



Beach School Policy and Handbook



Introduction to Beach Schools

At Beaconhill Community Primary School, we have a member of staff who has been awarded an 'Archimedes Training and Beach Schools Practical Skills and Environmental Management' Level 3 qualification. This allows that member of staff to work with groups of children at local beaches throughout the school year. Children are given time to explore the surrounding environment. However, priority is given to group discussions regarding boundaries, dangers and safety which are paramount to learning safely. Beach School activity encourages independence, turn taking, communication, negotiation and an element of risk taking within safe and risk-assessed sessions. Accredited staff transport children by mini bus to the beach, safety is paramount and the adult/child ratio is low to enable staff to work and supervise children appropriately.

We aim to support children to explore and experiment, develop an interest in the environment, stay healthy and to have fun. During sessions, children access a wide range of stimulating activities. They may learn about the gravitational pull of the moon on the tides; look into high and low tides, explore their creativity by making art creations using the natural materials found on the beach, develop shelter building skills, play imaginative role play games or find out about the creatures that inhabit our shoreline. Beach activities are planned in line with the school curriculum and will run alongside class based work.

Aims of Beach School

1. To provide children with experiences that encourages an appreciation, awareness and knowledge of the natural environment.
2. To learn to respect and care for the local environment.
3. To explore, experiment and stay safe.
4. To abide by rules and set standards of behaviour, to work cooperatively in groups and to respect each other's ideas.
5. To develop children's self-esteem, self-confidence and perseverance through the setting of small achievable tasks.
6. To develop children's communication and language through developing questioning skills, reasoning and descriptive vocabulary.
7. To develop fine and gross motor skills, coordination and dexterity.

Outline of Beach School Experience

- Beach School takes place during term time and in all weather conditions.
- The school will inform parents of the visits and request that an SV5 form and consent form are completed at the start of each school year.
- The Beach School Leader will ensure that all children are suitably clothed with waterproof coats, trousers and boots.
- The sessions will vary in duration from one hour to a full day, depending on the age and experience of the children, the planned activities and the weather conditions.
- A variety of activities are planned, which cater for all abilities and needs.
- The children are taught a variety of skills through practical hands on activities. They may also learn how to light fires safely.
- The children learn the care and safe use of a wide range of tools. This is a closely supervised activity.
- Children are encouraged to listen attentively to instructions and to take responsibility for their actions. They are also encouraged to have respect for the environment.

Please see Appendix 1 for further details outlined in our Normal Operating Procedures (NOP).

Resources

- The Beach School Leader holds a level 3 qualification in Beach Schools and Environmental Management. All staff hold an up to date First Aid certificate. Beach School Leader is responsible for planning, organising and running all Beach School sessions alongside class teachers.
- The school uses our own Beach School 17 seater minibus to transport the children to and from the beach. The bus is fitted with seat belts. The Leader, staff and other volunteers travel on the bus with the children. Several members of staff hold the relevant license to drive the bus.
- Staff who assist regularly on sessions have been given training by the Beach School Leader and have read the Beach School Policy and Handbook. All staff are DBS checked.
- All children wear a high visibility vest.
- The Beach School Leader carries a 'Beach School Bag' containing, first aid kit, burns kit, wipes, tissues, mobile telephone, emergency contact details, wipes, antibacterial gel, spades and buckets and other resources depending on the planned session.
- All children will wear a precautionary life-jacket when working anywhere near water.

The role of the Beach School Leaders

- The Beach School Leader ensures the safety of the children at all times. The leader will carry out a detailed safety check before each session and comply with health and safety risk assessments. These assessments are continuous and all staff are part of this process. The leader will also check tide times and weather before the trip.
- The Beach School Leader will ensure that all documentation is relevant and up to date.
- The Beach School Leader will carry an emergency pack at all times.
- The Beach School Leader is responsible for all equipment and will ensure that it is checked before use and returned back into the 'Beach School Bag' after each session.
- The Beach School Leader will keep an accident book and keep parents fully informed of any incidents that may occur during a session, e.g. trips, falls, stings, etc. If there has been a 'near miss', this will also be documented and discussed with the parents and staff.
- The Beach School Leaders have disseminated training to all staff, who may lead their own class trips.

Environmental Impact

Beach School has environmental awareness at the heart of its ethos. Wherever possible, environmentally friendly products and recycled materials are used when appropriate. Good practice is modelled by adults showing children that the world in which we live should be cared for.

Health and Safety

The Beach School programme will support children to develop responsibility for themselves and others. It will encourage early risk management strategies that will ensure children start to consider the impact of their actions on themselves and on others.

