



**NIPPERS HANDBOOK
2024 - 2025**

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Welcome!

Welcome to new and returning nipper members and their families for the 24-25 season.

This handbook provides information about the Nippers program at Tea Gardens Hawks Nest, including registration, participating as nippers and parents.

Tea Gardens Hawks Nest surf lifesaving club is a small club, but we boast healthy numbers in the Nippers program which reflects the importance we place on what we know is the future of the club.



Every year we rely on the assistance of all families and parents. It is expected that at least 1 family member will complete a Surf Life Saving Award and fulfil 5 voluntary duties within the Nippers season. The club applauds all those parents that have expanded their own boundaries by stepping up to complete various SLSA awards such as Age Managers, Bronze/Silver and or Gold Medallion, Officials, IRB, coaching etc. over the years.

The 24-25 season will see a new group of members fulfil this initiative and hopefully increase our permanent Patrolling numbers.

We encourage you to read this handbook, which provides useful information about Nippers and our Club. Your Age Manager or any Committee Member will be happy to help you should you require further information.

We have a vibrant, dedicated, and dynamic Junior Club. Our vision is to provide a safe, friendly, and welcoming environment where both Nippers and parents can interact and enjoy the benefits of a healthy outdoor activity. As a club we also make a commitment to the Safeguarding of the children within our club.

Our Nipper Program provides competition, training, recreation, and interaction with peers. If we can encourage and keep our children on the beach, this club will have a very sound base for future years.

For our junior members, we hope nippers is the start of a long Surf Lifesaving Club experience. We hope we can instil a sense of pride and tradition within our Nippers and have all children confident that they are part of something they can be proud of.

See you soon at the beach!

Ryan Russell
Junior Activity Coordinator 24-25

About Nippers

Nippers is a junior activities program that introduces children aged 5 to 14 to Surf Life Saving. It's a great way for children to make friends, be active and learn how to enjoy the beach safely. Nippers first learn about surf awareness and safety.

As they progress through the various age groups, nippers will undergo lessons in wading, running, ocean swimming, board paddling and lifesaving skills as well as learning the basics of resuscitation and first aid.

Our Aims

- Develop surf awareness;
- Increase confidence and skills in beach related activities;
- Instil and re-enforce sun smart philosophies;
- Encourage enjoyable and healthy participation;
- Progress members towards surf awards for relevant age groups;
- Promote a positive non-threatening environment;
- Meet and create lifelong friends.

PLEASE NOTE: Nippers is NOT a learn to swim program. To participate in water-based activities, nippers must complete a skills evaluation to assess their capabilities in the water. Skills requirements vary for each age group, continue reading for more information.



While competition is an important element, the surf awareness and education aspect are our primary aim. Children are taught from the youngest ages how to read the surf and use the surf to their advantage.

This is done in an environment of fun and healthy lifestyle which is unique to surf lifesaving.

We aim to provide an inclusive and welcoming environment for Nippers and parents especially our new Nipper families as we are aware that new ventures can be tricky, and we always welcome your feedback on this. We make a commitment as a club to the Safeguarding of all members including our children and youth.

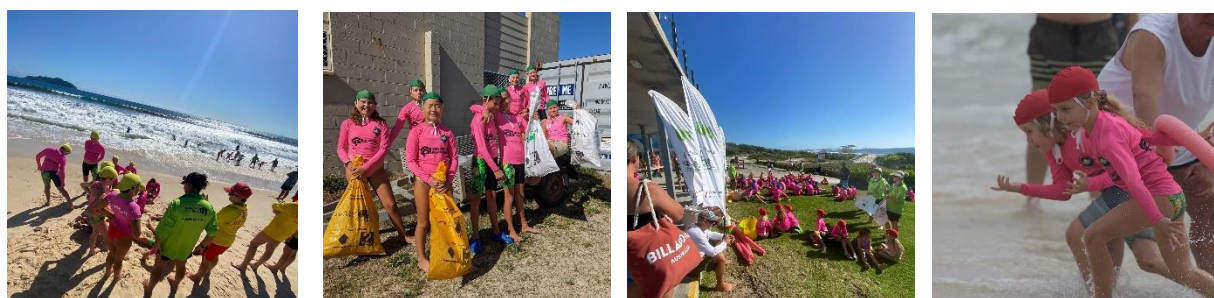
How to Register

Nippers (and at least one parent or caregiver per family) must register as members of Tea Gardens Hawks Nest Surf Life Saving club to participate. Registration and renewal are managed via the Surf Life Saving Australia website:

- New members can register here: [LINK](#)
- Existing members can renew via the member portal: [LINK](#)

Active Kids vouchers can be used during the registration or renewal process – have your voucher number ready before starting the registration process.

