



PAMBULA SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB

NIPPERS

Junior Surf Life Saving Handbook

2026–2027 SEASON

SKILLS FOR LIFE • CONFIDENCE IN THE SURF • COMMUNITY



nippers@pambulasurf.org.au

WELCOME TO PAMBULA NIPPERS!

Welcome to the 2026–2027 Nipper Season at Pambula Surf Life Saving Club. Whether you are joining us for the first time or returning for another season, we are delighted to have your family as part of our club community.

Our Nippers program helps children build confidence, beach and surf awareness, practical lifesaving skills and friendships — all while having fun on the sand & in the water.

Pambula SLSC has a very proud history with the Club celebrating 100 years in 2014! We are the original home of Nippers, being the first ever Club in Australia to introduce the program. Our Surf Education modules will tell you some wonderful stories about our history & some of the lives that have been saved right here on Pambula Beach.

YOUR NIPPERS TEAM

ROLE	CONTACT
Junior Activity Chair	Steve Flanagan
Junior Activity Administrator	Brie Lauer
Water Safety Coordinator	John Grady
Uniforms Coordinator	Alecia Toovey
Surf Sports / Carnivals Coordinators	Kat Sirl & Lauren Moreland
Kiosk Coordinators	Kat McLeod & Andy McLeod
Age Managers	Buckets (U6 & U7): Sam Seton U8: Sofie Rodda U9: Simon Daly U10: Angela MacLean U11: Phillipa Djikic U12: Jess Zandt & Jo Watson U13: Kat Sirl U14: Belinda Morris

KEEP IN TOUCH

Email: nippers@pambulasurf.org.au

Website: pambulasurfclub.com.au

Facebook Group: Pambula Surf Nippers

HANDBOOK AT A GLANCE

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1. GETTING STARTED

Why Junior Surf Lifesaving?

Junior Surf Lifesaving gives children the opportunity to develop confidence and skills in & out of the water. Our Nippers learn about beach and surf hazards, how to stay safe, and practical skills that can stay with them for life. Children do not need to arrive as strong surf swimmers — the program is designed to build knowledge, confidence & ability over time.

What Happens on a Sunday?

NEW TO NIPPERS? START HERE!

Sunday Sessions:

8:30am – Muster at the Pambula Surf Lifesaving Club
 8:45am – Beach warm-up
 9:00am – Program start
 11:00am – Program finish (Buckets finish earlier)

WHAT TO BRING:

- Wetsuit (we strongly advise a wetsuit over regular swimmers as conditions can be cold, especially at the beginning of the season!)
- Club cap & fluorescent vest for all Nippers in U8's onward (Cap is supplied for Buckets children). Vest & cap must be worn for safety reasons.
- Hat
- SPF 30+ sunscreen
- Water bottle
- Towel
- Optional change of clothes

ACTIVITIES:

Activities are based on the Age Group & may include:

- Age-appropriate beach & water activities
- Surf education & safety learning
- Beach sprints, relays, flags & wades
- Surf swimming, board paddling & rescue skills for proficient Nippers
- Optional preparation for Surf Sports & Carnivals

Please note that a parent/guardian must remain on the beach in case of emergency. Please accompany your child to their Age Group at the beginning of each session and remain available throughout the program.

Our wonderful Nippers program is run entirely by volunteers. We encourage all parents & guardians to get involved by volunteering. There are many opportunities to support the Club & these will be advertised throughout the season as needed, whether it be an ongoing role or occasional helpers. We'd love to have you! At least 2x parents/guardians from each Age Group are rostered on to assist with the Kiosk on a rotating basis. Each Age Group is rostered on only 2x per season, please see the Season Calendar for Age Group allocation.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out the Junior Activities Chair or your Age Manager.

2. SEASON CALENDAR



NIPPERS SEASON CALENDAR 2026-2027

Pool Proficiency Swims at Sapphire Aquatic Centre
 25th October 2:00 - 4:00pm & 31st October 1:00pm – 3:00pm
 Come any time in those windows, entry is free for Nippers

Nippers starts at 8:30am for 8:45am on the beach warm up and 9:00am start

Two parents from each age group needed each week to help with the Kiosk.

