



Nipper Program Information

The Surf Life Saving Junior Activities Program (or “Nippers”) has become one of the most successful children’s development and sporting programs in Australia. It encourages children to learn new skills and promotes active involvement of parents, creating a learning environment from which both children and parents can benefit from, and which may someday, save someone’s life. This information booklet is designed as a general guide to the Torquay Nipper program.

Torquay SLSC (TSLSC) shares the Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA) objectives in relation to Junior Development:

- To provide the best possible lifesaving experience for all juniors with the view to encouraging long- term active participation.
- To provide opportunities for juniors to participate in and enjoy lifesaving and competition in an aquatic environment by offering a wide variety of activities suited to the skill and maturation levels of all juniors.
- To ensure the juniors are safe on Australia’s beaches through the provision of surf safety education programs.
- To develop a team-based philosophy encompassing leadership, camaraderie, teamwork, and fun.
- To promote social, emotional and physical growth and development in a healthy and safe environment.

More specifically, through delivery of the Torquay Nipper Program we aim to:

- Provide a pathway for future lifesavers through life saving skill development and surf sports
- Bring families and friends together in community service
- Foster an appreciation and respect for the ocean and natural environment.



Being involved through volunteering

It takes a significant number of volunteers to run our junior program. The program is offered under the guidance of the Director, Junior Development and Nipper Sub-Committee with designated roles and responsibilities. In addition to these roles, we also need qualified water safety officers to supervise Nippers in the water; and members to act as officials at carnivals, to co-ordinate and run BBQ's and fundraising activities, and assist with administration.

We would like a parent/guardian from each family to be involved in some aspect throughout the coming season. Key roles include:

- Water Safety - complete a parent bronze course which is free of charge for TSLSC members.
- Carnival Official - undertake an online course and coaching at a carnival to become an accredited Life Saving Victoria (LSV) official
- Inflatable Rescue Boat (IRB) - become a crew member and/or driver of an IRB
- Age Manager - complete a one-day course accreditation to become an Age Manager
- Age Manager Assistant - join in with an age group to assist the Age Manager
- Team Manger – help the Age Managers with off-beach coordination activities
- Fundraising - help at TSLSC fundraising events and tin rattles
- Set-up/Pack-up - help packing trailers, setting up carnival tents, assist TSLSC and LSV with set up
- Transportation - drive the gear trailer to carnivals
- BBQ - assist our BBQ chef in cooking/selling
- Summer Holiday Program Set-up - assist in setting up the beach for the Summer Holiday Program
- Social Activities - assist the Nipper sub-committee to arrange and run social activities.

Age Managers & Team Managers

Age Managers are a vital part of the Nipper section. Without them, we can't operate in a way that allows the Nippers to be educated in surf safety and lifesaving skills. Age Managers need to complete an online accreditation course and a practical assessment by a licensed assessor. Age Managers receive information and training in all aspects of the Nipper training process and how to deal with children in a group environment.

At TSLSC, each age group has the support of an Age Manger and an Assistant, to ensure a comprehensive approach to junior development throughout the entire competition and summer holiday programs.



Age Managers receive clear guidance from LSV and TSLSC to ensure consistency across the below key areas:

- Training programs and techniques
- Carnival strategies and team selection criteria
- Team management
- Parent liaison
- Conflict management.

Team Managers do not need to be accredited and help by ensuring adequate attention is paid to administration duties, responsibility of signing in and out nippers at each session using the LSV Nipper App, carnival preparations and general running of the sessions and liaison with parents.

Each Age Manager & Team Manager will be issued with a list of all their age groups contact details for ease of communication throughout the season. Any questions parents have at any time relating to training or general information can be directed to your Age Manager. The Age Managers are there to assist and ensure all Nippers get the most out of the season.

Should any parent or parents wish to assist in their age group please let the Age Manager or the Director, Junior Development know.

