



Beach School Policy and Handbook





Introduction to Beach School

At Beaconhill Community Primary School, we have two members of staff who have been awarded an 'Archimedes Training and Beach Schools Practical Skills and Environmental Management' Level Three qualification (Mrs Wharton and Mrs Williams).

This allows those members of staff to work with groups of children at local beaches throughout the school year. Children are given time to explore the surrounding environment. Priority is given to group discussions regarding boundaries, dangers and safety which are vital to safe learning. Beach School actively 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. Naturally, safety is of paramount importance and the adult/child ratio is designed 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. For example, children 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 encourage 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 visits take place during term time and in all weather conditions (unless conditions are deemed to be unsafe)
- The school will inform parents of the visits and request that paperwork is completed at the start of each school year.
- Parents, alongside the Beach School Ranger, 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. This is dependent 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.
- 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

- Mrs Williams, the Beach School Coordinator and Mrs Wharton, the Beach School Ranger, both hold Level Three qualifications in Beach Schools and Environmental Management. All staff hold an up to date First Aid certificate. Class teachers are responsible for planning beach visits and the Beach School Ranger is responsible for organising and running all Beach School sessions alongside class teachers/teaching assistants.
- We use our own 17 seater minibus to transport the children to and from the beach. The bus is fitted with seat belts. The Beach Ranger, staff and other volunteers travel on the bus with the children. Several members of staff hold the relevant license to drive the bus (currently we have four members of staff with the appropriate license).
- Staff who assist regularly on sessions have been given training by the Beach School Ranger and have read the Beach School Policy and Handbook. All staff are DBS checked.
- All children wear a high visibility vest.
- The Beach School Ranger carries a 'Beach School Bag' containing, first aid kit, burns kit, wipes, tissues, mobile telephone, emergency contact details, antibacterial gel and other resources depending on the planned session.



The roles of the Beach School Ranger and Beach School Co-ordinator

- The Beach School Ranger and all attending staff ensure the safety of the children at all times whilst on visits. The ranger 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 a part of this process. The leader will also check tide times and weather before the visit.
- The Beach School Ranger 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 Ranger will ensure accidents are logged in class accident books and first aid stickers are issued.
- The Beach School Co-ordinator will ensure that all documentation is relevant and up to date.
- The Beach School Co-ordinator is responsible for collating all planning and creating risk assessments to ensure all visits can be carried out safely.

Environmental Impact

Beach School has environmental awareness at the heart of its ethos. Wherever possible, environmentally friendly products and recycled materials are used. Good practice is modelled by adults showing children that the world in which we live should be cared for. Groups will regularly carry out litter picking activities as part of their visits. Children are provided with gloves, litter pickers and bin bags for this.

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.

The Beach School Co-ordinator carries out termly risk assessments which have to be approved by the local authority.

The Beach School Ranger has an up-to-date certificate in First Aid and is in charge of first aid arrangements. 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, a mobile phone is carried at all times.

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 edge of the water.

Child Protection

Beach School sessions are led by a trained Beach School Ranger, 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 where necessary. Alternative provision with access to sand on school grounds is provided for children who are not yet able to safely access the beach.

Behaviour

At Beach School we operate within the Behaviour Policy of the school. Behaviour expectations on Beach School visits are the same as when in school. We reserve the right to stop children from attending beach visits (or all other external visits) if we do not believe they can safely take part.

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 sunburn and heat stroke could be a risk.

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. Clothing requirements will be stated on visit letters. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that children are dressed appropriately for Beach School visits.

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
- 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 Ranger 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 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 e.g. via text and/or 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 Headteacher
- The Beach School Ranger 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).

In the case of a major injury:

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

Emergency Contact Information

The Beach School leader will always carry a mobile phone.

Emergency Telephone Numbers

School: (01670) 714864

Emergency Services: 999

Beach School Leader also has the mobile telephone numbers for the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and Beach School Coordinator.

Location of Core Beach School Sites

Alnmouth Beach (///drawn.recruiter.trudges)

Amble Beach (///supplied.anchorman.passport)

Bamburgh Beach (///different.runways.flap)

Blyth Beach (///ripe.winter.pine)

Cambois Beach (///those.pound.best)

Cresswell beach (///veto.plugs.recruiter)

Cullercoats beach (///design.money.dome)

Druridge Bay Country Park and beach (///bulldozer.glorious.town)

Farne Islands (///cigar.trout.blunders)

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Holy Island (///diverting.bolt.rectangular)

Howick Beach (///yappy.innocence.washed)

Loughoughton Beach (///jammy.shiny.caravan)

Low Hauxley (///plausible.curtains.smile)

RNLI Lifeboat Station – Blyth (///perky.hobbyists.milkman)

Newbiggin by the Sea Beach (///slot.allowable.impose)

Sandhaven Beach, South Shields (///rise.arena.money)

Seaton Sluice Beach (///speeds.motel.roofs)

St.Mary's Island, Whitley Bay (///round.rash.indeed)

Tynemouth Beach (///charm.minute.scared)

There may also be occasional visits to other coastal areas.

Beach School Guide for Volunteers

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

Before Leaving School

- Check all equipment to ensure you have everything you need and all is in working order.
- Ensure all children/staff are appropriately clothed (waterproofs and wellies) and have visited the toilet.
- Assist with transportation of equipment to bus.
- Accompany children in an orderly fashion to the bus.
- Ensure all children have seat belts securely fastened.
- Complete pupil register.

Arrival at the Site

- On arrival assist children off the bus and check for any items left on the bus.
- Mark children off the bus using the register.
- 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/sinkholes.
- 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.
- Mark register as children get on the bus.

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 Ranger will ensure that all necessary equipment is ready prior to the beach visit.
- Teachers will plan activities according to the season.
- The Beach School Ranger 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.
- Fire building must only be done with a Beach School Leader present.
- Each adult must keep a check on the children they are responsible for and do a head count continuously throughout the session as well as registers on and off the bus.
- Beach School Ranger will carry a mobile phone. Other adults are recommended to carry a phone too.
- Teachers will continue with follow up work after each visit.

Appendix 2 – Emergency Action Plan

- The group leader will report any concern to Beach School Ranger.
- The ranger will assess the situation and, if necessary, remove the danger, or the person from the danger.
- A First Aid bag will always be carried on each visit. First aid will be given if appropriate.
- Risk assessments will be followed as appropriate.
- The ranger 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.

Review Cycle	Three Yearly
Last Review	December 2024
Next Review	December 2027
Lead Author	Amanda Williams