No Nippers on Carnival Dates

DAY	DATE	DETAILS	LOCATION	KIOSK ROSTER
Sunday	01 Nov 26	Nippers - Orientation	Pambula SLSC	
Sunday	08 Nov 26	Nippers – Junior Search and Rescue Drill and Rip Demo	Pambula SLSC	U14
Sunday	15 Nov 26	Nippers	Pambula SLSC	U13
Sunday	22 Nov 26	Pambula Mini Carnival	Pambula SLSC	U12
Sunday	29 Nov 26	Nippers	Pambula SLSC	U11
Sunday	06 Dec 26	CARNIVAL	Broulee SLSC	
Saturday	12 Dec 26	Twilight Christmas Nippers	Pambula SLSC	U10
Sunday	20 Dec 26	HOLIDAYS		
Sunday	27 Dec 26	HOLIDAYS		
Sunday	03 Jan 27	HOLIDAYS		
Sunday	10 Jan 27	HOLIDAYS		
Sunday	17 Jan 27	HOLIDAYS		
Sunday	24 Jan 27	Nippers	Pambula SLSC	U9
Sunday	31 Jan 27	Nippers	Pambula SLSC	U8
Sunday	07 Feb 27	Pambula Mini Carnival	Pambula SLSC	U14
Sunday	14 Feb 27	Nippers	Pambula SLSC	U13
Sunday	21 Feb 27	CARNIVAL	Pambula SLSC	
Sunday	28 Feb 27	Nippers	Pambula SLSC	U12
Sunday	07 Mar 27	Nippers	Pambula SLSC	U11
Sunday	14 Mar 27	Nippers – Police Boat	Pambula SLSC	U10
Sunday	21 Mar 27	CARNIVAL	Narooma SLSC	
Sunday	28 Mar 27	EASTER BREAK		
Saturday	3 April 27	Twilight Brats vs Adults + Presentation	Pambula SLSC	

School Holidays: 18th December 2026 – 27th January 2027

Easter Break: 26th March 2027 – 29th March 2027

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS



3. AGE GROUPS

Age groups are determined by a child's date of birth.

BUCKET BRIGADE

Children in the younger age groups may participate in the Bucket Brigade program, with fun beach & shallow-water activities delivered over a shorter session.

AGE GROUP MATRIX

Birthday Month/ Year 🎂	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
January	—	U14	U13	U12	U11	U10	U9	U8	Buckets	Buckets
February	—	U14	U13	U12	U11	U10	U9	U8	Buckets	Buckets
March	—	U14	U13	U12	U11	U10	U9	U8	Buckets	Buckets
April	—	U14	U13	U12	U11	U10	U9	U8	Buckets	Buckets
May	—	U14	U13	U12	U11	U10	U9	U8	Buckets	Buckets
June	—	U14	U13	U12	U11	U10	U9	U8	Buckets	Buckets
July	—	U14	U13	U12	U11	U10	U9	U8	Buckets	Buckets
August	—	U14	U13	U12	U11	U10	U9	U8	Buckets	Buckets
September	—	U14	U13	U12	U11	U10	U9	U8	Buckets	Buckets
October	U14	U13	U12	U11	U10	U9	U8	Buckets	Buckets	—
November	U14	U13	U12	U11	U10	U9	U8	Buckets	Buckets	—
December	U14	U13	U12	U11	U10	U9	U8	Buckets	Buckets	—

Please Note: Children may join Nippers once they turn five. Age groups are determined by age as at midnight on 30 September. Children who turn five after 30 September may join during the season after their 5th Birthday but will remain in Buckets the following season. SLS Hub online registration will not allow the child to be registered until their 5th Birthday has passed.

4. OUR NIPPERS COMMUNITY

Age Managers

Age Managers are central to the Nippers program. They support the safety & wellbeing of their age group, maintain attendance, coordinate activities & help make Nippers positive & enjoyable for every child. They work alongside the JAC, Water Safety & Education Team to support our Nippers in each Age Group.

We encourage all able parents/guardians to become an Age Manager. Please feel welcome to approach your current Age Manager or the JAC if you would like more information or are interested in becoming Age Manager Support (a great way to learn from another Age Manager if you're not yet ready to take the reins!).

Interested? Age Managers & Age Manager Support complete the SLS Child Safe Awareness & Age Manager online courses through the SLS Hub & must meet NSW Working with Children Check requirements. Speak to the JAC and we'll help you get started!

How Parents/Guardians Can Help

- Become an Age Manager or Age Manager Support
- Ensure availability for the Season's rotating Kiosk roster
- Assist with set-up and pack-down
- Become a Carnival Official
- Gain your SRC or Bronze Medallion & assist with Water Safety
- Help with Club events, administration or other volunteer roles, keep an eye out on your emails or the Facebook Group for current helping hands needed!

NIPPERS IS VOLUNTEER RUN!

Our program works because our wonderful community of families pitch in! You do not need to be an experienced lifesaver to make a valuable contribution.

5. WATER SAFETY & PROFICIENCY

IMPORTANT

Each Nipper must complete the required Preliminary Pool Skills Evaluation before participating in water activities. Competition in carnivals has an additional Competition Skills Evaluation requirement.

