BRIGHTON 19 21 LIFE SAVING CLUB

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Brighton Life Saving Club

NIPPERS HANDBOOK

2026-27

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Welcome to the BLSC Nippers 2026/2027 season - we are looking forward to a fantastic, sunny season.

With over 250 Nippers last year, we are expecting another big season ahead. The program is designed for children aged 5-13 and aims to teach them to be aware of important beach hazards (such as rips), as well as helping them to develop surf swimming and boarding skills.

It also provides a terrific opportunity for physical activity, social interaction with peers and to improve awareness regarding environmental issues affecting our beaches & waterways. As Nippers move through the program, they also acquire basic first aid & resuscitation skills.

Come along to the BLSC Nippers Open Day on the 18th October, 2026 from 12pm to 3pm. If you are unable to attend or have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to send an email to - nippers@brightonlsc.com.au

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INTRODUCING BLSC NIPPERS

Nippers is an exciting recreational and educational program for 5-13 year old kids with a keen interest in being active and safe around water.

The program at Brighton Life Saving Club, is not just about learning lifesaving skills, it is about learning to fully appreciate the beach and the water, developing friendships, being part of a club and the whole community.

It is also about getting kids outdoors and keeping them active. Nippers can be the start of a lifelong journey with a wide range of programs that provide pathways into becoming a lifesaver in the future. BLSC currently has approximately 250 Nippers, Cadets and YIPS (Youth Involvement Program).

We do not teach children how to swim, however we will teach them surf skills and educate them about the beach environment. Given the activities are conducted in a marine environment, Nippers are encouraged to undertake regular swim training through a local club or pool.

Existing Nippers need to be financial and enrolled prior to 30th September to ensure a place.

New Nippers will be waitlisted and offered a place after 1st October.

WHEN IS NIPPERS?

Our program runs for 10 sessions from early November through to late February on **Friday** evenings. Any changes to the program are communicated via email, SMS and on the BLSC Facebook page. The program won't run over the Xmas school holidays and the session for all age groups starts at 5.30pm and goes to 6.30pm.

Key Dates

Nippers Open Day	Sunday 18th October, 2026
Skills Assessment	Saturday 14th November, 2026
Session 1	Friday 20th November 2026
Session 2	Friday 27th November 2026
Session 3	Friday 4th December 2026
Session 4	Friday 11th December 2026
Session 5	Friday 18th December 2026
Session 6	Friday 29th January 2027
Session 7	Friday 5th February 2027
Session 8	Friday 12th February 2027
Session 9	Friday 19th February 2027
Session 10	Friday 26th February 2027

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Age Group Clarification

Age for a season is determined as at 30th September at the commencement of that season. (Please note that proof of age/Birth Certificates, will be requested for all new children joining at time of registration).

Children MUST be 5 years of age to be registered and permitted to participate in any LSV activities. A child's age group for the season is their age as at midnight 30th September. This is also their competitive age if participating at Interclub Carnivals and Junior State Championships.

Under 6	Must be 8 years at 30th September	Surf Play 1 Award
Under 7	Must be 8 years at 30th September	Surf Play 2 Award
Under 8	Must be 8 years at 30th September	Surf Award 1 Award
Under 9	Must be 8 years at 30th September	Surf Aware 2 Award
Under 10	Must be 9 years at 30th September	Surf Safe 1 Award
Under 11	Must be 10 years at 30th September	Surf Safe 2 Award
Under 12	Must be 11 years at 30th September	Surf Smart 1 Award
Under 13	Must be 12 years at 30th September	Surf Smart 2 Award
Under 14	Must be 13 years at 30th September	

Due to safety and insurance concerns, Nippers MUST participate within the correct age group stipulated by LSV. They are not allowed to participate in a group above their age, irrespective of their ability.

Different colours are assigned to each age group to help distinguish between age groups and to assist with marshalling during rotations. Each Nipper will be expected to wear a Nipper hat which corresponds to the colour of their age group. These caps are distributed by Age Managers and returned at the completion of each session.

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NIPPERS PROGRAM

Expectations

Each age group will have an Age Group Manager and one or two coaches who will run the group through the program. These are the first people to go to if you have any queries about the program or need to inform someone of information related to your child's wellbeing. A roll is taken at the start and end of each session by the Age Group Manager.

Nippers are **not permitted** to leave the beach during the session unless accompanied by a parent/guardian and only after notifying the Age Group Manager. Parents must notify Age Group Managers if they are removing their child from the group before the scheduled finish time.

Parent Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of parents to ensure Nippers are Sun Smart and well hydrated while on the beach. It is strongly advisable that Nippers wear a wetsuit to protect against cold conditions for water activities. Nippers are encouraged to carry their own backpack at all sessions with goggles, towel, wetsuit, sunscreen, water and snacks.

