

## Summer in Dorset Beach School

### Date

*(High tide & Low tide times and heights)*

*Max 6 participants*

During this session we will be doing some rock pooling as an example of a local habitat. Often rock pools closest to the beach are full of green seaweed called gut weed, which looks like intestines! These brackish pools (a mixture of seawater and freshwater) aren't good for rock pooling. Most rock pool creatures are marine animals and need full seawater. Pools closest to the sea edge are better.

If we are unable to do this activity, we will use the rock pool identification sheets to create some of the beach creatures whilst at the beach.

### Rock pooling:

- Start by seeing what's swimming under the surface. You might see small fish such as a goby, butterfish or blenny. If you're lucky you might spot a pipefish, which looks like a swimming shoelace and is related to the seahorse. Prawns and shrimps are also common inhabitants of rock pools. They move very quickly and often swim backwards when you least expect it.
- At the bottom of rock pools you might see a starfish or its skinny, spiny relative, the brittlestar. Sea hares (a type of sea slug) can often be found munching on seaweed. Their colour depends on the seaweed they feed on.
- Look carefully and you might see a sea anemone waving its tentacles gently at you. You may also get a glimpse of a shell moving on legs – a hermit crab that's made its home in an old periwinkle shell.
- To get the best out of a rock pool you need to get your hands wet. Turning over seaweed can bring sea mats, sea squirts or sponges into view. You may also find the white swirls of tube worms such as keel worms.
- Pick up rocks and you may see a green shore crab or porcelain crab scuttle out. Look out for edible crabs, which often look like pebbles, and squat lobsters. Beware of the red-eyed blue velvet swimming crab, as it can nip.
- Use a small bucket to collect rock pool creatures for closer inspection. Remember to let them go again where you found them after a short time. Place the bucket in the water and see what swims in or push it gently through the water to scoop up a critter you've found. You can transfer these to a larger tray, but keep crabs separate as they will fight.
- At the end of the session, all creatures must be returned to the rock pools

### Resources:

Buckets and spades – 1 set each  
larger trays/boxes for rock pooling  
Identification sheets  
clipboards and pencils for tally of rock pool creatures

### Remember

- Keep the children safe.
- Social distancing to be maintained at all time
- Resources not to be shared
- Children to stay within the designated area.
- Children to be allowed to explore and develop their ideas. They will be encouraged them to talk about what they are doing.

### Timings:

Session times 10:00 – 12:00 **or** 13:30- 15:30