Preliminary Pool Skills Evaluation

Preliminary Pools Skills Evaluations are held in late October before the Nippers Season begins. Please see the Season Calendar & Pambula Surf Nippers Facebook Group for dates each year. Please come during the advertised times. There is no charge for the proficiency swim, thanks to our sponsor, Little Nippers Early Learning & Childcare in Merimbula. Nippers (from U8 onward) must have their skills evaluated before the season start. Buckets are not required to participate in the proficiency swims. If you are concerned your child may not meet the requirements, please come along anyway to give it a try & discuss with the Nippers team as we may still be able to accommodate them (e.g. beach activities & games, instead of water if 1:1 water safety is not available).

AGE	FLOTATION	SUBMERSION	PROPULSION
U8	Back or front float for a minimum of 15 seconds, recover to stand.	Submerge to touch the bottom with hands.	Swim on front any stroke (distance 20 metres) followed by swim underwater (distance 2-3 metres).
U9	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.	Submerge to touch the bottom with hands.	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.
U10	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.	Submerge to touch the bottom with hands.	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.
U11	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.	Submerge to perform forward or backward roll/somersault underwater, recover to surface, submerge to touch the bottom with hands.	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.
U12	Front to back float or back to front float – 5 seconds each side. Tread water and/or any stroke sculling for minimum 3 minutes.	Submerge to perform forward or backward roll/somersault underwater, recover to surface, submerge to touch the bottom with hands.	Swim on front any stroke for 75 metres followed by survival stroke(s) breaststroke and/or sidestroke for minimum 50 metres.
U13	Front to back float or back to front float – 5 seconds each side. Tread water and/or any stroke sculling for minimum 3 minutes.	Submerge to perform forward or backward roll/somersault underwater, recover to surface, submerge to touch the bottom with hands.	Swim on front any stroke for 100 metres followed by survival stroke(s) breaststroke and/or sidestroke for minimum 50 metres.
U14	Front to back float or back to front float – 5 seconds each side. Tread water and/or any stroke sculling for minimum 3 minutes.	Submerge to perform forward or backward roll/somersault underwater, do not recover to surface, submerge to touch the bottom with hands.	Swim on front any stroke for 100 metres followed by survival stroke(s) breaststroke and/or sidestroke for minimum 100 metres.

Competition Skills Evaluation

Competition Surf Evaluations are only for those interested in competitions & carnivals. Assessments will be conducted during normal Nippers weekly program, prior to the Season's first Carnival. If your child is unsuccessful but wishes to try again later in the Season, this can be accommodated.

AGE GROUP	COMPETITION EVALUATION
U6	Nil
U7	Nil
U8	Nil (no water competition, except for wade which takes place in waist-deep water)
U9	Minimum 150m open water swim (any recognised stroke)
U10	Minimum 150m open water swim (any recognised stroke)
U11	Minimum 200m open water swim (any recognised stroke)
U12	Minimum 200m open water swim (any recognised stroke)
U13	Minimum 200m open water swim (any recognised stroke)
U14	Minimum 200m open water swim (any recognised stroke)

6. EDUCATION

Each age group follows Surf Life Saving Australia's Junior Development Program, with learning building as children progress through Nippers. Alongside plenty of fun, games and time in the surf, Nippers develop beach and water safety knowledge, practical lifesaving skills, confidence, teamwork and surf sports skills.

Age Group	Award	What Will Our Nippers Learn?
Buckets (U6 & U7)	Surf Play 1 & 2	Getting to know the Surf Club and beach, recognising lifesavers and the safest place to swim, sun safety, asking for help, water confidence, wading, beach sprints, flags & developing the basic movement & beach skills they'll use as they progress into Nippers.
U8	Surf Aware 1	SunSmart behaviours, beach & marine environments, beach hazards including rips and waves, red-and-yellow flags, signaling for help, calling 000, plus wading, dolphin diving, body boards, sprints & flags.
U9	Surf Aware 2	Waves and surf conditions, beach signs, personal safety, healthy bodies/nutrition, environmental awareness & what makes the beach change, alongside board paddling, body surfing & beach events.
U10	Surf Safe 1	Developing a deeper understanding of rips, waves & beach hazards, dangerous marine creatures, basic first aid, personal health & wellbeing, communication & surf safety, while building swimming, board & beach skills.
U11	Surf Safe 2	Recognising people who may be at risk or in trouble, beach signage, first aid, DRSABCD & CPR, surf conditions & stronger surf skills including boards, swimming & transitions.
U12	Surf Smart 1	More advanced surf awareness, physical health & wellbeing, first aid & resuscitation, emergency situations, rescue principles & environmental awareness, alongside increasingly capable surf & board skills.
U13	Surf Smart 2	Bringing their knowledge together: CPR & First Aid, rescue techniques, emergency services, communicating with beach users, surf hazards & decision-making, plus tube rescue, board rescue & advanced surf skills.
U14	SRC Pathway	Transitioning from Nippers towards becoming a lifesaver, with more advanced rescue, resuscitation, first aid, surf awareness and patrol-related skills, working toward the Surf Rescue Certificate pathway. SLSNSW currently identifies U14 with the SRC pathway.

