

Port Kembla Surf Life Saving Club



The Nippers Handbook



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Welcome to Port Kembla Nippers

Port Kembla is one of the best beaches in the Illawarra. We hope that you will enjoy our great beach and being part of our surf lifesaving club. Our aim is to provide a fun environment where your child will learn to be safe and confident on the beach and in the water. We are a very strong and welcoming community and our aim is to provide the best experience for our Nippers.

Nippers Junior Development Program

Nippers follow a Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA) program that, through fun activities, introduces children to surf lifesaving, gradually building knowledge and skills that will ultimately allow them to gain the Surf Rescue Certificate. The key features of the program include:

- Learning about surf awareness and safety – respect, read and use the surf to their advantage.
- Gaining a better understanding of our beach environment through theory such as beach safety, sun safety, rips and other hazards, and what it means to be a lifesaver.
- Training in basic resuscitation/CPR skills.
- Improving fitness in a fun and healthy outdoor environment:
 - Beach sports: flags, beach sprint and relay
 - Wades, swimming, dolphin diving and body surfing
 - Nippers boards (techniques and paddles)
- Progressing through the Surf Education program from basic surf lifesaving skills to the completion of the Surf Rescue Certificate.
- The opportunity to make friends, be active, have fun and enjoy the beach in a safe environment.

Age Groups

Nippers can join anytime between 5 and 14 years of age. They must be a minimum of 5 years of age to be registered and participate in any Surf Life Saving NSW activities. The age groups are as follows:

Age Group	Age	Surf Program
Under 6	5 by 30 September	Surf Play 1
Under 7	6 by 30 September	Surf Play 2
Under 8	7 by 30 September	Surf Aware 1
Under 9	8 by 30 September	Surf Aware 2
Under 10	9 by 30 September	Surf Safe 1
Under 11	10 by 30 September	Surf Safe 2
Under 12	11 by 30 September	Surf Smart 1
Under 13	12 by 30 September	Surf Smart 2
Under 14	13 by 30 September	Surf Rescue Certificate

*Participation in the correct age group is mandatory for all children, and no exceptions can be made.

Surf Rescue Certificate (SRC)

In U14s, Nippers train for their SRC. This course provides participants with the skills for basic patrolling and surf awareness. The SRC course is normally completed over the first part of the season. Once completed, the participants can act as water safety for younger age groups and will be assigned to a beach patrol to progress their knowledge and skills.

Cadet Membership: Next Step After SRC

For those who have achieved their Surf Rescue Certificate (SRC), Cadet membership is available for the upcoming season. Cadets can register by selecting the "Cadet Membership" at registration. A parent membership is not required for Cadets, but family involvement is always encouraged within the club. Cadets are a vital component of the Nippers community, performing essential water safety duties and providing support to younger Nippers throughout the season.

Registration

Registration normally opens in August and new members need to sign up to the Port Kembla Surf Club via the Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA) join system. At least one parent/guardian is required to join as a general member. Notification and instructions for registration will be provided via all communication channels (email, text message, social media). Refunds, cancellation and transfers are not possible once registered. Unfortunately, we are unable to accept active kids vouchers. Do not order uniforms until your registration has been confirmed.

Swimming Proficiency

Before participating in any Nippers activities, your child will need to complete a **Preliminary Skills Assessment**, which is tailored to their age group. This assessment is designed to ensure your child has the basic swimming and self-survival skills necessary for their safety during beach and water-based activities.

We will notify you in advance when the swimming proficiency assessment is scheduled. Typically, this takes place **around one week before the start of the Nippers season**.

The assessment is held at the **Port Kembla Swimming Pool**, conveniently located adjacent to Port Kembla Beach. You'll find the exact location illustrated in the map in the following section.

Stage One: Under 6, Under 7, Under 8

Aquatic Play and Fundamental Aquatic Skills (FAS)

Recommended depth of safe aquatic environment – 1 metre

	Under 6	Under 7	Under 8
Flotation	Back or front float for a minimum of 5 seconds, recover to stand.		
Submersion	Submerge to touch the bottom with hands.		
Propulsion	Push and glide from wall (distance 1-2 metres) recover to stand.	Push and glide from wall, kick (distance 2-3 metres) recover to stand.	Swim on front any stroke (distance 20 metres) followed by swim underwater (distance 2-3 metres).

Stage Two: Under 9, Under 10, Under 11

Applied aquatic skills

Recommended depth of safe aquatic environment – 1.5 metres

	Under 9	Under 10	Under 11
Flotation	Front to back float or back to front float – 5 seconds each side. Tread water and/or any stroke sculling for a minimum of 1 minute.		Front to back float or back to front float – 5 seconds each side. Tread water and/or any stroke sculling for minimum of 2 minutes.
Submersion	Submerge to retrieve object from bottom of water with hands (e.g. dive ring).		Submerge to perform forward or backward roll/somersault underwater, recover to surface, submerge to touch the bottom with hands.
Propulsion	Survival stroke(s) breaststroke and/or sidestroke and/or back sculling for minimum 50 metres.	Swim on front through water any stroke for 25 metres followed by survival stroke(s) breaststroke and/or sidestroke and/or back sculling for minimum 25 metres.	Swim on front through water any stroke for 50 metres followed by survival stroke(s) breaststroke and/or sidestroke and/or back sculling for minimum 50 metres.