Parents & Guardians can choose between associate and active membership. We encourage all Nippers parents and guardians to join our club as active members. A variety of roles are available, and training is provided by the club.



Age Groups

Nippers are organised in age groups, determined by the age they are as at the 30th September. For the 24-25 season, age groups are as follows:

Age Group	Born Between	Age at 30 th September 2024	Award
Under 6	1 st Oct 2018 to 30 th Sep 2019	5	Surf Play 1
Under 7	1 st Oct 2017 to 30 th Sep 2018	6	Surf Play 2
Under 8	1 st Oct 2016 to 30 th Sep 2017	7	Surf Aware 1
Under 9	1 st Oct 2015 to 30 th Sep 2016	8	Surf Aware 2
Under 10	1 st Oct 2014 to 30 th Sep 2015	9	Surf Safe 1
Under 11	1 st Oct 2013 to 30 th Sep 2014	10	Surf Safe 2
Under 12	1 st Oct 2012 to 30 th Sep 2013	11	Surf Smart 1
Under 13	1 st Oct 2011 to 30 th Sep 2012	12	Surf Smart 2
Under 14	1 st Oct 2010 to 30 th Sep 2011	13	SRC – Surf Rescue Certificate

Nippers can join as soon as they turn five years of age, and they are more than welcome to start anytime throughout the season.

In some cases, age groups may be combined based on the number of children and age managers.

Skills Evaluation

Preliminary Evaluations must be completed prior to starting nippers each year. This is not a proficiency process, but a skills evaluation to determine the level of water safety required for participants. Evaluation sessions will be conducted at the start of the season as detailed in the nippers calendar. Nippers cannot participate in water activities until evaluation is completed.

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 (DOB 1/10/2018-30/09/2019)	Under 7 (DOB 1/10/2017-30/09/2018)	Under 8 (DOB 1/10/2016-30/09/2017)
Flotation	Back or front float for a minimum of 5 seconds, recover to stand.	Back or front float for a minimum of 10 seconds, recover to stand.	Back or front float for a minimum of 15 seconds, recover to stand.
Submersion	Submerge to touch the bottom with hands.		
Propulsion	From standing position in waist deep water, perform a front glide (1-2 metres) & recover to stand.	From standing position in waist deep water, perform a front glide (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 (DOB 1/10/2015-30/09/2016)	Under 10 (DOB 1/10/2014-30/09/2015)	Under 11 (DOB 1/10/2013-30/09/2014)
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 mins.
Submersion	Submerge to touch the bottom with hands.		Submerge to perform forward or backward roll/somersault underwater, recover to surface, submerge to touch the bottom with hands.
Propulsion	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 10 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 25 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 (DOB 1/10/2012 – 30/09/2013)	Under 13 (DOB 1/10/2011 – 30/09/2012)	Under 14 (SRC) (DOB 1/10/2010 – 30/09/2011)
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, submerge to touch the bottom with hands.		Submerge to perform forward or backward roll/somersault underwater, do not recover to surface, submerge to touch the bottom with hands.
Propulsion	Swim on front any stroke for 75 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 50 metres.	Swim on front any stroke for 100 metres followed by survival stroke(s) breaststroke and/or sidestroke for minimum 100 metres.

Nippers Season

Nippers season starts in October and runs through until March, with a break during the Christmas school holidays. A full calendar of events is included in the nippers handbook.

Our nippers season includes 4 'Championship' rounds, where nippers can compete within their age group to accumulate points towards championship trophies at the end of the season.

What to bring

Please ensure your nippers bring the following items each week:

- Swimmers
- Hi-vis (pink) vest or rashie
- Water bottle
- Towel
- SPF 50+ Sun Protection
- Hat
- Goggles
- Warm clothing (in case of poor weather)

A nipper swimming cap will be provided on the day and returned at the end of each nippers session. Each age group will use a different coloured swimming cap for easy identification.



