

# JUNIOR SURF PARENT & WHĀNAU HANDBOOK 2023



*In it for life*

# Welcome

Joining a Junior Surf programme is a great way to increase the water safety skills and knowledge of your children and whānau. Junior Surf is a key initiative of the surf life saving movement in New Zealand since our first Junior Surf programmes started in 1968. The continuous success of Junior Surf since those early days is important to the growth and sustainability of Surf Life Saving New Zealand's (SLSNZ) 74 surf lifesaving clubs.

Junior Surf is delivered at most surf lifesaving clubs across New Zealand throughout the summer months in a safe, fun, organised and welcoming environment. It assists to build children's confidence, knowledge, and skills on how to be safe around the water and at the beach. Children are also developing skills towards becoming future surf lifeguards and learning about lifesaving sports.

The aim of this handbook is to provide parents and whānau key information about the overall experience of Junior Surf.

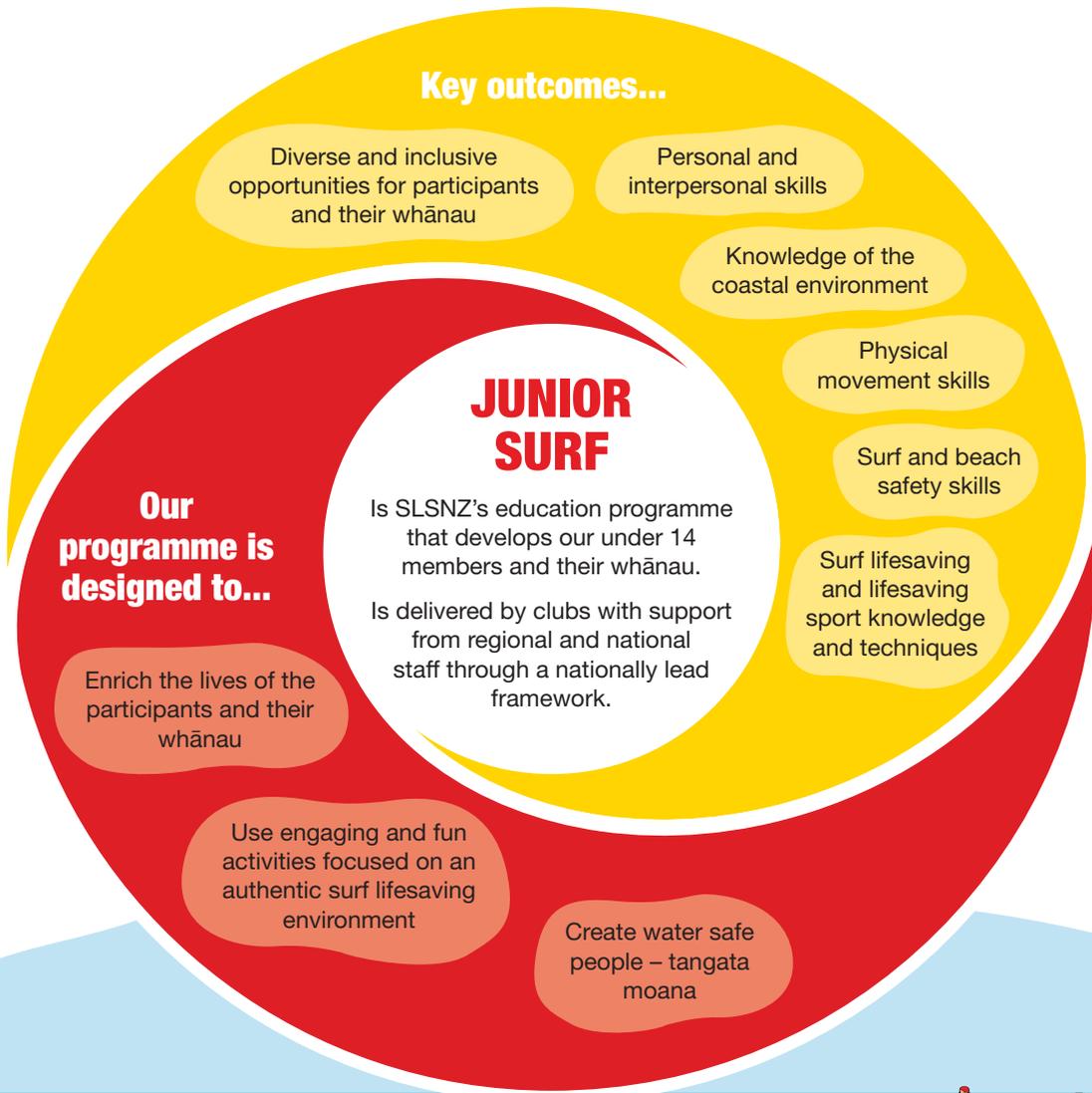


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# Junior Surf Guiding Principles



