

Zetland Beach School Handbook



Introduction:

The Council for Learning Outside the Classroom states that “LOtC should not be about a once a year school trip, but about frequent, continuous and progressive opportunities to learning outside the classroom that build on knowledge and skills gained during previous experiences both inside and outside the classroom” (LOtC – The OfSTED perspective)

At Zetland Primary School we believe that the beach is a fantastic resource that can be used, both to learn and have fun on. This handbook intends to outline the key rationale and ideas for supporting beach school implementation for Zetland practitioners. It will also outline the safety requirements for all staff when engaging in beach activities.

As a learning resource, the rationale of going on the beach matches the school ethos well - allowing children to use their local environment to enrich the curriculum. 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 strong winds.

Permission to use the beach:

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, at the beginning of each term, a letter will be sent home to all parents to ensure that children are equipped with the appropriate clothing.

Redcar and Cleveland Council are happy that that the public are free to use the beach, as long as they follow 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.

Preparing children for Learning Outside the Classroom:

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. As a class you could create your own beach code on how you will treat the environment when you 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:

Normal Operating Procedures

- 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.
- Before leaving, the visit leader must check the contents of the 'happy bag' to ensure everything is accounted for and working.
- The visit leader must go through the contents of the 'happy bag' with any another adult(s) that is supporting the visit.
- The visit leader must discuss the tide times and speeds and cover the contents of the 'happy bag' if needed with any supporting adults.
- The visit leader must take the school mobile phone. At least one other adult should also have a mobile phone.
- The visit leader must allocate a group to each supporting adult.
- Agreed route: The visit leader and the adult support must walk the class down Redcar Lane, over the crossing on to the sea front and down onto the beach in front of the Stray Café.
- The visit leader must walk the class down onto the beach.
- Each group of children stay with their supporting adult. Whilst the children are carrying out their activity, the adults must support and watch them, carrying out head counts at appropriate intervals.
- Whilst the activities are ongoing, the visit leader must stay with their back to the sea defence, watching the children and the tide with the 'happy bag'.
- The visit leader should do follow up activities, such as reflection time of the beach, after the visit.
- The visit leader should ensure that the contents of the 'happy bag' are intact and ready for the next visit.

Emergency Action Plan:

- Visit leader report any concerns regarding the trip to the EVC.
- First aid bag and burns kit located in the 'happy bag' for use if required.
- A mobile phone, with service, will also be located in the 'happy bag'.
- 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 'happy bag'.

- 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 'happy bag' 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, so you are aware where the tide is when you are on the beach, and which way it is going, in or out. If you do find yourself being caught by the tide, then you should stay calm, wave your arms in the air and shout. If you have something bright coloured, then you should also wave this. The tide can come in strongly, so do not swim against it. Instead, swim across the shore line until free of the current and then head to shore.

Another risk that could affect your trip 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 be sure to take water with you and drink it at regular intervals. You 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. If you do feel that you are becoming sunburnt ensure that you find shade immediately and try to cover and protect the part of the body that is getting burnt.

Alternatively, 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 are visible, you hear thunder or see lightening 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, you should try and get somewhere dry. This may be in the splash zone. However, being indoors is the best protection against lightening. You should ensure that you do not leave your shelter and go outside until thirty minutes after you saw the last lightning bolt.

Happy Bag:

The Happy Bag is designed to ensure that it helps keep everyone 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 happy bag should include:

- A whistle
- A mobile phone (the service should be checked to ensure its coverage whilst on the beach)
- A throw line
- Camping foam mat

- Orange survival bag
- Thermal blanket
- Bothy bag
- Plastic gloves
- First aid kit

