senior staff on any questions you may have with respect to the above, or any other matter relating to your stay at the Yoga Retreat, your assignments or the conduct of your fellow students.



STANDARDS AND RULES OF CONDUCT:

- Use of respectful language free from profanity, cursing, swearing, vulgarity, insults, abusive or crude language, and verbal threats.
- Maintaining an environment that encourages mutual respect, promotes spiritual growth through maintaining civil and congenial relationships among senior staff, students, presenters, guests, and is free from all forms of harassment and violence.
- Promoting an atmosphere of acceptance and tolerance where all can discuss their differences and exchange ideas openly, honestly and respectfully.
- As a RSKYP student, you represent the Ashram in all contacts with the guests. Please refrain from offering your personal contacts in connection with any of the Ashram’s affairs and in all contacts with the guests act kindly and respectfully, granting service and promoting the Ashram’s image to the best of your ability.

COVID REGULATIONS

Please review the COVID regulations on the website [Sivananda Bahamas COVID Policies](#)

I read the COVID regulations pertaining to the ashram on the website (link above) and specifically acknowledge that I understand and will follow these policies including

- Wearing facemasks when requested and as required
- Observe social distancing
- I will not leave the ashram premises including Atlantis, Starbucks and other locations within walking distance
- Maintain hand hygiene at all times, using hand sanitizer provided throughout the ashram

_____	_____	_____
(Signature)	(Print Name)	Date



CONDUCT:

- The Yoga Retreat is a place for spiritual practice and growth. RSKYP students are recommended to keep celibacy and silence as much as possible during their stay at the Yoga Retreat. Your personal behavior, both private and public, should be such that it enhances the spiritual atmosphere of the Yoga Retreat.
- You are to refrain from offering unauthorized healing, massage, bodywork or other therapeutic sessions to any other of the Yoga Retreat’s occupants (including, without limitation, guests and RSKYP students).
- Excessive public displays of romantic affection or sexual conduct in the public areas of the Yoga Retreat is prohibited.
- All RSKYP students are to strictly adhere to the Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy outlined on page 5.

I read the above section relating to personal conduct and specifically acknowledge that I understand and will follow the instructions in such sections:

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(Signature)	(Print Name)	Date



Attendance and Forbidden Substances Rules:

- Attendance is mandatory at both daily satsangs. You are also required to practice your asanas daily. The 3 month immersion program requires ongoing availability for service, as you shall be instructed. Under the karma yoga program six to seven hours of daily service (seven days a week) are required. For the 36 day program, 5 hours of daily service.
- The following are forbidden for use while in the program (on and off premises): Alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, narcotics. I understand that a violation of this section is likely to result in termination of my stay at the Ashram. I am aware of the great value in keeping the Ashram free of forbidden substances and will bring to the Ashram management’s attention any use of such substances that will become known to me.
- The following are forbidden for use while in the program: meat, fish, fowl, eggs, onions and garlic.
- No candles, incense or other open flames are permitted on Yoga Retreat property except in the temple.

I read the above sections relating to attendance and forbidden substances and specifically acknowledge that I understand and will follow the instructions in such sections:

_____	_____	_____
(Signature)	(Print Name)	Date

Etiquette and Safety

- The temple is to be regarded as a place of worship and meditation, and the atmosphere in it should be kept pure. Please wash your feet, face and hands before entering the temple; refrain from unnecessary talk or chatter; enter the temple without shoes and cover your shoulders and knees. No shorts, short skirts, bathing suits, halter tops or similar apparel may be worn at any time in the temple.
- In the Ashram, please wear only modest clothing. Bathing suits are to be worn only at the beach. Nudity is forbidden.
- Shoes are not to be worn in the Meditation room or any of the asanas platforms at any time. Around the Yoga Retreat, please wear modest clothing. Bathing suits are to be worn on the beach only.
- Disturbing music or loudness is not permitted. Lights out at 11:00 pm and quiet time starts at 10:30 pm.
- For your own safety, please keep your room or tent locked at all times (locks are available in the boutique). Valuables should be kept on your person. The Yoga Retreat is not responsible for the loss of any property nor does it provide any safety deposit boxes.
- Do not leave the Yoga Retreat grounds after evening satsang without permission.
- Use of facilities of neighboring resorts without payment is trespassing, and is strictly prohibited. Violation of this rule may result in expulsion from the Yoga Retreat.
- For your own health safety you must have valid medical insurance for the entire duration of your stay at the Ashram.