7. SURF SPORTS & AWARDS

Carnivals

Carnivals are optional for all Nippers. They do require preparation, planning & time, but the benefits can be great for increasing self-esteem, teamwork & confidence.

Nippers must pass Junior Competition Surf Evaluation in addition to Preliminary Pool Skills Evaluation if they would like to compete.

The Nippers Season Calendar lists the Far South Coast Branch Carnivals each Season. Pambula SLSC sets up a Club tent & supplies all boards & equipment for participating Nippers. The Club pays for the Carnival registration fees. Each year, there are also NSW Country Championships & a NSW State Carnival with thousands of competitors. Any Nipper or Senior member can attend these. If your child would like to be involved, please discuss with your Age Manager, Carnival Coordinator or the JAC.

Events at Carnivals may include:

- March Past
- Surf Races (body surfing, wading, sprinting)
- Cameron Relay (Team of 4; 1x swimmer, 2x runners & 1x board paddler)
- Board Races & Board Rescue (1x swimmer, 1x board paddler)
- Iron Man/Woman (swim, board & sprint) – for U11 & above only
- Flags
- Beach Sprints
- Beach Relay (Team of 4)

LiveHeats wrist band technology allows for tracking and recording of event results. It is compulsory for Nippers to wear them while competing. They will be given one for free if they haven't competed before. If they have lost the band, or it has been damaged, a new one will need to be purchased (usually around \$10).

Nipper Awards

Nippers will be acknowledged for their achievements at the End of Season Presentation, which all Nippers (including our Buckets!) are encouraged to attend to be recognised & support their peers! Various awards will be presented, including, but not limited to:

- Age Champion
- Most Improved Award (per Age Group)
- Best All Rounder (per Age Group)
- Most Improved in the Water
- All Heart Award
- Nipper of the Year (Male & Female)

Age Champion awards have a set number of criteria which includes attendance and participation at Sunday Nippers, Carnival participation & results, as well as overall attitude. Further information regarding these criteria can be obtained from Age Managers.

8. SAFETY & CONDUCT

CODES OF CONDUCT

KIDS

1. Play to enjoy!
2. Follow the rules
3. Do not throw sand, it can be dangerous
4. Do not argue with Official's decisions (in a Carnival situation, the Team Manager can ask the necessary questions)
5. Be a good sport
6. Treat other Nippers as you like to be treated
7. The aim is to have fun and improve your own ability
8. Stay with your age group
9. Nipper caps must be worn at all times
10. Listen to your Age Manager & be respectful to your teammates
11. Competing is most important, winning is a bonus

Note: Because of the risk of disrupting & endangering others in the Age Group, any Nipper who does not follow the above code may be asked to leave the beach on the day.

NO BULLYING WILL BE TOLERATED

PARENT/GUARDIANS CODE

1. Ensure your children understand the Kids Code
2. Be present on the beach at all times
3. Do not force an unwilling child to participate
4. Ensure your children are involved in the sport for their enjoyment
5. Encourage effort, it is as important as the result
6. Work towards improving skills & sportsmanship
7. Support & encourage your child, even if they make mistakes
8. Do not publicly question an Official's decision
9. Recognise the value and importance of volunteer coaches

SPECTATORS CODE

1. Applaud good efforts by your own team & their opponents
2. Show respect for your team's opponents. Without them there would be no competition!
3. Respect all decisions made by the Officials
4. Encourage competitors to always play according to the rules
5. Do not swear at or harass Competitors, Coaches or Officials.

SunSmart Policy

- **SLIP** on protective clothing
- **SLOP** on SPF 50+ water-resistant sunscreen before water activities
- **SLAP** on a broad-brimmed hat when appropriate
- **WRAP** on UV-protective sunglasses
- Bring plenty of drinking water!

9. CHILD SAFETY

Pambula SLSC is committed to Child Safety. Please see the Surf Lifesaving Australia website for our Child Safety Commitment Statement <https://www.surflifesaving.com.au/child-safety/>.

