

Chapel St Leonards Primary School



Beach School Handbook

Our Beach School

At Chapel St Leonards Primary School we believe that the beach is a fantastic resource that can be used, both to learn and have fun on. Our Beach School is a way of giving children the opportunity to learn and develop in a natural environment, sparking their intrinsic motivations to explore, create and be curious about the world around them. Our Beach School provides an opportunity for holistic development for children, giving them good foundations for the rest of their life. This handbook outlines the key rationale and ideas for supporting beach schoolwork at Chapel St Leonards Primary School. It will also outline the safety requirements for all staff when engaging in beach activities.

We have a fully qualified Level 3 Beach School leader who is the visit leader for all Beach School sessions that take place in our school.

As a learning resource, the rationale of going to the beach links coherently to our curriculum vision ensuring our use of the beach is focused, inspiring, responsive and engaging.

We are committed to ensuring safe and high quality experiences when using the beach in relation to learning outside the Classroom and the beach. We will visit the beach in any weather: rain or shine. The only instances where weather will stop a beach trip is during storms or particularly heavy rain or strong winds.

Organisation of Beach School Sessions

Permission for children to use the beach will be gathered from parents using their 'on entry' consent for school trips and visits form. In addition, prior to a Beach School session, a letter will be sent home to all parents to ensure that children are equipped with the appropriate clothing.

We use the beach in line with the seaside code. This includes: leaving things where you find them, including plants, animals and stones, making sure you know the tide times and discarding rubbish that could kill the local wildlife.

As part of our beach schools provision, we will encourage children to take some risks as part of their overall development that will support them to become well-rounded human beings.

Before going on the beach, children need to be reminded that everything we find on the beach belongs there, so we must not take anything back with us. No trace of the activities taken place on the beach should be left, for example if building a fire it should be put out correctly and then covered. The children, particularly younger children, may become over excited when looking at live creatures, so how to handle them could be demonstrated beforehand. Some of our classes may decide to create their own beach code on how they will treat the environment when they visit the beach.

Safety and Assessing Risk

All beach activities must be risk assessed.

Whilst visiting the beach, there will always be at least one member of staff who is confident with the Normal Operating Procedures and the Emergency Action Plan. These are detailed below. Individual class and activity risk assessments can be found in a folder on the beach school trolley.

Normal Operating Procedures

The Visit leader and Education Visits Coordinator (EVC) to discuss visit to the beach (rationale, logistics etc.)

EVC to advise visit leader on the type of activity that could take place depending on the season, weather and tide.

Visit leader, to organise visit, including risk assessment, ensuring they have the correct number of adults and a letter home to parents asking for the child to be sent with appropriate clothing.

The visit leader must take the school mobile phone. At least one other adult should also have a mobile phone.

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.

Agreed route and area of the beach

The visit leader and the adult support will walk the children down Sea Road, up the Pullover onto the sea wall and then walk along the promenade.

The children will use our familiar part of the beach – along the promenade, past the Admiral Benbow pub and on to the next opening in the railing on the left (in line with the flagpoles). We walk down the few steps, cross the dunes and set up on the far Eastern side of the dunes.

The visit leader must walk the class down onto the beach.

Whilst the children are carrying out their activity, the adults must support and watch them, carrying out head counts at appropriate intervals.

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.

Spare Clothes

Parents will be asked to provide their child with a full change of clothes to change into on returning to school. A change of clothing to wear at the beach in case the child(ren) get wet will also be requested.

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.

Emergency Action Plan

Visit leader report any concerns regarding the trip to the EVC.

First aid bag and burns kit located in the trolley for use if required.

A mobile phone, with service, will also be located on the trolley.

In the event of a problem on the visit, respond using the risk assessment.

First Aid required, but well enough to remain on the trip/trip to continue:

- If appropriate, apply first aid, and continue with the activities. Apply first aid using the first aid kit in the trolley.
- If needed, use a mobile phone to contact the school, depending on the incident a member of staff walks to the beach and takes injured child, or whole class return to school.
- Emergency services needed:
- Contact emergency services immediately and then notify school of the incident.
- Use contents of the trolley to ensure the injured person is comfortable and warm whilst waiting for emergency services.
- School will notify parents/ carers.
- Depending on the incident, two adults remain with the injured person whilst waiting for the emergency services. Other adults will leave school, walk to the beach and then accompany the rest of the class to school.

Risks

Due to the environment of the beach, it obviously poses a number of risks. However, these can be prevented by identifying the risks beforehand and implementing suitable preventative measures. Often the benefit and positive contribution of the different activities on the beach outweigh the possible risks. Children also enjoy a degree of risk taking.

An obvious risk on the beach is the tide. It is important to check the tide table before heading out onto the beach, this ensures knowledge of where the tide is when on the beach, and which way it is going, in or out. If caught by the tide, then stay calm, wave arms in the air and shout and wave anything brightly coloured. The tide can come in strongly: do not swim against it. Instead, swim across the shore line until free of the current and then head to shore. A member of staff will be supervising the water at all times.

Another risk that could affect visits to the beach is the weather. When visiting the beach with young children in particular it is important to be aware of the sun. Being on the beach when it is hot can be misleading due to the wind. Children and adults should ensure that they are dressed appropriately for warm weather including sun hats and sun cream.

When warm, people can quickly become dehydrated so water should be taken to on visit and opportunities to drink regularly. Groups should aim to stay out of the sun at midday when the sun is at its highest point as this is when it is the hottest and the risks increased.

Bad weather can also be dangerous on a beach. If very windy, or heavy rain, then visibility or hearing can be reduced. This may mean that you miss other risks, for example the incoming tide. If dark clouds become visible and thunder is heard or lightening is seen it is important to head for shelter immediately. Being on an open beach increases the likelihood of being struck by lightning. Emergency shelters, such as Bothy Bags, will not offer any safety against lightening. If it is not possible to reach shelter then stay out from open space and away from tall objects. As water conducts electricity it is important to head to dry areas. Being indoors is the best protection against lightening. Do not leave your shelter and do not go outside until thirty minutes after you saw the last lightning bolt.

Trolley

The trolley contains items that ensure everyone is safe and happy throughout the visit to the beach. The contents should be checked before and after a visit to ensure that it is in good condition.

The trolley should include:

- A whistle
- A mobile phone (the service should be checked to ensure its coverage whilst on the beach)
- Shelter building equipment
- Bin and nappy bags
- Plastic gloves
- First aid kit
- Warm and cold water
- Handwashing station

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

Children 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.