I read the above sections relating to etiquette and safety and specifically acknowledge that I understand and will follow the instructions in such sections:

_____	_____	_____
(Signature)	(Print Name)	Date

Ocean Safety

- It was explained to me that there are no lifeguard services on the beach. It was also explained to me that there are strong and unexpected currents; a big drop-off (about 300 feet) by the reef and feeding sharks in shallow water at night.
- It was further explained to me that I am not to go swimming beyond the point I can stand with my head above the water on my own, should not go swimming at night, and to the extent such exist, not cross the swim lines in any event. It was further explained to me that due to the severe possible consequences of violating such safety rules, violation will result in severe disciplinary actions.

I read the above instructions relating to ocean safety and specifically acknowledge that I understand and will follow such instructions:

_____	_____	_____
(Signature)	(Print Name)	Date

Anti Sexual Harassment Policy

1. Sexual harassment of any fellow RSKYP student, staff member, guest or any other person present on the Yoga Retreat's premises is strictly prohibited. It is the Yoga Retreat's policy that all RSKYP students are responsible for insuring that the Yoga Retreat is free from sexual harassment.
2. Sexual harassment is a form of sexual discrimination and is defined as any unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favors or any conduct of a sexual nature when:
 - a. Submission to requests or conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment, whether or not the person is a paid employee or a volunteer, or the terms and conditions of any part of a student/ guest's use of the ashram; or when rejection of such advances or conduct is used negatively as a basis for any decision; or
 - b. Sexually oriented conduct, whether so intended or not, that is unwelcome and has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's performance or enjoyment of the ashram or participation in ashram programs by creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating, or offensive environment.

While sexual harassment encompasses a wide range of conduct, some examples of specifically prohibited conduct include:

- i) Unwanted sexual advances whether or not they involve physical touching;
 - ii) Sexual epithets, jokes, written or oral references to sexual conduct, gossip regarding one's sex life, comments on an individual's body, or comments about an individual's sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess;
 - iii) Sexual or discriminatory displays or publications anywhere on ashram grounds by employees or volunteers, such as sexually suggestive objects, pictures, or cartoons;
 - iv) Unwelcome leering, whistling, brushing against the body, sexual gestures, and suggestive or insulting comments;
 - v) Unwelcome inquiries into one's sexual experiences; and
 - vi) Unwelcome discussion of one's sexual activities.
3. It is against Yoga Retreat policy for any RSKYP student to sexually harass any other person by, (a) making unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favors or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature as a condition of any student's continuation of the program, or (b) making submission or rejections of such conduct the basis for decisions affecting the RSKYP student's program, or creating an intimidating or offensive serving environment by such conduct.
 4. Senior staff is responsible for reporting and taking corrective action to prevent sexual harassment in the Yoga Retreat.
 5. Any RSKYP student who has a complaint of sexual harassment by anyone involved with the Yoga Retreat, including management, other students, guests or visitors, should report the complaint immediately without fear of reprisal to a senior member of the Yoga Retreat staff (as you shall be advised upon your arrival).



PHOTOGRAPHY RELEASE AND WAIVER

I was advised that the Sivananda Ashram Yoga Retreat, through various photographers, takes photos and video recordings of activities and guests around the Ashram. I hereby give to the Sivananda Ashram Yoga Retreat, and any photographer acting on its behalf, their heirs, legal representatives and assigns, authority and permission:

- a) the unrestricted right and permission to copyright and use, re-use, publish, and republish photographic portraits or pictures of me or in which I may be included intact or in part, composite or distorted in character or form, without restriction as to changes or transformations or reproduction hereof in color or otherwise, made through any and all media now or hereafter known for illustration, art, promotion, advertising, trade, or any other purpose whatsoever. I also permit the use of any printed material in connection therewith.
- b) I waive any right that I may have to examine or approve the completed product or products or the advertising copy or printed matter that may be used in conjunction therewith or the use to which it may be applied.
- c) I hereby release, discharge and agree to save harmless, the Sivananda Ashram Yoga Retreat, and any photographer acting on its behalf, their heirs, legal representatives and assigns and all persons functioning under their permission or authority, from any liability by virtue of any blurring, distortion, alteration, optical illusion, or use in composite form whether intentional or otherwise, that may occur or be produced in the taking of said picture or in any subsequent processing thereof, as well as any publication thereof, including without limitation any claims for libel or invasion of privacy.
- d) I hereby affirm that I am over the age of majority and have the right to contract in my own name.

I have read the above authorization, release and agreement, prior to its execution; I fully understand the contents thereof. This agreement shall be binding upon me and my heirs, legal representatives and assigns.

_____	_____	_____
(Signature)	(Print Name)	Date