Water Safety

As a requirement of SLSA & LSV (our governing bodies) we MUST have adequate Water Safety at ALL sanctioned TSLSC training and competition events throughout the season. We request that all parents and members who hold a current Bronze Medallion Award are available for as many training sessions as possible throughout the season. Without adequate water safety for each session, we will be forced to restrict the numbers of Nippers in the water at any point in time.

This is a non-negotiable SLSA, LSV & TSLSC safety requirement that will be strictly adhered to – always!

Your children are our priority, their safety is paramount.

All qualified water safety officers must wear orange water safety tops during the session. This is a high visibility colour that gives our children a clear understanding of where help is. The more members in orange we have the safer our children are.

The ratio for water safety to Nippers varies depending on the conditions of the ocean and the weather. The conditions are assessed by the Director, Junior Development, Club Captain



(when available) and the Safety Coordinator prior to the commencement of each session. If the conditions are not deemed suitable, training will be altered, the location may be moved (from TSLSC to Cosy Corner) or the session cancelled.

We take the decision to change location and the running order of sessions very seriously and these decisions are always made with your children's safety as the number one priority. Changes to program venues are always communicated via Team App and the closed TSLSC Nipper Facebook group.

Member Behavior and Expectations

The TSLSC is an all-inclusive family club that strives to uphold the ideals and good values of sportsmanship and inclusion for all. If at any time these values are not being upheld by any member, please bring this to the attention of the Director, Junior Development. We take this very seriously and will thoroughly explore any issue.

At TSLSC we encourage all our Nippers and Senior Members. We do not discriminate; we respect each other, their efforts and their achievements, irrespective of the result.

We are all parents; we all want our children to be successful in every aspect of their lives, which at times can be difficult for parents to control. We ask that all members approach their children's varying levels of success in a positive and encouraging manner. Not every child will succeed, win or make a team but EVERY child is successful for having a go, sometimes well beyond their comfort level.

Surf Lifesaving is one of the most difficult and demanding of sports. The level of physical endurance required to train and compete is incredible. At times, we are asking children as young as 8 years old to swim two to three times over 150m in the ocean with currents and waves. They may back this up with boarding over longer distances of up to 300m, again two to three times. Keeping this in mind it is no surprise our children get tired, emotional, frustrated and even angry!

When these things happen, our Age Managers will take care of your children. We ask that, as parents, you respect the emotions and mindset of the Nippers as sometimes, enough is enough for them. If they wish to pull out of an event or sit out of a training session that's fine. If their Age Manager wants them to sit out, take a break and recover, then that's what will happen.

If you have an issue with the Age Manager's decisions or approach, please bring this to the attention of the Director, Junior Development who will then assess the situation and respond accordingly.



The role of parents is critical to the young person's wellbeing and ongoing involvement. Supportive parents provide essential care, education, and enthusiasm. Age Managers are encouraged to provide a full briefing to parents during the season outlining the Age Managers' expectations in relation to supporting the children and assisting with activities.

It is important that a parent or carer of an TSLSC Nipper will:

- Remember that their child participates in surf life saving for their own enjoyment
- Focus on their child's efforts and performance rather than winning and losing
- Show appreciation for good performances by all participants
- Never ridicule or yell at their child or other children for making a mistake
- Respect official's decisions and teach their children to do likewise
- Not physically or verbally abuse or harass anyone associated with the activities (e.g. coach, official, Age Manager, etc.)
- Be a positive role model for others.

The Nippers Program

Surf Sports Training

The Surf Sports program usually begins in October and goes through to Victorian Junior Life Saving Championships (Feb/Mar). The focus of this program is the development of surf sports skills and ocean fitness, with a view to competing at carnivals throughout the season and potentially the State Championships. It is important to note however that competing at carnivals is entirely optional. Some nippers just like to train and not compete at all.

Note the Surf Sports Training Program schedule is likely to change as Government restrictions and the aligned LSV COVID Safe Plan stages change.

Training for the 21/22 season will commence Sunday 10th October and continue until Victorian Junior Life Saving Championships to be held in Lorne Friday 25th February – Sunday 27th February.

