WHANGAMATA SLSC
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WHANGAMATA SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB (INC.) | KAITIAKI O TE TAPĀTAI KI WHANGAMATĀ
CORNER LOWE STREET AND ESPLANDE DRIVE, WHANGAMATĀ | **EMAIL** MANAGER@WHANGAMATASURF.CO.NZ | **PHONE** 07 865 8401

JUNIOR SURF PROGRAMME

Parent & Whanau Handbook

2026/2027 Season



WELCOME

Tēnā koutou katoa and welcome to Whangamatā Junior Surf.

Whether your tamariki are new to the beach or have grown up in the surf, there is a place for them here. Our aim is for every child to become confident and capable in the ocean, build friendships and develop a lasting connection with their community.

In it for life

Junior Surf is the start of a pathway — from Juniors and Cadets through Rookies, Lifeguards and Lifesaving Sport.

Junior Surf is run by a dedicated team of volunteer parents and club members. Coaches lead each session, but parent and caregiver involvement is essential to making the programme work.

ABOUT WHANGAMATĀ SURF LIFESAVING CLUB

Established in 1949, Whangamatā SLSC has been keeping our community and visitors safe at the beach and in the water for more than 75 years.

The Club delivers volunteer and paid lifeguard patrols, Junior Surf and lifesaving sport, while providing a place for members and the wider community to connect.



OUR CODE

The Whangamatā SLSC Code articulates the behaviours that unite us as Clubbies and help make #WhangaFam a positive place to belong, contribute and grow.

AS WHANGMATA SURF LIFE SAVING MEMBERS WE:

1. Demonstrate behaviours that strengthen and promote WSLSC.
2. Are committed to delivering quality service to one another and the wider community.
3. Understand, embrace and live our values every day.
4. Lead by example, support those around us, and contribute positively to our one club culture.
5. Treat everyone with respect, recognising their rights, dignity and worth.
6. Engage with others fairly, thoughtfully and with integrity.
7. Act professionally and take ownership of our decisions and actions.
8. Understand and work within WSLSC and SLSNZ guidelines, recognising our responsibilities and accountabilities.
9. Actively promote behaviours that reflect our Code and values and constructively call out behaviour that falls short.

Whangamatā SLSC encourages all members, visitors and staff to embrace and demonstrate the behaviours and values in the Code.

JUNIOR SURF PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Shoulder season:	13 November 2026 – 18 December – Fridays, 5:30–6:30pm *Life Saving Sport Development only 24th October – 27th20th Dec – Times TBC
Peak Season	27 December 2026 - 17 January 2027 Sundays, Mondays and Tuesdays • U6: 10:00–11:00am • U8, U10 & U12 (Cadets): 10:00–11:30am • Rookies: 10:00am–11:30am • * Lifesaving Sport Development: 8:30–9.30am
Shoulder season	24 Jan – 28 Feb: Sundays – 10.00am to 11.30am • U6: 10:00–11:00am • U8, U10 & U12 (Cadets): 10:00–11:30am

Juniors (U6)	**Ages 5 - 6:** learning the basics, beach fun, floating and survive, bodyboards
Intermediate (U8 and U10)	**Ages 7 to 9:** building surf skills, bodyboards
Cadets (U12)	**Ages 10 to 12:** Using the waves, saving myself, foam knee boards, introducing fibreglass boards when ready (for those in the surf sport programme).
Rookies (Under 14)	**Age 13+** (12 Only if turning 13 in January of the season): Rookie Lifeguard Programme. "Saving a Life", introduction to lifeguarding skills.
***Lifesaving Sport – Development (9+)**	Pathway from participation to competition, with a focus on ocean skills, fitness, teamwork and having fun. For more information, see the Lifesaving Sport Handbook.
***Lifeguard Award**	**Age 14 and above:** full Surf Lifeguard Award.

Age groups are based on your child's age as at 30 September each year. For example: if your child turns 8 before 30 September, they are in the Under 10 group; if they turn 8 after 30 September, they are in the Under 8 group for that season.

Programme Fees	Pre and post peak – included in membership fee
Peak Season	Juniors and Intermediate $50 peak season fee Cadets age groups: $50 peak season fee +$50 gear fee for Cadets - enables use of knee boards inside and outside of session times (*conditions apply) Rookies: $100 Rookies fee - includes Rookies handbook/manual, facilitator sessions and uniform. *Life Saving Sport Development $50 - 24th October – 27th December (pre-peak) $50 – 27th December – 17th January (peak) Casual session: $10 Club cap and vest: included Pool entry for pool sessions: $5 per session

Certificates

Certificates of completion and participation are awarded to those who complete the core components of the programme.

Prizegiving – Dates will be communicated throughout the season.

*Life Saving Sport Development – full information can be found About life saving Sport - Whangamata Surf Life Saving Club

*Life Guard Award – Full information can be found Become a Lifeguard - Whangamata Surf Life Saving Club

WHAT TO BRING

Every child should arrive with:

- Club skull cap and vest (compulsory)
- Sunscreen (SPF 50+, applied before you arrive)
- Long sleeve rash shirt or wetsuit (encouraged)
- Goggles (encouraged)
- Sunhats (encouraged) - to be worn underneath skull caps
- Cadets and above - Surf Fins encouraged
- Towel
- Water bottle
- A positive attitude (compulsory, non-negotiable)

Wetsuit tip

The water can be brisk early in the season. A wetsuit makes a real difference for younger kids; they stay in the water longer and enjoy it more.