## Junior Surf key outcomes



### Diverse and inclusive opportunities for participants and their whānau

- All programmes are actively working to ensure that they engage with both the wider community and existing members to tailor the experience to meet the needs and desires of these people.
- Programmes grow and nurture social, emotional and physical development in a fun and safe environment.
- Retention and progression of members through to the next age and stage is a core focus for clubs within youth programmes.



### Personal and interpersonal skills

- Participants in programmes are actively taught through modelling and instruction on how to develop their personal and interpersonal skills including positive teamwork and friendships.
- Focused around SLSNZ's volunteer strategy values of wellbeing, respect, growth, support and relationships.
- Identification of how involvement in surf lifesaving contributes to an individual's hauora (wellbeing).



### Knowledge of the coastal environment

- Participants have opportunities to explore the physical, historic and cultural aspects of their local coastal environment.
- Participants have opportunities to develop kaitiakitanga (guardianship) relating to their local area and of their decision making around activities in coastal environments.
- Provide opportunities and experiences that builds knowledge and skills at the participant's beach and club.



### Physical movement skills

- Participants have structured development opportunities to explore fundamental movement skills relevant to surf lifesaving and lifesaving sports.
- Participants build a lifelong love for physical activity and movement to support wellbeing and health, through exploration of fundamental movement skills across a wide range of Junior Surf activities.
- Participants have opportunities to learn, experience and develop a range of movement skills for lifesaving sports activities in a manner that meets their physical development needs.



### Surf and beach safety skills (authentic open water)

- Participants will learn surf safety rules, how to identify wave types and how to use waves in a range of situations.
- Participants will learn what to do in an emergency, including some commonly encountered surf lifesaving and lifesaving sports situations.
- Participants will learn how to identify rips, the 3R's and how to apply them in practical situations.



### Surf lifesaving and lifesaving sport knowledge and techniques

- Participants will learn what to do in case of an emergency including; calling for help, self-rescue and survival using the 3R's.
- Basic identification of patrol operations including first aid and awareness of environmental risks to personal safety.
- Introduction to and participation in lifesaving sports activities including rules and race techniques in an age appropriate way.

# What does a Junior Surf programme look like?

Junior Surf uses a combination of theory and practical activities taking place at a local surf lifesaving club.

Throughout the sessions participants will complete a range of beach and water activities using individual and group skills.

The day is often organised in an activity circuit with different stations and activities using the beach, water, and the surf lifesaving club as the learning environment. Many clubs run their main Junior Surf sessions on a Sunday morning. Some clubs run focused programmes over the summer holiday period where participants go every weekday and others run midweek afternoon sessions.

All surf lifesaving clubs and their communities are different, so Junior Surf delivery might look and feel unique at each beach, but everyone is working towards the same key outcomes.



## A typical Junior Surf day (timings will vary at each club)

Time	Activity
15 minutes before session starts.	Sign in, get ready in club specific uniform and wetsuit.
5 minutes	Welcome and briefing by club Junior Surf Coordinator or Group Leader.
10-15 minutes	Beach safety theory and knowledge.
20-30 minutes	Beach based games supporting development of running skills.
30-45 minutes	Water based activities supporting development of swimming, board, and open water survival skills.
5 minutes	Recap session and sign out.
Own time	Free time, get changed and meet up for a post session BBQ or ice cream!



# What will my child learn?

SLSNZ's Junior Surf programme is designed to develop 16 core learning areas through age and stage appropriate variations. The learning outcomes are detailed on page 5 of this handbook. The core learning areas include; skills on the beach, in the water and key water safety knowledge.