The training schedule is still to be confirmed but will look something like this :

Split sessions depending on Covid restrictions

Wednesday all Age Groups @ Front Beach (opposite Growlers)

- U8, U9, U10's: 5.15pm – 6.00pm
- U11, U12, U13's: 6.15pm – 7.00pm

Sunday all Age Groups @ TSLSC



- U11, U12, U13's: 8.30am – 9.15am
- U8, U9, U10's: 9.30am – 10.15am

Changes to training sessions due to weather conditions will be posted on the Facebook closed page, and through Team App (see Communications).

Summer Holiday Program (SHP)

In addition to Surf Sports training sessions, we also offer a Summer Holiday Program (SHP) which is a specific intensive program over a 1-2-week period from 27th December. This gives holiday makers an opportunity to participate and includes some fun social activities for the whole family to enjoy.

Our Summer Holiday Nipper program provides a great opportunity to gain surf-safety information and skills, with a whole of family approach. Many families make lifelong friends from their involvement in Nippers and enjoy the social activities provided. The sessions are also attended by those children that wish to continue training for competitions.

Through the Summer Holiday Program, TSLSC aims to deliver a SLSA compliant program that is structured specifically to children between the ages of 5 and 13. This program teaches children basic lifesaving skills required to be safe around an aquatic environment as well as developing their skills to compete in surf sports. The Program includes lessons that are tailored to each of the junior member age groups. The program is based on participatory evaluation and not assessed on competence. At the end of this program Nippers will be awarded with the relevant Surf Education Award. During this Summer Holiday Program, participants will be broken into age groups based on age and will be assigned Age Manager(s) who will be responsible for the delivery of the relevant award program. One of the main aims of Nippers is to teach its members surf safety, surf awareness and lifesaving development.

Times are to be confirmed but are expected to remain early morning to avoid congestion with public beach users.

The Welcome Event will be held virtually prior to the first session, Nipper Disco and SHP Presentation will be subject to mass gathering restrictions and as such are tentatively scheduled at this stage.



Planned dates and times for the 2021/22 Summer Holiday program are:

Monday, 27 December 2021	SHP Session 1 8:00am – 11:00am
Tuesday, 28 December 2021	SHP Session 2 8:00am – 11:00am
Wednesday, 29 December 2021	SHP Session 3 8:00am – 11:00am
Thursday, 30 December 2021	SHP Session 4 8:00am – 11:00am
Friday, 31 December 2021	SHP Session 5 8:00am – 11:00am
Saturday, 1 January 2022	Rest Day
Sunday, 2 January 2022	SHP Session 6 8:00am – 11:00am
Monday, 3 January 2022	SHP Session 7 8:00am -11:00am

Nipper Age Groups

Age at 30 September	Nipper Age Group
5	Under 6
6	Under 7
7	Under 8
8	Under 9
9	Under 10
10	Under 11
11	Under 12
12	Under 13
13	Under 14

Junior Preliminary Skills Evaluation

All TSLSC Nippers are required to provide a swimming competence evaluation form completed by an accredited swimming instructor. If you are unable to have this form completed there will be an opportunity to undergo this assessment at the club prior to the beginning of the season. Date TBC.



Many activities that will be completed by children as part of the Nippers program will be conducted in the water. To ensure that all children have a suitable swimming ability to enable them to participate in these activities, SLSA requires a Junior Preliminary Skills Evaluation for each age group to be completed by each nipper, every year.

The intent of this is to conduct an evaluation of each junior member's own swimming and water survival ability for the information of the member, parent and Age Manager.

Any child that does not meet the required evaluation level will require a higher level of supervision when involved in water-based activities. These children must remain in shallow water and supervised on a 1:1 ratio until the child is deemed competent in relation to the preliminary skills evaluation guidelines.

Depending on water safety resources available in each session, parents may be required, and should be prepared to be, in the water with their children.

Any child that does complete the preliminary skills evaluation competently can progress to water based junior activities under the regular water safety 5:1 ratio.

The relevant competency level can be signed off by an accredited swimming teacher.

Forms for swimming teacher sign off can be obtained through Age Managers or the Director, Junior Development.

