

Information Sheet: Planning a trip to the Seashore Checklist



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Planning a trip to the Seashore Check list:

1. Access / Facilities	
2. Risk Assessment	
3. First Aid / Emergency	
4. Tides	
5. Volunteers	
6. Plan the Day of Activities	
7. Briefing / Designated Meeting Point	
8. Clothing	
9. Changing Tides	
10. Equipment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Simple identification keys to life on the seashore - A bucket (per group) - Small hand held dip nets 1. Small Ziploc food bags (for seaweed / shells) 2. Magnifying pots 3. Digital Camera (with macro capabilities for close up pictures of small creatures) - Clipboard, Notebook and Pencil (and a plastic polypocket – in case it rains) - Hula Hoops (in lieu of quadrants for counting) - Games and Activities 	
11. Safety on the Seashore Code	
12. Conservation Code on the Sea Shore	



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Before the field trip to the seashore - check the following:

1. Access / Facilities:

Select a safe seashore where you can safely manage a fieldtrip. ALWAYS visit the shore BEFORE taking the class.

- Ensure there is good mobile phone coverage in the case of an emergency, easy access to the seashore (e.g. road) and parking.
- Identify where the facilities are on site – toilets, shelter, somewhere to eat lunch, wash hands etc.
- Check that the trip is within the time limitations of the school day. It is also important that the coach carrying students can park as close to the beach as possible, in case of rain.

2. Risk Assessment:

Identify potential safety and access hazards and plan how these are to be managed safely. Always look out and observe warning signs. Be aware of cliffs, currents, sharp and slippery rocks, hazardous litter, weather, tides, waves.

3. First Aid / Emergency:

Complete a First Aid / Emergency plan prior to going to the seashore. The following list are the “must haves” (but not limited to):

- Details of the location, map and evacuation route – know where the nearest local hospital is.
- First aid kit and someone who knows how to use it (for minor emergencies such as twisted ankles, grazes etc).
- A mobile phone - that has phone coverage.
- Phone numbers (all emergency services / coastguards / local hospital, local doctor, local Garda/ students’ parents and schools)

4. Tides:

One VITAL piece of information prior to going to the seashore is a precise knowledge of the times of both high and low **tides**. Times of high and low tides change each day, moving forward by 45 minutes approximately every 24 hours. For example, if low tide occurs on a Thursday at 8.04 am, on Friday the Low tide will be at approximately 8.50 am. Remember to look up the tide tables and weather forecast for the day you plan to go to the seashore.

Tide tables can be purchased from angling and yachting shops and times for high and low water levels can often be found in the local newspapers or on the internet.

5. Volunteers:

Organise and prepare volunteers well in advance of the field trip. Make sure that there is an appropriate student: adult ratio. Ensure that volunteers know the emergency plan and activities for the day.



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On the Day at the Seashore:

6. Plan the Day of Activities:

Have a plan of what is to be done at the beach, giving enough time for briefing the students and volunteers and suitable time for exploration, activities, exercises and games.

- Let the children learn how to simply “*explore*” before introducing organised activities.
- Prepare interesting stories about the creatures that students are likely to find on the beach prior to the fieldtrip.
- Most importantly – have fun – let the seashore be the STAR
- Don't forget snacks and a picnic lunch.

7. Briefing / Designated Meeting Point:

Provide a briefing to the volunteers and students explaining:

- The activities and timetable set for the day.
- Confirm the designated meeting point and a signal (such as a whistle) for everyone to return to the designated point.
- Ensure everyone is aware of each others Safety while on the beach.
- Ensure everyone is aware of the Conservation Code.

8. Clothing:

Ensure all of the students are wearing appropriate clothing before heading for the seashore. The clothes and shoes must be strong, comfortable and safe. As the weather is unpredictable prepare for rain, wind and sunshine.

The following clothing is essential:

- Wellies or waterproof boots (hiking) are best. It is very important that the footwear worn on the beach has a gripped surface on the bottom so as to reduce slipping. The footwear must also be strong to prevent potential cuts from jagged rocks or broken glass.
- Light wind and waterproof coat
- Suntan lotion (ensure students bring their own or the use of suntan lotion is approved by parents)
- A towel
- Change of clothing – socks, shoes, trousers (just in case they get wet standing in a rock pool).



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9. Be Aware of the Changing Tides:

When you are at the seashore, the time can pass very quickly. Therefore, always remember to keep an eye on the time and the changing tide.

The best time to go to the seashore is one to two hours as the tide is going out and one hour of the incoming tide. This will allow students to start on the upper zone of the seashore and work down the seashore while the tide is going out.

Working with the tide going out and then back provides a wider window of time for exploration. However remember that tides come in quicker on flat sandy shores.

10. Equipment:

Try not to take too much equipment and materials to the seashore as children need to have the freedom to explore and shift seaweed and rocks with their hands to find animals and plants rather than carry things.

Depending on the exercises planned for the seashore - only hand out equipment and materials as it is required.

The following items are the most essential for exploration exercises. Most of the items can be put into a pocket until needed:

- **Simple identification keys:** There are a number of simple identification keys to seaweeds and species available from bookstores and websites. See Explorers Education - additional resources for more information on handy pocket sized books that can be used at the beach.
- **A bucket (per group):** A white container or bucket is best to put things in to see, show and tell – remember to return living species back into the rock pools etc.
- **Small hand held dip nets:** Hand held dip nets are useful for capturing the quick fish. Handheld nets used for aquariums and fishbowls are best and are often available from garden / pet shops.

Other items that are useful include:

- **Small Ziploc food bags** – use to collect samples of different seaweeds.
- **Magnifying pots** – for those small tiny creatures that need to be magnified in order to be seen them properly.
- **Digital Camera:** A camera with macro capabilities is useful for capturing images of species and plants on the seashore to discuss in more detail back in class.
- **Clipboard, Notebook and Pencil (and a plastic insert – in case it rains)** – for drawing and recording activities
- **Hula Hoops** – in lieu of precise scientific quadrats for counting



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11. Safety on the Seashore: In the Classroom

Complete the Seashore Safety exercise to ensure students are aware of:

- Safe clothing
- Warning Signs
- Cliffs (rocks falling)
- Walking on a muddy shore
- Take it slow – avoid running and jumping over wet slippery rocks
- Tread carefully over seaweed – as it often covers uneven surfaces, hidden rock pools and holes.
- Keep away from the waters edge
- Watch out for waves – especially near rocks
- Hazardous waste and litter

12. Use the Conservation Code on the Sea Shore:

Complete the Conservation Code exercise to ensure students are aware of:

- Watch wildlife in their natural habitats without disturbing it:
 - If a close look of different species is required, pick up the creatures carefully and put in a bucket with the fresh seawater for a short time.
- Return animals back to the place where you found them – remember what zones species belong to as they may not survive in other areas of the beach.
- Try not to damage animals homes – return the rocks to the position they were found so animals don't dry out.
- Collect seaweed not creatures – however only take samples of loose seaweeds.
 - Don not destroy seaweed areas by pulling it all off the rocks.
- Don't disturb birds feeding and stay away from nesting birds
- Don't Litter – always put your rubbish in a bin or take it home with you. Organise a beach clean as part of the days activities.