Junior Surf builds activities that are designed to provide participants with the skills and knowledge to be safe around open water, participate in lifesaving sport and building towards becoming a surf lifeguard.



Beach Activities	Water Activities	Clubhouse Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tag games.</li> <li>• Problem solving activities.</li> <li>• Running technique.</li> <li>• Team building activities.</li> <li>• Lifesaving sports beach events.</li> <li>• Agility skills.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wading.</li> <li>• Dolphin diving.</li> <li>• Floating for survival.</li> <li>• Catching waves.</li> <li>• Swimming.</li> <li>• Bodyboards.</li> <li>• Paddleboards.</li> <li>• Lifesaving sports water events.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surf safety rules.</li> <li>• Rip survival plan.</li> <li>• Lifeguard operations.</li> <li>• Risk identification.</li> <li>• Introductory first aid.</li> <li>• Interpersonal skills.</li> <li>• Teambuilding.</li> </ul>



# Does my child need to be able to swim?

We recognise that swimming in the ocean is a new experience for many children and that even competent pool swimmers can find this challenging at first. Our aim is to encourage children, supporting them to develop confidence and skills towards swimming in the ocean through education and development opportunities.

Being able to swim and having experience in the water plays a role in keeping children safe around water as well as allowing them to enjoy actively participating in all surf lifesaving activities.

Junior Surf is **not** a targeted learn to swim programme, however basic swimming skills are supported and developed through many of the activities. Many clubs also run additional swimming sessions in local pools to further support their members development.

If you have questions about your child's swimming ability, then having a conversation with their group leader or the clubs Junior Surf Coordinator can allow you to discuss how to best support your child's participation with confidence.



## 200m swim badge

All junior members who wish to use fibreglass or foam paddleboards and/or swim beyond waist depth must pass their 200m safety test. This is a mandatory safety requirement which demonstrates that junior participants are confident in the ocean and capable of returning to shore if they are separated from their equipment.

The 200m swim badge is also a requirement for entry into lifesaving sports events for participants in the U11–U14 age groups, and for some U10 events. The 200m swim badge assessment is completed in either of the following methods;

### 1. Pool Swim

Participants must swim (using any stroke) confidently and competently 200m in 7 minutes or less. Followed by a 1 minute tread water.



### 2. Open Water

Participants must swim (using any stroke) confidently and competently 200m. This must include a stop in deep water to complete a 1 minute tread water. An all-inclusive time to complete this is 10 minutes or less.

All results are then entered by a club administrator into the SLSNZ membership database under each participant's profile. The 200m swim badge must be refreshed annually.



# What does my child need to bring?

## Uniform requirements

All participants must wear the club's compulsory identification items during Junior Surf activities.

All open water activities require the use of high visibility identification items which are usually vests. This includes swimming, board paddling and bodyboarding. It is recommended that appropriate sun protection is used in addition to the high visibility item.

Clubs may choose to use age group coloured caps which goes on your child's head for group identification, or their club competition cap.

The high visibility items must meet the colour guidelines set out by SLSNZ, which your club will communicate to you.



## What to bring to each session

Your child will need to have the following items each week:

- Swimwear.
- Club cap or age group cap (some clubs may provide this on the day)
- Wide brim or bucket style hat.
- Sun block (at least SPF 30+).
- Goggles.
- Towel.
- Water bottle.
- Wetsuit (strongly recommended for cold water and weather).
- Dry clothes for after Junior Surf session.

**Please label all belongings clearly.**



# Sun protection

We aim to teach children about all aspects of water safety, including sun protection.

We encourage all participants and supporters to follow the NZ Cancer Society SunSmart recommendations:

- 1. Slip** on sun-protective clothing and into shade where possible.
- 2. Slop** on SPF30 (or higher) broad-spectrum water-resistant sunscreen.
  - Apply 20min before going out into the sun.
  - Apply to exposed skin every 2 hours.
  - Reapply every time you exit the water.
  - Apply zinc or lip balm.
- 3. Slap** on a broad-brimmed hat that protects your face, head, neck and ears.
- 4. Wrap** on sunglasses.

Remember it's UV not the heat that is the danger and the UV level can be high on a cold or cloudy day. The free SunSmart app tells you when sun protection is recommended for your location and shows the current UV levels.