A site risk assessment has been carried out and a copy is held in the Beach School file on the school site.

The Beach School Leader has an up-to-date certificate in First Aid and is in charge of first aid arrangements. A number of first aid kits are taken on all visits and a separate burns kit is taken when incorporating fire pit activities. In the case of an accident requiring further assistance, emergency contact forms are carried with a mobile phone.

Fires are a valuable part of the Beach School experience but will only be lit according to the procedures and permission from the local authority or landowner.

The safety procedure when paddling is that one adult will be in the sea with their back to the water. Another adult will be with the children as they walk down the beach to the waters edge.

Child Protection

Beach School sessions are led by a trained Beach School Leader, supported by members of staff and volunteers. All adults are fully briefed on health and safety, risk assessment of sites and activities. Staff and volunteers are made aware of the relevant school policies and procedures and ensure that they adhere to the guidance contained in them. All school staff and regular volunteers have current DBS checks.

Equality and Inclusion

Beach School sessions are inclusive and all needs and abilities are catered for. We aim to provide a safe and secure environment in which children can flourish and in which children feel able to share their ideas. Additional risk assessments are carried out for children with Special Educational Needs.

Behaviour

At Beach School we operate within the Behaviour Policy of the school. When a child's behaviour threatens the well being of him/herself or others, and he/she does not respond to a verbal warning, he/she may be returned to school.

Weather Conditions

Beach School sessions will go ahead in all weather conditions with only a few exceptions:

- Strong winds that make beach areas hazardous.
- Dangerous travelling conditions such as snow or ice.
- Very wet or extremely cold conditions.
- During very hot periods, where sun burn and heat stroke could be a high factor.

During cold weather, warm drinks are taken down to the beach in flasks, to ensure the children are comfortable and warm. Cold drinks and ice packs are taken in the summer to ensure children stay cool.

Clothing

To ensure that the children are sufficiently protected from the weather and the beach environment we require children to wear appropriate clothing and footwear. Clothing is likely to get sandy or wet so protective clothing is required.

Winter Beach Kit

The general rule is to wear layers which keep in the heat and can be removed if needed.

Children will need:

A warm coat
Long sleeved t-shirt/shirt
Jumper/fleece
Warm hat
Gloves - not mittens
Wellies with warm socks
Trainers
Waterproof coat and trousers
Warm, comfortable trousers (not jeans!)
Spare socks

Summer Beach Kit

A waterproof jacket
Sun hat
Sun cream applied before session
Wellies
Trainers
Spare socks
A water bottle

The Beach School Leader and staff will ensure all the children are appropriately dressed before leaving for the beach.

Spare Clothes

In the case of a half day visit, parents will be asked to provide their child with their school uniform to change into on returning to school.

Cancellation

There may be times when Beach School sessions have to be cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances. These may include:

- Staff illness
- Adverse weather conditions
- Any situation that poses a health and safety risk

In the event of this situation arising, cancellation decisions are made as soon as possible and volunteers are advised. Parents will be informed via text and the school Facebook page.

Procedures for Lighting Fires at Beach School

Before lighting a fire at Beach School, the following should be in place:

- The agreement of the Head Teacher
- The Beach School Leader must be present
- Permission from the Local Authority or Landowner
- Children must have a secure knowledge of the circle safety (not crossing the circle, and not walking in the vicinity)

When lighting a fire:

A trained person will take responsibility for the fire. This will be their sole responsibility for the session. They shall be responsible for lighting it, manning it while it is burning and putting it out safely at the end of the session.

The fire shall be contained within the area agreed with the Local Authority or Land Owner and in the centre marked-out circle. The ground shall be cleared of flammable material and the following adhered to:

- We will have a container of water beside the fire to put it out.
- We will ensure that the flames of the fire do not reach higher than knee-height.
- While the fire is being lit, young children will be engaged in activities elsewhere.
- We will extinguish the fire before the session ends.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

The leader must ensure that all staff and volunteers are familiar with current risk assessment and emergency procedures at the start of each session. Groups must stay within the agreed boundaries which will ensure they are within earshot of each other. Please see appendix 2 for further details outlined in our Emergency Action Plan (EAP).

Emergency information is kept in the Beach School Bag, along with a mobile phone and First Aid kits.

In the case of a major injury:

- Keep calm. If necessary, remove the danger, or the person from the danger.

- Call 999 and stay with the casualty whilst the children make their way back to the assembly point. A member of staff will take responsibility for the children while the leader joins the casualty.
- The leader will carry out necessary First Aid, whilst delegating someone to call for further assistance, if necessary. If assistance is required, an adult will be delegated to meet them at a pre-arranged place.
- Whoever has called for further assistance will also call the school to inform them of what has happened. The incident must be reported in the School Accident Book.