PLEASE NOTE: Nippers will be unable to take part in any activities unless they are wearing a pink hi-vis vest or rashie and nipper swimming cap. These items are compulsory for safety reasons.

Swimmers and rashies are available for purchase from the club or BYO.

What to expect

Nippers commences at 9:00am on Sunday mornings and include:

- Sign in, grab a swimming cap and meet your age group in front of the clubhouse.
- Welcome and overview of the day's activities.
- Age managers and parents head to the beach in their age groups
- Beach and water activities as programmed.
- Return equipment to the clubhouse and sign out

Activities may include (subject to conditions):

- Land-based activities e.g. sprints, flags & games
- Water-based activities e.g. wading, swimming, boards, relays & games
- Surf safety & learning activities e.g. identifying rips, beach safety

Safety & Beach Conditions

Safety is our priority for ALL activities. This includes on the beach, in the water and considers the protection of all children.

Beach Conditions: It should be assumed that Nippers will take place each scheduled week no matter the weather. At the start of the day the Junior Activities Coordinator and the Patrol Captain will discuss the environmental and surf conditions and carry out a Risk Assessment for all planned water activities.

If the beach is closed or conditions are unsuitable for the day's activities alternate activities will be organised.



The Patrol Captain or JAC (Junior Activities Co-ordinator) may cease any activity if conditions become unsafe. The decision of the Patrol Captain or JAC shall be final.

Dangerous conditions will include:

- Extremely low or extremely high weather temperatures
- High or strong winds
- Rough/dangerous seas or
- Any other condition that may cause concern for the safe participation of all members.

Water Safety: We endorse & apply water safety policies and guidelines issued by Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA).

It is important that we have as many qualified water safety personnel as possible to supervise our water activities. Water safety personnel can be found in Hi-vis Orange or Red/Yellow lifesaving rash vests and their Orange cap. We require as many parents as possible to obtain or maintain their Surf Rescue Certificate (SRC) or Bronze medallion (BM) to assist with water safety.

The minimum ratio for water safety to Nippers is one qualified adult to five children (1:5).

An inflatable rescue boat (IRB) will be operational during all water events however, it must be assumed that if water safety staff are not available, Nippers will be unable able to participate in water activities.

PLEASE NOTE: Parents are not to accompany nippers during swimming or board activities unless they hold their Surf Rescue Certificate (SRC) or Bronze Medallion (BM).

Training is available to all members throughout the season to obtain these qualifications.

Age Managers

Age Group Managers are volunteer parents that are allocated to each age group with responsibility for organising and conducting the various Nipper activities. Age Managers are easily identified by their bright green sun shirts and can be found on the beach each Sunday. Many of our patrolling Club Members started as Age Members accompanying their children to Nippers each week.

Parents are encouraged to make themselves known to their child's Age Group Manager and to help when required. If you have any questions or concerns about your child's ability or if your child has any medical condition that may restrict him or her in any way, please speak with your Age Manager.

If you are interested in helping with the delivery of Nippers and becoming an Age Manager, we would love to speak to you. All we need is enthusiasm and an open mind for you to start the Age manager process.

To become an Age Manager, you must:

- Be a current registered member of TGHN SLSC
- Have completed a WWCC (if required as per the guidelines)
- Complete the SLS Safeguarding Children online course.
- Complete the Online Age Manager Course OR
- Complete an Age Manager course which is run by the club.



Age Group Managers responsibilities include:

- Encourage the children in their age group to participate, enjoy, co-operate, and compete in all activities of the Club.
- Keep weekly records of each child's attendance and proficiency achievements.
- Assist in the development of surf awareness and surf safety for the children in their age group(s).
- Instruct the children in their age group of the necessary requirements for the National Awards.
- Ensure the children of the age group are aware of and encourage sun protection.

Being an Age Manager is an important role, so having an Assistant to help is vital. This season we are encouraging members from the age of 13 years to become an Age Manager Assistant to help with activities on the beach and build on their instructing skills. The requirements are:

- Minimum age 13 years.
- Complete the Child Safe Awareness online course.
- Successfully complete the online Age Manager course component.