## How do we join Junior Surf?

There are 74 clubs from Ahipara in Northland to Oreti in Southland.

If you are unsure where your local surf lifesaving club is, have a look on the SLSNZ website for the club closest to you [surflifesaving.org.nz/join-us/find-a-surf-life-saving-club](https://www.surflifesaving.org.nz/join-us/find-a-surf-life-saving-club)

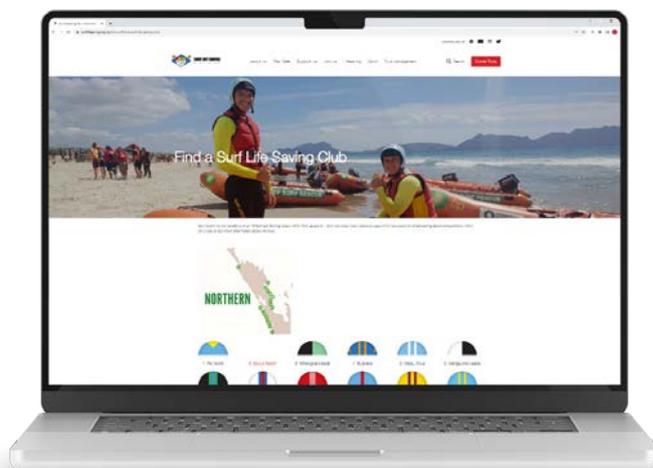
Many clubs host an open day at the start of the season to give new members an opportunity to ask questions and get a feel for the club before joining.

Once you have decided on which club is a good location for you, then accessing the club website or social media pages will give you access to their registration platform.

### Sign up is a two-stage process

**Stage 1:** Sign up for free to join a club as a surf lifesaving member via the SLSNZ website: [memberportal.surflifesaving.org.nz/new-membership/](https://memberportal.surflifesaving.org.nz/new-membership/)

**Stage 2:** This stage is club specific. Most clubs generally have an electronic signup process available on their website and links on their social media pages.



# Parent and whānau involvement

Junior Surf like many sports and recreation activities relies upon volunteers including parent and whānau help. No surf lifesaving knowledge or skills are necessary as you will learn alongside your child.

Helper roles include; setup and pack down of activities, in-water helpers, BBQ cook, Group Manager, Group Leaders, fundraising, administration tasks and becoming a qualified surf lifeguard.

**Please note: a parent/guardian is required to always be on the beach, during Junior Surf sessions.**



## Key roles within a Junior Surf programme

Role	Overview
<b>Junior Surf Coordinator</b>	Develops, coordinates, and oversees the Junior Surf programme. This may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Season planning and review.</li> <li>• Appointing volunteer roles.</li> <li>• Group leader training.</li> <li>• Recruitment of volunteers and members.</li> <li>• Safety management and compliance with SLSNZ National Standard Operating Procedures (NSOPs).</li> <li>• Communication with SLSNZ staff and club leadership structures (club committee or board).</li> <li>• Leadership in budgeting and fundraising.</li> </ul>
<b>Junior Surf Administrator</b>	Assist the coordinator in planning the season and taking on coordination of elements of the programme. This may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Registration process.</li> <li>• On day administration.</li> <li>• Processing of junior skills assessments.</li> </ul>
<b>Group Manager</b>	For larger groups (more than 20 in a single group) a manager is recommended. This person works as a liaison between the group leader, participants, and helpers. Assisting with headcounts, sign in/out process and coordination of equipment and property.
<b>Group Leader</b>	Group leaders are responsible for the implementation and coordination of activities for a group within the programme. Facilitating the development of skills, knowledge and for the overall safety and wellbeing of their group. They are guided by the SLSNZ resources and supported by the coordinator.
<b>Group Leader Assistant</b>	Group leader assistant's support the group leader with the delivery of sessions. This role is great for whānau who are new to surf lifesaving or young surf lifeguards who are looking to upskill through Junior Surf leadership.
<b>Water Safety Leader (WSL)</b>	Is the team leader for a group of water safety personnel. The WSL must hold a refreshed Surf Lifeguard Award. It is also strongly recommended they hold a current first aid qualification. The WSL completes the operational risk assessment for water activities prior to the commencement of each session. If a club does not appoint a WSL then this role falls to the Junior Surf Coordinator.
<b>Surf Lifeguards</b>	Qualified and refreshed surf lifeguards provide the key water safety. The lifeguards act under the leadership of the WSL. The ratio of these is one lifeguard to 20 participants.
<b>In-water helpers</b>	Adults who are in the water supporting participants, creating the boundaries for activities and ensuring the one adult to five participants ratio is met. This group doesn't require any formal training or qualifications and is given instructions by the WSL and at times the group leader on how to create a safe water area.
<b>First Aid Officer</b>	First aid officers are qualified personnel attending the Junior Surf programme to provide basic first aid should the need arise. First aid set up and equipment will vary based on individual clubs and may be provided by surf lifeguards. Incident forms must be completed for members during club activity.
<b>Equipment Personnel</b>	Programme helpers who organise and coordinate the equipment required as part of each session, and assist with the set up and/or pack up activities on the beach. This may include BBQ, fundraising activity, building clean up, repairs and maintenance.