If you have any complaints or concerns you would like to report, please visit <https://complaints.sls.com.au/>.

The [Child Protection \(Working with Children\) Act 2012 No 51 - NSW Legislation](#) & the [Child Protection \(Working with Children\) Regulation 2013 - NSW Legislation](#) require that a Working With Children Check (WWCC) is a prerequisite for anyone in child-related roles, either paid or voluntary.

Photography

Photographs and video may be taken during Nippers activities for legitimate Club purposes, including Club communications and promotion, in accordance with Surf Life Saving's Child Safe and Photography policies and members' recorded permissions. Consent to images being taken of you or your child is given at the point of registration.

Parents and spectators are asked to photograph respectfully and be mindful that other families may have preferences or restrictions regarding images of their children. Photography or recording is not under any circumstances permitted in change rooms, bathrooms or other private areas.

10. REGISTRATION & MEMBERSHIP

REGISTRATION QUICK LINKS

Club website: pambulasurfclub.com.au

Membership enquiries: registrar@pambulasurf.org.au

Nippers enquiries: nippers@pambulasurf.org.au

Membership Fees

Membership at Pambula Surf is to be renewed each year on 1 July. Surf Lifesaving NSW allow a grace period up to the beginning of the patrolling season. If you do not renew by this time your membership will be archived.

We value your membership in our Club and hope you will consider renewing for the coming season. We have set our prices at a low rate to assist with the cost of living we all experience, and a lower rate for renewals vs new memberships.

If you are experiencing difficulties in renewing your membership through your Members Hub you are welcome to contact registrar@pambulasurf.org.au.

MEMBERSHIP	RENEWAL	NEW
Adult – Associate	\$60	\$100
Adult – Active	\$55	\$65
Individual child – Nippers	\$35	\$40
Family	\$150	\$180

Every Nipper must have at least **one adult member** (Associate or Active). To join the club or renew, go to https://members.sls.com.au/SLSA_Online/modules/login/index.php

Which Adult Membership Should I Choose?

Associate Member: Perfect for parents and carers who want to be part of the Club and support their Nipper but **don't hold a surf lifesaving qualification**. Associate members can still get involved in many volunteer and Club roles.

Active Member: For members who **hold the required surf lifesaving award and actively participate in lifesaving activities**, such as patrols & water safety. Parents interested in becoming more involved can undertake training through the Club to work towards Active membership.

Online Registration Information for New Members

New Members

For Nippers & Members Under 18

You will need to make a payment upon registering yourself & your family to join the Club.

Pambula Surf Lifesaving Club requires a parent/carer to join with a Nipper. You can choose to pay in the most cost-effective way. e.g. if you are joining 1x Nipper and 1x parent, it is better to pay as an adult plus an individual child, if you are joining 2x adults & 2x Nippers, then the Family membership is more cost effective. Please refer to the Membership Price List for the relevant membership fees.)

Visit the webpage [SLS Hub - Register](https://hub.sls.com.au/sign-up) - <https://hub.sls.com.au/sign-up>

Remember your username & password as you will use this each year to renew.

Options available:

- **Join as an Individual** – select ‘An Individual’ and follow the prompts
- **Join as a Family – select ‘My family’** - The first person to sign up must be over 18. Fill in the required details and then *Add a New Member* to sign up your child. Keep adding new members to the family group if you have more than one child.

Note: If the system comes up with the following, it means that you have previously been a member at another Surf Club (This often happens if adults are joining & did time in Nippers as children or were a member in another state):

Our checks have detected that you are already an active member of a Surf Club or a Commercial Academy.

Because of this you need to go straight to the Members Area and create an account. From there you can change your membership details or transfer / join another club.

If you are still having issues, please contact the club or entity you are trying to join - you can obtain contact details below or at https://sls.com.au/club_directory

In this instance follow the directions or contact the Club Registrar on registrar@pambulasurf.org.au for assistance.

SEE YOU AT THE BEACH!

Pambula Surf Life Saving Club • Nippers • 2026–2027

OUR SPONSORS

Our Pambula SLSC Nippers program is made possible by the generosity, kindness & community spirit of so many wonderful people & local businesses.

From financial contributions & donated goods to lending a helping hand & giving their valuable time, our sponsors & supporters play an important role in helping us provide a fun, safe & inclusive environment where our young members can learn, grow, build confidence & develop vital skills.

Every contribution makes a difference, and we are incredibly grateful to everyone who gets behind our Nippers community and helps make the program what it is today.

Thank you for being part of our Nippers family & investing in the next generation of surf lifesavers! Please show your support to these local businesses as thanks for their generous contributions:



TOAST

**Southern
Trucks**
PAMBULA