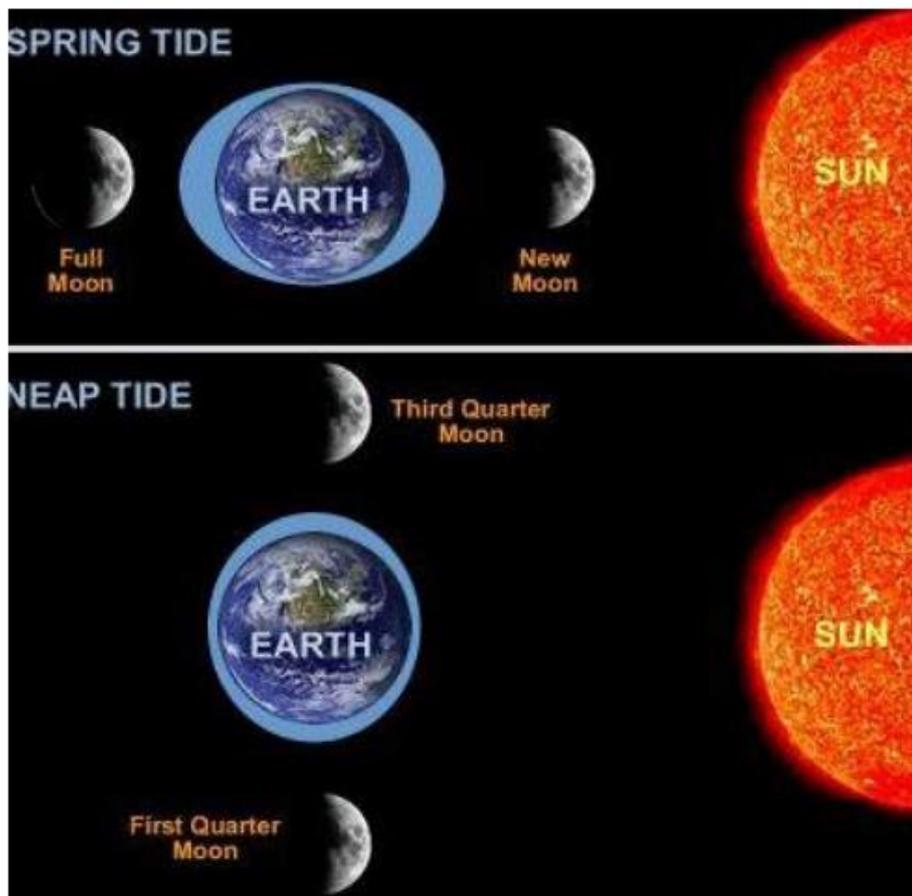
If building fires, the happy bag should also contain a burns kit and fire blanket.

Seasons and tides:

When planning your beach trip, it is important to bear in the mind the time of year you want to go and the time of the day. Both can have a big impact on what type of activities you can carry out.

Spring and Neap Tides:

- Spring tides travel faster and further up the shoreline. A spring tide occurs when the Sun, moon and Earth are directly in line with each other.
- Neap tides travel slower than a spring, and don't travel as far up the shore. They occur when the Sun, moon and Earth are not in line with each other.
- Slack water is when the tide has stopped coming in and is about to change direction and begin to go out. It is when the tide line is at its highest.
- When planning your session, it is important to consider where the tide will be and if it is a spring or neap tide.
- For example, if you are working in the high tide zone, and a spring tide is coming in you must ensure not to be caught unawares as the tide will be moving faster, and travel further inland than usual.
- If you are working in the mid tide zone, as the tide goes out, then you can worry less about being caught out by the tide. This is because the tide has got to move out, and then back in again before reaching you. This process would take roughly 6 hours.
- For example,



Seasons

Although the Sun and the moon affect the tide, you must also take into account the season in which you take the children onto the beach. This is mainly because of the weather, but it can also change what you might find on the beach.

In the Autumn and Winter, the weather is generally raining and cold. It is important that all children are dressed appropriately to spend their time on the beach warm and dry (as much as possible) by wearing waterproof coats and trousers. Children should also wear layers to stay warm. You must take into account the visibility and how well the children can hear you, and each other, in bad weather.

As the visit leader, you should watch your group for signs of becoming cold, rather than taking them inside you can change the activity, for example play some running around games to warm the children up. It is important not to take the children out when a storm is approaching/in a storm due to the risk of lightening.

If the weather has been particularly windy, then the sea may travel slightly more in then it would be normally. It would also not be appropriate to do particular activities, such as paddling, when very windy as this increases the strength of the waves and the risk of the children falling into the water.

In the Spring and Summer, the weather should be becoming warmer with less rain and not as windy. Again, children need to be dressed appropriately for the weather. For example, if it is hot and sunny children need to wear suntan lotion and sun hats. If it is warmer children may be more tempted to go into the water so it is important they are reminded of water safety and how to behave during paddling sessions.

Due to the warmer weather, it is more likely that the rock pools will have more creatures to discover in them as well. During the colder months, many animals, such as crabs, travel deeper and further into sea to avoid the cold. When the weather starts warming up they begin to move back towards the shore where they can be washed up into the pools.