If you are interested in being involved in any of the above, please talk to your club's Junior Surf Coordinator.

# Health, safety, welfare, and risk management

SLSNZ and clubs have both a responsibility and duty of care to provide a safe environment for all participants, and to ensure that the health, safety, and wellbeing of participants takes priority over all other competing considerations.

Your club will carry out risk management using the tools supplied and supported by SLSNZ which includes online training modules and digital risk management tools.

As a parent or whānau member you can contribute to the overall risk management of Junior Surf participation through:

1. Complete the online Be Safer, Risk Management module to learn the SLSNZ process.
2. Actively support your group leader as an in-water helper.
3. Upskill in first aid or surf lifeguard training through the SLSNZ qualification pathway.
4. Report any concerns you have to the Junior Surf Coordinator or other key members.

A club and all its members are responsible for risk assessment and management.



## Water safety

To ensure the safety of Junior Surf participants, a very careful risk assessment and management plan is put in place by Junior Surf Coordinators. The water safety supervision system utilises qualified refreshed surf lifeguards and unqualified parent in-water helpers.

### Ratios for Junior Surf activities

- 1:5** Clubs have a minimum ratio of one in-water helper to five participants regardless of conditions.
- 1:1** For participants under 6 years old, it is recommend this ratio drop to one in-water helper to one participant.
- 1:20** One qualified surf lifeguard is present for every 20 participants in the water.

### Water quality

As with most illnesses children can be more susceptible than adults. Pollution caused during storm water runoffs can cause high levels of bacteria (enterococci), which are used as an indicator of the level of disease-causing bacteria in the water. Current water quality assessments can be accessed at SAFESWIM. Visit [safeswim.org.nz](https://safeswim.org.nz) for more information, or your local regional council website.



# Safeguarding children and young people

SLSNZ is committed to the safeguarding of children and young people. We acknowledge a safeguarding organisation doesn't just happen; it requires conscious action to protect children from harm.

It is imperative that we provide a safe and supportive environment for children and young people that focuses on fun, education and building the confidence of our people through positive learning and development.

SLSNZ's core values include being open, welcome, inclusive and building stronger and safer communities for everyone. We are committed to reducing the risks of abuse and harm to children and young people, and will ensure all members and clubs understand and adhere to the safeguarding children and young people policy and procedure and requirements.

We are committed to providing a robust reporting mechanism for all members for any concerns around the safety or wellbeing of children and young people. We commit to provide opportunities for members to receive the most

appropriate support, which may include formal debriefing and counselling arising from incidents of children and young person abuse. For more information visit [surflifesaving.org.nz/club-management/health-safety/member-protection-toolbox](https://www.surflifesaving.org.nz/club-management/health-safety/member-protection-toolbox)



# Wellbeing

All members have access to trained surf lifesaving peer supporters and free external professional counselling.

Both of these services can be easily accessed and are considered a normal and important part of maintaining good wellbeing in the surf lifesaving environment.

Keeping physically fit, getting good quality sleep and eating well all contribute to good wellbeing.

## Social support

The social support you have at a surf club plays an important role in your wellbeing. During challenging times, keep connected to your surf club community and other important people in your life.

## Peer support

Peer supporters are specially trained SLSNZ members who can provide wellbeing support for a range of issues including mental health concerns, bullying, stress and traumatic lifesaving incidents. Peer supporters play an important role in post-incident support, and may be called on to attend post incident debriefs and assist with member follow-ups.