Members should speak with their JAC if they are interested in becoming an Age Manager Assistant.

Parent Responsibilities

Attendance: It is important that you never leave your child unattended at Nippers. A parent is to remain at the beach for the duration of all nippers sessions, and parents retain responsibility for their children at all times. If a child is left unattended, we may exclude that child from future participation in the program.

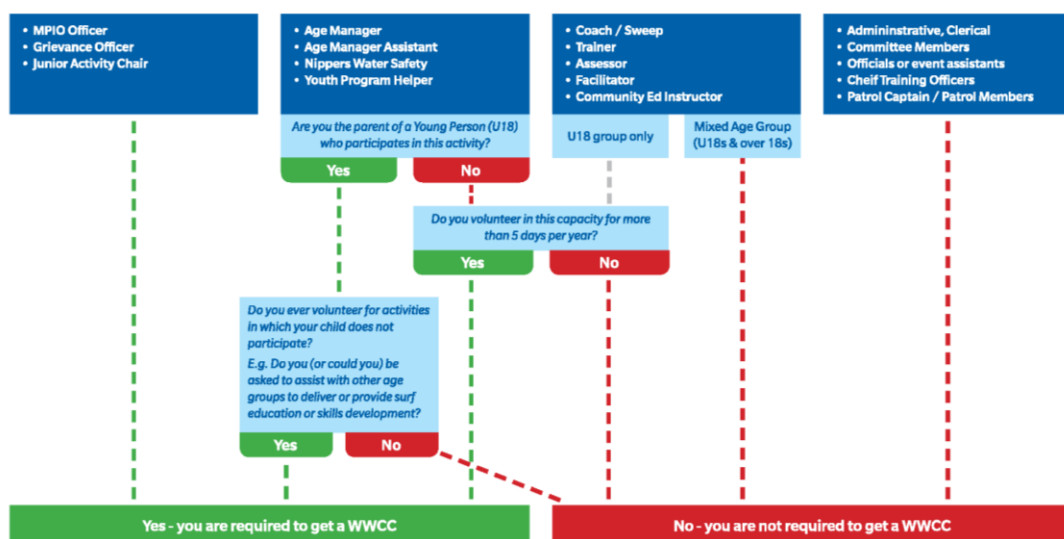
Sign-in and sign-out: Nipper’s are to be signed in at the start and completion of every session. If you must leave before events are finished, please inform your child’s Age Manager to ensure their name is marked from the roll before taking your child from the beach. No nipper will be allowed to leave nippers unsupervised.

Code of conduct: As members of TGHNSLSC, all parents & caregivers are subject to SLSNSW & TGHNSLSC Code of Conduct and have a clear responsibility to act in a constructive and encouraging manner at all times. Breaches of code, including unsupportive comments or behaviour may result in cancellation of membership. Copies of these policies are available on the club and SLS NSW websites.

Volunteer duties: Parents are requested to actively support the nippers program through a variety of roles including patrols, age managers and water safety. The club will provide all required training to support your involvement and ensure nippers can safely & effectively operate each week. Parents must remain on the beach and assist age managers where required, unless they are providing support in another capacity e.g. patrol, age manager, water safety or another active member role.

Member Protection: Any adult wishing to assist with the nippers program should review the following [guideline](#) to determine if their role requires a valid Working with Children Check (WWCC). To learn more about the WWCC or to apply visit the [Service NSW website](#).

Do you require a WWCC?



Note – if you perform multiple roles in Surf Life Saving, please ensure you check the flowchart and obtain a WWCC where needed.



Equipment

To maintain our equipment, we request that all Nippers, Age Managers, and Parents take pride in our resources and equipment. Boards must be carried and not dragged and washed at the end of each use. This is a simple activity however it guarantees the longevity of its use in the coming seasons.

If an issue (damage/ problem) is noted with ANY equipment, please let the Age Managers or the JAC know so the equipment can be inspected and repaired as soon as possible.

Equipment must be shared. There will be enough equipment for all Nippers however not at the same time. Scheduling of activities will allow for Nippers to use different educational tools at different times.

Please understand that consideration for other Nippers and the use of the equipment is just as important as the use of the equipment itself.