Parents are expected to be actively involved in the program. At least one parent (or adult family member) is required to be present at every session attended by your child. This is to assist with the program and to provide support and encouragement to your child.

***If you do not want your child to be in a photograph that potentially may be on BLSC social media, please notify the club at** directorofadministration@brightonlsc.com.au

Friday Nights

A sausage sizzle is held at the end of each session. This is a great time to socialise and meet other members of the club. Proceeds of the BBQ are used to fund new equipment for the Nipper Program.

Junior Preliminary Skills Evaluation

At the beginning of each season in the first two weeks (weather dependent), Nippers will be required to do a preliminary swim and float. This is a requirement of BLSC and LSV to ensure children in the program have a suitable level of swimming ability in the ocean. Confident swimmers that complete their Proficiency swim will be allocated straight to their appropriate age group.

Depending on resources available, individual parents may be required to be in the water with their children.

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Age group requirements are as follow:

- **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
- **Under 14:** 200m swim (freestyle in less than 5 minutes) and 3 minute survival float

Signing in and out

Sign in begins at the start of each session. Parents must be present in order for child to commence program. **Nippers must wear their group cap and fluro rash vest at all sessions.** Once signed in, Nippers must keep their cap on for the entirety of the program until SIGNED OUT BY A PARENT. Caps are provided by the club each session, and rash vests can be purchased on the BLSC website, online shop (Home Page, Top Right Tab) – www.brightonlsc.com.au

Medical Conditions

Any Nipper who suffers from ASTHMA or other medical conditions must inform your child's coach and age manager of any medical condition, which may affect your child's participation in Nippers activities.

Nippers Equipment and Apparel

Brighton Life Saving Club has a fantastic range of swim wear, club apparel and nipper rash vests for sale – these can be purchased at the club at the Nippers Open Day and on the Friday night Nipper sessions.

Nippers are required to purchase a BLSC fluro rash vest in order to participate in the program. Any child that is not wearing this rash vest will not be permitted to participate in water activities. This is not only BLSC's policy, but mandated at a state and national level as it is a safety measure.

Getting Involved

Parent Involvement

Nippers is run completely by volunteers. The Nipper Committee, Age Managers, Coaches, Water Safety Personnel, BBQ Attendants, etc., are all volunteers giving up their time to make BLSC Nippers a great place for your child to learn and experience the beach.

Your Membership Fees go towards insurance, carnival fees, purchasing new equipment and general maintenance of equipment. As such, we require as much help as possible from Nipper Parents/Caregivers to ensure the smooth and safe running of Nippers; so please make yourself available when your rostered to do so & any other time available. A parent or caregiver must be present on the beach (or the clubhouse) throughout Nippers season in case of an accident. We cannot, and do not, provide a childcare service

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As we rely completely on the support of parents, and have struggled to make numbers over previous years, this season there will be a roster where all families will be automatically allocated 2 sessions to assist in the area of the program. This could be assisting your child's group, helping in the kitchen, with the admin desk or on the BBQ. **All parents assisting must be financial members of the club and hold a current Working with Children Check with BLSC and LSV listed as volunteer organisations.**

Other ways you can assist with Nippers are listed below.

Nipper Committee

The Nippers Committee is responsible for running the Nippers program throughout the season. This is led by the Nippers Coordinator who works with those on the committee to ensure the successful completion of the program. There are many different roles and we are open to all level of skills and experience. If you would like to help out or think you have something that could assist with the program please talk to one of the key contacts.

First Aid

With any sporting or club program, First Aid is always essential. If you have a current First Aid award, you may be able to assist us with our program on a Friday night.

Coaches

Our coaches are paramount to the program, and without them, we wouldn't be able to run. Coaches are responsible for delivering the skills, training and knowledge to their Nipper groups. Wearing blue tops, coaches are qualified with bronze medallion and are given pre training and support to run programs. We endeavour to ensure all groups have at least two coaches.

Age Managers

Age Managers are assigned to a particular age group for the season and are responsible for the care, safety and wellbeing and development of the junior life saver. They are responsible for signing in and out the children in the group and are identifiable in red tops.

They will assist the coaches in encouraging the children to participate, compete and enjoy the Nippers activities; assisting in the development of surf awareness and surf safety; and keeping children and parents informed. Age Managers are not babysitters. Age Managers are the first point of contact if you have any questions or concerns. Please help the Age Managers by supporting them all you can. This includes not taking away your child (E.G. Toilet runs, sunscreen, etc.) without first informing the Age Manager.

If you are interested in becoming an Age Manager, we will assist you in a short online course to get qualified.