## Counselling

All Junior Surf Coordinators have access to free counselling which is provided by an external organisation. The counselling is confidential and can be used for personal issues such as stress, anxiety and grief as well as for support after stressful or traumatic incidents. Counselling can be accessed through the SLSNZ website [surflifesaving.org.nz/club-management/wellbeing](https://www.surflifesaving.org.nz/club-management/wellbeing)

## SLSNZ code of conduct

SLSNZ expects all members, supporters, coaches, advisors, staff and associates of SLSNZ to abide by a code of conduct that upholds the principles and values of the organisation.

Check out our member protection toolbox at [surflifesaving.org.nz/club-management/health-safety/member-protection-toolbox](https://www.surflifesaving.org.nz/club-management/health-safety/member-protection-toolbox)



# Lifesaving sports events

## Carnivals, festivals, and events

The skills and knowledge learned in Junior Surf covers a wide range of outcomes, some of which can be developed by participation in lifesaving sports activities. For many members lifesaving sports is a great way to challenge themselves and be part of a club team.

There are a wide range of opportunities available for members interested in participating in lifesaving sports. This includes both competitive and participation events, individual and team races across sand, surf, and pool contexts.

SLSNZ hosts local, regional, and national lifesaving sports activities and events. These are generally organised by SLSNZ staff with support from local volunteers. There are also formal and informal interclub and club events which provide a wide range of competitive and participation activities for those interested. Many clubs may also run 'club champs'.

## Who can participate in lifesaving sport events?

No one needs to "qualify" to attend a carnival. Participants without a 200m swim badge can only participate in beach sprint, beach flags, beach relay, run-wade-run, boogie board race and boogie board relay. The 200m swim badge is a requirement for entry into water events for participants in the under 11– under 14 age groups, and for some under 10 events.

## How old do you need to be to enter?

SLSNZ Junior Surf competitions are for participants aged under 8 to under 14 as at midnight 30 September. Participants are placed into age categories for competition.

## Roles for parents and whānau

Lifesaving sports is an action packed and exciting way for SLSNZ members to test their skills. Clubs often need to provide a ratio of support helpers to competitors to take part in an event. A wide range of roles are required to support the effective delivery of events.

- Lifesaving sports coaches.
- Lifesaving sports officials.
- Work party members to help organise equipment.
- Age group managers.
- Team managers.
- Water safety and event safety.

These roles are extremely rewarding and a fabulous way to further develop your skills, meet new people, support your club and visit some of New Zealand's most amazing beaches.



### Individual and team – ocean, pool and beach divisions

Age in years	Individual division	Team division
7 years	Under 8	Under 10
8 years	Under 9	
9 years	Under 10	
10 years	Under 11	Under 12
11 years	Under 12	
12 years	Under 13	Under 14
13 years	Under 14	

## Overview of lifesaving sport events for juniors

### Beach sprint

This is a straight running race. U8 – U10 run 50m, U11 – U14 run 70m.



### Beach relay (all age groups)

Teams of four (two at each end of the course). Each run the same distance as beach sprints. Team members run carrying a baton and pass to the next team member. Each baton must be received behind the line and if any part of the body crosses the line before the baton has changed, the team will be disqualified. If the baton is dropped, it can be picked up and the team continues.



### 2km beach relay

A four person team runs the following legs:

- Person one runs 800m,
- Person two runs 600m,
- Person three runs 400m,
- Person four runs 200m.

At the end of each running leg, a baton change occurs behind the start line.



### Beach flags (all age groups)

This is a sprint up the beach to claim a baton in the sand. There will always be fewer batons than participants. The participant who does not get a baton is eliminated from the competition. All participants lie face down with toes on the start line, heels together, hands on top of each other and head up facing out to sea. On the command “heads down” chins are placed on the hands and participants must stay still. At the whistle participants get to their feet as quickly as they can and run to get a baton. There is only one false start allowed, so the next participant to false start is eliminated. U8 – U10 run 10m, U11 – U14 run 15m.



### Run-wade-run (U8 – U10)

This is a beach/water event. Participants run from the starting line on the beach into the water, then wade out and around two markers or buoys and back into shore where they sprint to cross the finish line. Some competitions do not offer this event for U10's.