Grievances

TGHN SLSC Nippers is a very inclusive environment, however if there are any problems relating to any activities the following line of communication is to be taken.

1. Parents only are to approach the Age Manager in a polite and respectful manner to discuss the situation.
2. If the Age Manager cannot solve the issue on the spot, they will refer the problem to the Junior Activities Coordinator (JAC).
3. Parents can contact the JAC in person or via email on nippers.tghnslsc@gmail.com
4. If there is a continued discrepancy, members may raise their concern to the Member Protection Information Officer (MPIO).

For further information please see our website for the Code of Conduct, Grievance and Discipline Handling Policy.

Nippers Calendar

Month	Date	Event Details
August 2024	Thu 1 st	Registrations Open
September	Sun 8 th	Club Open Day
	Wed 11 th	Nippers Information Session
October	Sat 12 th	Skills Assessments, Tea Gardens Pool
	Sat 19 th	Skills Assessments, Tea Gardens Pool
	Sun 20 th	Skills Assessments, Tea Gardens Pool Age Manager Induction, Bennetts Beach
	Sun 27 th	Round #1, Bennetts Beach
November	Sun 3 rd	Round #2, Jimmys Beach Surf Swim Proficiency (U9-U14 Competitors)
	Sun 10 th	Round #3, Bennetts Beach
	Sun 17 th	Round #4, Bennetts Beach
	Sun 24 th	Round #5, Bennetts Beach
December	Sun 1 st	Round #6, Jimmys Beach
	Sun 8 th	Nippers Christmas Party
		Christmas Break
January		Christmas Break
February	Sun 2 nd	Round #7, Jimmys Beach
	Sun 9 th	Round #8, Bennetts Beach
	Sun 16 th	Round #9, Bennetts Beach
	Sun 23 rd	Round #10, Bennetts Beach
March	Sun 2 nd	Round #11, Jimmys Beach
	Sun 9 th	Nippers Presentation

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Where can the Junior Activities Preliminary Evaluation take place?
 - a. These can take place in the ocean, rock pool, or local indoor/outdoor swimming pool. TGHN will conduct evaluations at the pool where possible.
2. Why do we do Junior Activities Preliminary Evaluations?
 - a. To record the baseline level of a child's competency in the water before they can commence junior activities. It also assists with determining water safety numbers for Nipper sessions each week.
3. Can children move down in Nipper age groups?
 - a. Yes, this is permitted however, they must complete the Junior Activities Preliminary Evaluation and program for this age group. They will also receive the certificate of completion for this age group. E.g., a child who is eligible to be in U9's, can move down to the U8 age group if they would like to. This child will only complete the U8 Junior Activities Preliminary Evaluation and program and, they will receive the U8 certificate of completion. Refer to the [Surf Sport Manual – 37th Edition](#) for competition age guides.
4. Can children move up in Nipper age groups?
 - a. Yes, however they can only move up by one age level, and this undertaking requires that the child completes the Junior Activities Preliminary Evaluation for the age group that they are entering. E.g., a child who is eligible to be in U9's can move up to the U10 age group if they have satisfactorily achieved the Junior Activities Preliminary Evaluation for the U10's age group. Refer to the [Surf Sport Manual – 37th Edition](#) for competition age guides.
5. Can children wear goggles and a wetsuit?
 - a. Of course! They can wear a wetsuit and goggles anytime they wish. Please note that during competition, a wetsuit can only be worn if the water temperature drops below 16 degrees. Goggles are permitted to be worn in the water at any time. And a high vis rash vest must always be worn as the outer layer! Refer to the Surf Sport Manual – 37th Edition for further information.
6. How do I become an Age Manager?
 - a. Contact the Junior Activities Coordinator (JAC) to express an interest in becoming an Age Manager. Online learning courses are required to be undertaken as part of the Age Manager Training through the SLSA e-learning section in the SLS Members Area.
7. How do I become an Age Manager Assistant?
 - a. Age Manager Assistants are a vital component on the beach in assisting Age Managers each week. Age Manager Assistants can join from 13 years of age and upon completion of the online component of the Age Manager course.
8. Do I have to renew my Age Manager Award?
 - a. Age Manager awards have a recommended annual skills maintenance (completed online) that can be accessed through the SLS Members Area (all Age Manager courses are free of charge).