Stage Three: Under 12, Under 13, Under 14

Junior/trainee lifesaver – pathway to SRC

Recommended depth of safe aquatic environment 1.8 metres

	Under 12	Under 13	Under 14
Flotation	Front to back float or back to front float – 5 seconds each side.		
	Tread water and/or any stroke sculling for minimum 3 minutes.		
Submersion	Submerge to perform forward or backward roll/somersault underwater, recover to surface, retrieve object from bottom of water with hands (e.g. dive ring).	Submerge to perform forward or backward roll/somersault underwater, do not recover to surface, retrieve object from bottom of water with hands (e.g. dive ring).	
Propulsion	Swim on front through water any stroke for 100 metres followed by survival stroke(s) breaststroke and/or sidestroke for minimum 50 metres.	Swim on front any stroke for 100 metres followed by survival stroke(s) breaststroke and/or sidestroke for minimum 100 metres.	

Nippers Sessions

Where is it held?

Generally, Nippers is based at the Olympic Boulevard end of Port Kembla beach. This location provides ample parking, toilet facilities and easy access to the beach. When conditions are unfavourable at this location, it may be necessary to use Fisherman's Beach (Fisho's); this is accessed from Gloucester Boulevard. Fisho's offers a sheltered location but can have more limited beach area. Access is also a little more difficult and there are no toilets available. Older groups may on occasions, also undertake CPR/first aid training at the Port Kembla Surf Club house located at 1A Cowper Street.



When is it held?

Nippers runs on most Sunday mornings during the season, excluding school holidays. Normally, Nippers starts promptly at 9:30am and finishes up at 11am. There are a few exceptions to this, such as twilight nippers, so please check the calendar.

On arriving, Nippers should go to their age groups flag displayed on the beach, where the groups age manager (wearing blue Age Manager rash vest) will be waiting to sign in their age group. Sign in starts from 9am, please ensure that your child is signed in at the beginning of Nippers. At the end of the Nippers session, the age manager will sign the Nippers out when they are collected by the parent/guardian (please be on time to collect your child).

What to wear?

Each nipper will need to wear the following essential items:

- Appropriate swimwear
- Tight fitting (for safety) Hi-Viz pink singlet or rashie
- Nippers cap (to be put on at sign-on and taken off at sign-off)
- Sunscreen / sunblock (nippers will be exposed to the sun for a couple of hours so sunscreen application should be compulsory. Zinc is a good option for the face as lotion can run into the eyes when in the water)



The following items are also highly recommended:

- Water bottle (to keep hydrated and to wash sand from eyes)
- Towel
- Swimming goggles (essential for U8's up)

Uniforms

Uniforms can be ordered online once the uniform shop opens. A link will be sent once registrations are finalised. Payments are made online directly to the supplier and are non-refundable. Uniforms will be sent in bulk to the surfclub and pickup days will be organised prior to Nippers start date as well during the season.



Last minute changes

At times of poor weather or surf conditions there may be a change of venue, or the Nippers session may be cancelled. In this event you will be notified by Surfguard SMS and information will be posted on the Port Kembla Facebook/Instagram page. Notifications will be sent/posted as early as possible but will be by 8:30 am at the latest.

Competition & Point Score

Port Kembla Nippers currently does not participate in external club carnivals. However, we recognise that a little friendly competition can be a great motivator for kids, so throughout the season, we run regular point score events for age groups U8 to U13.

These point scores are not about winning — they're designed to encourage participation, engagement, and personal improvement. Every child who attends a Sunday session earns 1 participation point, reinforcing that simply showing up and giving it a go is something to be celebrated.

In addition, we run fun point score activities such as:

- Beach Flags
- Sprints
- Ocean Swim
- Board Paddle

These activities are held throughout the season, but the specific dates are not announced in advance — this helps keep an element of surprise and excitement for everyone.

At the end of the season, we tally the points and award prizes for:

- 1st and 2nd place overall point scorers
- Most Improved Boy and Girl in each age group

These awards are based on both performance and attendance, with a strong emphasis on effort, consistency, and team spirit.

Safety in the Water

Before nippers begins each Sunday, a beach risk assessment is conducted to determine the safest locations for nippers to enter the water. Water activities are then carried out with the support of our qualified Water Safety volunteers who wear high-viz orange rash vests and caps.

Water Safety Officers are club members who hold Bronze Medallion or SRC qualifications. Bronze Medallion and SRC courses are available for parents or carers wishing to assist with Water Safety (please contact us for more information).

Parents Involvement/General members

Parents are essential to the success of our Nippers program. At least one parent or guardian is required to join the club as a **General Member**. General members can log in to the Surf Life Saving Australia Members Area to access free training resources that help develop an understanding of both Nippers and surf lifesaving.