### Wading relay

Teams of four complete the same course as the wading race. Participant one starts at the start line moving around the marked course using their running and wading skills, when they reach the start line again, they tag the next team member who does the same until the last team member runs through the finish line at the end of their race.



### Run-swim-run (U10 – U14)

This is a beach/water event. Participant run from the starting line on the beach into the water, then swim out and around two buoys and back into shore, where they sprint to cross the finish line. The swim distance varies

by age group. All participants must have completed their 200m swim badge.



### Surf race (U10 – U14)

This is a swimming race. The course length varies by age-group but will be no longer than 200m. All participants must have completed their 200m swim badge. Participant usually swim left to right around the course and return to shore to sprint across the finishing line.



### Bodyboard race (U8 – U10)

The race starts at the water's edge with each participant's board leash attached to their arm. They race out and around two markers or buoys and back into shore. Participants must cross the finish line in contact with their board. No fins are required. Some competitions do not offer this event for U10's.



### Board race (U10 – U14)

This is a kneebord race. Participants start at the water's edge holding their board. They race out into the water on the starter's whistle, paddle out and around three buoys, and back into shore to the finish line. If participants lose their board after the last buoy, they can swim the remainder of the course.

Participants must cross the line and finish with their board. The type of board used and distance paddled will vary by age groups. All participants must have completed their 200m swim badge.



### Board relay (U10 – U14)

This event runs the same as a board race but with teams of three. The first team member completes the water course and tags the next team member who is waiting on the beach (not their board). The final team member must cross the finishing line in contact with their board. All participants must have completed their 200m swim badge.



### Board rescue (U13 – U14)

Teams consist of a swimmer and a paddler. On the starter's whistle, the swimmer races out to their allocated buoy; on arrival, places a hand on the top of the buoy and raises their other hand. The paddler begins at the swimmer's signal. On reaching the swimmer, the paddler rounds the buoy from left to right, picks up the swimmer, making sure that they are on the seaward side of the buoy. Then the team jointly paddles back to shore. The paddler and swimmer run to cross the finishing line with both competitors in contact with the board. All participants must have completed their 200m swim badge.



### Tube rescue (U13 – U14)

Teams consist of a patient and rescuer. First, the patient lines up at the start between their flags. Then, on the starter's whistle, they swim out to their buoy. On reaching the buoy, the patient places a hand on the top of the buoy and raises their other hand. On seeing the signal from the patient, the rescuer, with rescue tube and fins, runs into the water putting their fins on in the water. They then swim out to the buoy.

The rescuer swims left to right around the buoy, clipping in the patient behind the buoy. The patient can help clip on the tube before they cross the buoy line and swim into shore. The patient must remain on their back while being towed and assist by kicking and/or sculling underwater. The rescuer removes their fins when they are in shallow water, and the team runs up the beach to finish in between their flags, or their allocated position on the start line.



### Diamond race (U10 – U14)

This is a multi-discipline event. The order of events is swim and board. The participant swims out, and around two buoys, returns to the beach and picks up their board. They then return to the water, paddle out and around the buoys, returning to the beach, dropping their board at the flags then sprint to the finishing line.



### Cameron relay (U8 – U14)

This is a multi-discipline team event. The order of events is the same as the diamond race but done in a team of three. The first participant swims out, and around two buoys, return to the beach and tags the paddler. They run to the water and paddle out and around the buoys, returning to the water's edge, tagging their runner who then sprints to the finishing line.

## Pool rescue events

Pool rescue competitions provide a great platform for members to increase their swimming capability and train in a range of rescue type events in the pool. Events include, diving under obstacles in the water, carrying rubber bricks through the water, tube rescues, swimming with fins and team relays. All of these simulate rescue situations our lifeguards may be faced with. Pool rescue events can take place in both a 25 and 50 metre pool. The age groups for the events are U11, U12, U13, and U14 in the Junior Surf space.







**SURF LIFE SAVING®**  
NEW ZEALAND

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Surf Life Saving New Zealand  
[member.education@surflifesaving.org.nz](mailto:member.education@surflifesaving.org.nz)  
[www.surflifesaving.org.nz](http://www.surflifesaving.org.nz)