PARENT & CAREGIVER INVOLVEMENT

Parent help is an essential part of Junior Surf.

Minimum water supervision

- Under 6: 1 adult: 1 child
- 6 and over: 1 adult: 5 children
- At least 1 qualified lifeguard per 20 children

Families will be rostered to help during sessions. You do not need to be a lifeguard or have special skills — coaches will brief you.

You may be asked to:

- Assist with beach and water activities
- Supervise children in the water
- Help manage groups
- Support sign-in/sign-out
- Help at carnivals and events
- Assist with fundraising and Club activities

If you cannot make your rostered session, please arrange a swap and let the committee know.

SIGN-IN, SUPERVISION & SAFE RELEASE

Every session

1. Arrive 15 minutes early.
2. Sign your child in.
3. Check they have their cap, vest and sunscreen.
4. Remain on the beach for the entire session.
5. Personally sign your child out at the end.

Children will not be released to leave on their own.

If someone else is collecting your child, tell the coach beforehand.

Please keep medical information, allergies, medications, emergency contacts and other relevant information up to date through Friendly Manager.

Safety comes first at every Junior Surf session.

Children must:

- Never enter the water without a coach or designated supervisor.
- Wear their club vest.
- Follow coach and supervisor instructions.
- Stay with their buddy in the water.
- Get out if conditions become unsafe.

Coaches have final say on whether water activities proceed.

We teach children about rips, shore break, beach conditions and swimming between the red and yellow flags.

200M SAFETY BADGE & KNEEBOARDS

Cadets who wish to use a kneeboard, and children joining Lifesaving Sport Development, must hold a current **200m Safety Badge**.

The badge confirms that a child can swim 200m continuously in the ocean and must be completed each season.

Under 6 and Under 8 participants do not require the badge or use kneeboards in the water.

Foam kneeboards may only be used outside supervised sessions when:

- The child has a current 200m Safety Badge.
- Adequate adult supervision is present.
- The board is used as a kneeboard, not stood on like a surfboard.

CARNIVALS & COMPETITION

Carnivals are a great way for children to put their skills into practice and have fun.

Opportunities include:

- Local and regional carnivals
- Coromandel Cup – **6 January**
- National events for selected competitors

Events may include beach flags, sprints, wade/swim, kneeboard, board rescue and iron person events.

Carnival entries are generally additional to programme fees. Information will be provided through Friendly Manager.

Parent support, including officials, is essential.

SAFETY, CHILD PROTECTION AND CONCERNS

The safety and wellbeing of our members, participants, volunteers and visitors is a priority.

We are committed to:

- Health & Safety – keeping everyone safe during activities, training, events and use of our facilities.
- Child Protection & Safeguarding – protecting children and young people from harm.
- Complaints & Concerns – providing a clear process for raising concerns about behaviour, safety or Club activities.

Everyone has a role in creating a safe and respectful environment.

Our policies are reviewed regularly and apply across all areas of the Club.

You can view our current policies and procedures on the Whangamatā Surf Life Saving Club website. Club Documentation - Whangamata Surf Life Saving Club

COMMUNICATION AND STAYING INFORMED

Friendly Manager is our primary communication channel.

Use it for:

- Session updates
- Cancellations
- Important notices
- Schedules
- Group communication

Please make sure you are connected to Friendly Manager so you don't miss important information.

Other contacts

Website: whangamatasurf.co.nz
Email: admin@whangamatasurf.co.nz
Junior Surf: juniorsurf@whangamatasurf.co.nz
Phone: 07 865 8401

For programme feedback or concerns, talk to a committee member or contact the Club.



SCAN THE QR CODE TO DOWNLOAD

CLUB JOIN CODE: QT702-IM429

FAQ FOR NEW FAMILIES

My child has never been in the surf before. Is that okay?

Yes. Juniors and Under 8s start with basic beach activities and a very gentle introduction to the water. If your child is nervous, let the coach know; our coaches are experienced at helping children build confidence gradually.

Do I need to stay for the whole session?

Yes. You must remain on the beach for the duration of your child's session. You'll be needed for supervision (see Section 9), and children cannot be released until you personally sign them out.

What if the weather looks rough?

Follow the Friendly Manager App. We run sessions in light rain and overcast conditions, as is typical in New Zealand summers. Sessions are cancelled if conditions are unsafe. We aim to give as much notice as possible.

Can my child attend if they can't swim?

Under 6 and Under 8 participants do not need to be strong swimmers. For Under 10 and above, swimming ability is expected and the 200m badge applies for kneeboard/water activities. If you're unsure, contact the committee before registering.

We're only in Whangamata for a few days. Can we still join in?

Yes. Casual have-a-go sessions are available for $10 per child.

What if I can't make my rostered parent help session?

Let the committee know as early as possible and arrange a swap with another family. We understand that circumstances change, but please do not leave us short-staffed on the day.

How does age grouping work?

Your child's age group is based on their age as at 30 September each year. For example: if your child turns 8 before 30 September, they are in the Under 10 group; if they turn 8 after 30 September, they are in the Under 8 group for that season. If you are unsure, please ask at registration.

My older child wants to be a lifeguard. Where do they start?

At 13, they join the Rookie programme. At 14, they can begin the Surf Lifeguard Award. Visit https://whangamatasurf.co.nz/become-a-lifeguard/ for more information. We are proud to see young people grow up through the club.