We strongly encourage all parents to get involved. Whether it's helping the **Age Manager** with beach activities, lending a hand with set-up and pack-down, helping at the BBQ, or joining the committee — every contribution makes a difference.

Age Managers – Critical for Every Age Group

Port Kembla Nippers has 9 age groups, and **each group requires at least one Age Manager per 20 children** as a minimum to run effectively. Without an Age Manager for an age group, **we will not be able to run that group's activities**. Age Managers lead the weekly beach and water sessions for their group, supported by Water Safety and parent volunteers.

While one Age Manager may be enough to keep the session going, it is ideal — and far more enjoyable for everyone — to have other parents assisting. Many parents are happy to help but simply don't know how or where to start.

To support our Age Managers, we will **roster parents from each age group** to assist with **set-up and pack-down duties** on a rotating basis. These tasks are simple, and with many hands, they take very little time. You'll receive advance notice so you know when your group is on duty.

We will also provide clear guidance on the kinds of help parents can offer — no experience is needed. Your support not only helps keep the program running smoothly but also builds a stronger, more connected Nippers community.

Volunteering as an Age Manager or a helper is not just about responsibility — it's about **being part of your child's journey**, making new friendships, and creating lasting memories by the beach.

Link to training library at: <https://sls.learn-sls.etrainu.com/training/>

The courses listed in the Age Manager category are a great way to increase understanding of lifesaving and the Nippers program, even if you do not intend to become an age manager, they will help you to assist your child to get the most out of Nippers.

Member Protection

Port Kembla SLSC is committed to the protection, welfare and well-being of all members and is dedicated to providing a positive and safe environment in line with the [SLSA Member Protection Policy](#) and [SLSA Child Safe Policy](#).

We take an inclusive approach, dedicated to being open to all members of the Australian community and providing a safe environment, ensuring all members are treated with respect and dignity and are protected from discrimination, harassment and abuse.

Our aim is to create a safe and nurturing environment for all members participating in surf lifesaving by following the [Member Protection Code of Conduct](#).

Our Member Protection Team

Our club has a group of dedicated volunteers who look after member protection practices and issues. These include a Member Protection Information Officer (MPIO), Complaints Manager and Child Safe Coordinator.

MPIO: Michelle Martin

Complaints Manager: Justin Brown

Child Safe Coordinator: Chris Landon

Complaint Management

An MPIO is available to provide information to members who may have an issue or grievance at the club. The MPIO may be a first point of contact for any member wishing to raise a concern.

To contact the MPIO, please email portkemblaslscmpio@gmail.com to arrange a call back.

After contacting the MPIO, should a member wish to proceed with a formal complaint, this can be lodged via the online complaints portal:

<https://complaints.sls.com.au/>

All formal complaints are handled by a Complaints Manager, who will take action to resolve complaints after they are lodged via the portal.

We understand that in a community organisation where everyone knows each other, conflicts of interest can arise. We want members to feel they are able to raise any concerns they have, and if there is a conflict of interest and members would prefer to speak to someone else within the club regarding their concern, please email admin@portkemblasurfclub.com.au. Alternatively, you can contact the MPIO at your branch portkemblaslscmpio@gmail.com or any SLS MPIO.

Child Safe

CHILD SAFE COMMITMENT STATEMENT

Our Club is committed to the safety and wellbeing of every child and young person who takes part in our activities, programs, events or services and will work to create an environment in which children and young people are safe and feel safe at all times.

Port Kembla SLSC recognises the importance of protecting young people under the age of 18 from abuse, harm and exploitation. It is everyone's responsibility to treat children and young people respectfully and follow child safe legislation and the SLSA Child Safe Policy. The Child Safe Code of Conduct applies to all members and associated parties as outlined in the [Child Safe Policy](#).

Resources, webinars and online training courses are available to all members, providing clear guidelines of appropriate behaviour when engaging with children and young people. All members are encouraged to complete the [Child Safe Awareness online course](#) found in the e-learning section of your members portal.

Working with Children Check

Members in Child related roles may be required to provide a Working with Children Check to the club to be verified with the Office of Children's Guardian. Failure to do so will result in suspension from any child related roles. Some exclusions apply. To check if you are required to have a WWCC, follow the guidelines below:

[WWCC Guidelines](#)

Child Safe Reporting

Keeping children and young people safe relies on community members reporting their concerns.

All Port Kembla SLSC members have a responsibility to speak up if they become aware of or observe something considered inappropriate. Please contact an MPIO, portkemblaslscmpio@gmail.com and/or submit the concerns through the online reporting portal:

1. Visit <https://complaints.sls.com.au/> and click on 'Child Safe Matter'.
2. Follow the question prompts, noting you may wish to remain anonymous.
3. Click submit once finished. Your report will then be sent to SLSNSW for investigation.

All reports submitted will be treated in confidence and with the utmost respect for all those involved.



Contact us

If you have any questions, please catch us on the beach or contact us via:

Email: portkemblanippers@gmail.com

Message: www.facebook.com/portnippers.slsa or [@portkemblanippers](https://www.instagram.com/portkemblanippers)