Age group requirements are as follows:

- Under 7 Nil (shallow water activities only)
- Under 8 25 metre swim, (any stroke) 1-minute survival float
- Under 9 25 metre swim, (any stroke) 1-minute survival float
- Under 10 25 metre swim, (freestyle) 1 1/2-minute survival float
- Under 11 50 metre swim, (freestyle) 2-minute survival float
- Under 12 100 metre swim, (freestyle) 2-minute survival float
- Under 13 150 metre swim, (freestyle) 3-minute survival float

Signing in and out

All children must be signed in and out of any Nippers sessions by a responsible parent or guardian.

Parents or guardians are required to be in close proximity on the beach for the duration of all sessions in the case of medical or other emergencies or to assist with the need to attend the toilet or change of clothing, find goggles or the like.



Age Managers and/or Team managers will sign nippers is using the LSV Nipper App. The LSV Nipper App feeds from SLSA and is a list of financial members. If your child is not listed, contact the club to ensure your membership is current. Nippers are not able to participate until your family membership has been processed.

Children are not to leave the Clubhouse or its surrounds until collected by the adult responsible for them.

Colour coded caps are used to identify children in each age group.

Nippers equipment and apparel

All club members participating in the Torquay Nippers Program receive a high visibility yellow rash vest as part of their season membership. These rash vests are MANDATORY at all Nippers sessions. This colour has been chosen by Surf Life Saving Australia as the one of the most highly visible underwater and is being introduced as a safety measure. The one colour will apply regardless of gender. (Parents are strongly urged to label all items of club apparel). Depending on weather conditions, Nippers may elect to wear wet suits for their water activities (refer Age Managers for guidelines in U12 and above).

Up until the U10 age group, Nippers use foam boards for various activities, while U11 and above may use fiberglass surf craft. Speak to your Age Manager, or the Director, Junior Development for information on where to procure new or secondhand fiberglass boards.

The TSLSC has a variety of swimwear and general club wear which may be purchased from the uniform shop.

November Lorne Nipper Camp

The 2021 Lorne Training Camp is scheduled for 12-14th November 2021 subject to any COVID19 restrictions preventing us to travel.

A Nipper training camp is usually run in November in Lorne. Most of the Nipper families camp at Lorne Foreshore Camping Ground. The training camp includes a program of Nipper based activities combined with team bonding and, most importantly, lots of fun for kids and adults alike! This camp is a great opportunity to meet other club members and learn some new skills from some experienced coaches.

Nipper Captains



Nipper captains will be appointed from the U13 age group and are usually announced at the Lorne Camp.

Nominations will be sought from the U13 age group in early November by written submission, with interviews to follow with, and selections made by the Club Captain and Club President.

Successful applicants will be selected based on their response to the following:

- Year joined Nipper program:
- Year of first LSV carnival participation:
- Please answer the following questions:
 - 1) Finish this sentence: If I was to be appointed club captain the main thing I would like to achieve is.....
 - 2) Describe the key things that you have learned as a Nipper.
 - 3) What does the role of Nipper club captain mean to you?
 - 4) Imagine you meet a new family on the beach....how would you describe the Torquay Nipper program?
 - 5) Tell us why you should be appointed as Nipper club captain for this year.

Additional considerations to selection will include:

- Character of applicant
- Years within the club
- Leadership qualities
- Demeanor
- Relationship and interaction skills with others within the Nipper section
- Training and club participation.

Nipper captains will be expected to perform several roles throughout the SHP and Surf Sports Season. This level of commitment will be confirmed but is likely to include:

- Give a verbal presentation to the SHP Nippers at the first session of the SHP
- Assist in each age group for 1 session during the SHP
- Assist in the development of Nippers where required by Director, Junior Development and Age Managers
- Represent the TSLSC at the Torquay Anzac Day Dawn Service and lay the TSLSC wreath
- Assist at carnivals with the warm-ups of the competition team and offer support/motivation
- Give an end of season verbal presentation to the Competition Team at States