Minor Injuries

All minor injuries must be recorded in the accident book and reported to the leader. First Aid must only be administered by a member of staff with a current First Aid certificate.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

The Beach School leader will always carry a mobile phone.

Emergency Telephone Numbers

School: 01670714864

Emergency Services: 999

Location of Beach School Sites:

Blyth Beach
 South Shields
 Druridge Bay Country Park and beach
 Cullercoats beach
 Tynemouth Beach
 St.Mary's Island, Whitley Bay
 Holy Island
 Cambois Beach
 Cresswell beach
 Amble Beach
 Alnmouth Beach
 Bamburgh Beach
 Longhoughton
 Cullercoats
 Howick Beach
 RNLi Lifeboat Station - Blyth

Beach School Guide for Volunteers

Before joining our Beach School team please read the following guidance carefully.

Before Leaving School

- Check all equipment against the session list.
- Ensure all children/staff are appropriately clothed (waterproofs and Wellingtons) and have visited the toilet.
- Assist with transportation of equipment to bus.
- Accompany children in an orderly fashion to and on the bus.
- Ensure all children have seat belts secured.

Arrival at the Site

- On arrival assist children off the bus and check for any items left on the bus.
- Assist with transporting equipment to the site.
- Accompany your group to the safety of the grass verge and stand with them.
- At all times be alert and aware and cooperate with the leaders.

On the Beach

- Encourage and support your group during activities as requested or directed by the leaders.
- Allow children time and space to solve any problems and encourage independence by offering suggestions rather than showing them how or taking over the task.
- Assist leaders with any cooking, snacks or drinks that may be needed.
- Be vigilant for any potential dangers and inform the leader immediately of any accidents, then assist as directed.
- Be vigilant of any areas of quick sand/sink holes.
- Be aware of any jellyfish, particularly in the summer months.
- Be vigilant of the tide, looking out for rip tides and ensure the children's safety at all times.
- Assist in clearing the site and transporting equipment back to the bus.
- Accompany the children back to the bus and assist with boarding if necessary. Ensure all children are seated with belts on.

On return to School

- Assist children getting off the bus safely.
- Check that nothing has been left on the bus.
- Accompany children back to the relevant classes.
- Assist with clothing and ensure it is returned to the children's pegs.

All volunteers must have read a copy of the Beach School Policy document. Any questions, please ask.

Rip Tide Information

Rips are strong currents that can quickly take swimmers from the shallows out beyond their depth.

Lifeguards will show you where you can avoid rips but if you do get caught in one:

- Stay calm – don't panic
- If you can stand, wade don't swim
- Keep hold of your board or inflatable (if you have one) to help you float
- Raise your hand and shout for help
- Never try to swim directly against the rip or you will become exhausted
- Swim parallel to the beach until free of the rip, then make for shore
- If you see anyone else in trouble, alert the Lifeguards or call **999** or **112** and ask for the Coastguard.

Please see the RNLi Beach Safety Booklet that is kept in the Beach School folder on the school site for further Beach Safety information.

Appendix 1 Normal Operating Procedures (NOP)

- The Beach School Leader will ensure that all necessary equipment is ready prior to the beach visit, including a letter to parents to ask for clothing/ footwear.
- The Beach School Leader will plan activities according to the season.
- The Beach School Leader will transport the children to the beach by minibus.
- As pupils arrive at the beach, beach leaders direct them to their nominated adult. Beach leaders then direct groups to their starting task and give each group leader a list of suggested activities and the pupils they are responsible for.
- Each group starts at a designated activity but then they may choose any of the listed activities to go to next.
- Adults are reminded that paddling and fire building must only be done with a Beach School Leader.
- Each adult must keep a check on the children they are responsible for and do a head count continuously throughout the session.
- Beach School Leaders will carry a mobile phone. Other adults are recommended to carry a phone too.
- Class Teachers will continue with follow up work after each trip.

Appendix 2 – Emergency Action Plan

- The group leader will report any concern to Beach Schools Leader.
- The leader will assess the situation and, if necessary, remove the danger, or the person from the danger.
- A First Aid bag will always be located in the same place. First aid will be given if appropriate.
- Risk assessments will be followed as appropriate.
- The leader will use a mobile phone to make an emergency call to the relevant emergency service if necessary.
- The leader will delegate a request to inform the Headteacher.
- The incident will be recorded in the school accident book.

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