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Water Safety

As a requirement of SLSA & LSV (our governing bodies) we MUST have adequate Water Safety at ALL 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 Nippers 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 & BLSC safety requirement that will be strictly adhered to – always! **Your children are our priority, their safety is paramount.**

All qualified water safety officers are to 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 Nipper Coordinator, Director of Life Saving Services (when available) and the Water Safety Coordinator prior to the commencement of each session. If the conditions are not deemed suitable, training will be altered or the session cancelled.

Club Championships

The BLSC Club Championships are conducted in a similar fashion to intra-club carnivals with the exception that they are only open to members of the club. The Club Championships are held in the last few weeks of the program and awards are given at the presentation evening. Points are awarded for both placing and for participation and the overall winners in each age group are determined based on the total number of points awarded. Encouragement awards are also presented at the BLSC Club Championship Presentation Evening.

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Nippers Competition

Competitions are an exciting part of lifesaving. They are held throughout the summer season at Bayside and ocean beaches on a local and state level. Events are designed to teach children beach safety, surf skills, strength and fitness which is required if they become volunteer Life Savers in the future.

They are conducted on land and water and may include:

- Wade (Team Event)
- Surf/swim (Individual & Team)
- Board (Individual & Team)
- Iron - Swim, Board & Run
- Sprint
- Long distance (1-2km)
- Flags

To participate in competitions, children must demonstrate swimming proficiency applicable to their age group. Competitions are a fantastic way to strengthen friendships and team cohesiveness. We encourage all Nippers to participate and even attend if not competing to 'cheer-on' the team.

All BLSC registered Nippers, (depending on Age Group clarification availability - TBC), who attend Friday evening sessions, are eligible to attend these carnivals. We also attend to run some weekend training sessions at the club with specialist coaches to help kids with gaining an understanding of how the carnivals and events work.

To compete at carnivals, it is compulsory for competitors to wear the club cap and the fluoro rashie or vest (for water-based events). The wearing of other club uniform items such as club bathers is preferable.

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COMMUNICATIONS

Your Nippers Age Manager is your primary contact for any questions or issues or alternatively contact the Nipper Coordinator. Age Managers may set up their own communication methods with their age group parents. BLSC and the Nipper Coordinator will issue regular communications via email.

BLSC on Facebook

Search for and join the closed group ***Brighton Life Saving Club*** - for BLSC members to share information, ask questions, get to know each other and keep up to date. Club emails will be the main communication method for Nippers.

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USE OF CLUB FACILITIES

Supervision of those under 18

Parents/guardians of Junior BLSC Members are expected to supervise these members at all times whilst on club premises.

Hall

The upstairs room is open for BLSC Members to relax when the club house is open. Members should ensure they are dry and sand-free before entering and be mindful to sweep and clean up after themselves.

Change Rooms

Male and female change rooms with shower facilities are available for **BLSC Members only** use. Please note that the access door must remain closed at all times. BLSC Members are reminded that these facilities are not available to the general public.

Equipment

BLSC Members and Nippers are able to come down over the weekend when the club is open during patrol and use the club boards. Nippers **MUST** wear their fluro rashies and kids who are not part of the club, unfortunately cannot use the club equipment.

USE OF BOARD CRAFTS

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OUTSIDE OF NIPPERS

How can I get my family more involved in the club?

While Nippers may be all you know, there are many more facets to the club.

Swimmers Group

If you are an avid swimmer or keen to develop your ocean swim skills, BLSC has a group of dedicated morning swimmers who religiously swim each morning. If interested, get in touch with any member who can point you to the right people to speak to.

BLSC Bathing Box Classic

The BLSC Bathing Box Classic that is always on the first Sunday in February, is an official annual event on the Ocean Swim calendar. Race times for these Open Water Swims: 2.5km (starting at 9.00am) or 1.2km (starting at 10.30am) at the picturesque and iconic Bathing Boxes.

Adult Bronze Course

Our vital community service of life saving is provided free to the beach going public thanks to the thousands of volunteers who dedicate their time and energy to training, patrolling and volunteering at their local lifesaving club. Your membership is an investment in your safety as well as the safety and well-being of everyone important to you.

Adult Bronze Course is a specific course aimed at adults and is a great opportunity for wide community participation to develop water safety skills. Participants must be a minimum of 15 years of age on the date of the final assessment and have completed a 400 metre swim in under nine minutes in a pool or open water. Brighton Life Saving Club runs Bronze Camps usually in November/December each year with the camp typically running over a week period.

Youth Bronze Camp

Bronze Camp is a specific course aimed at 13 to 18 year olds who wish to become active lifesavers at BLSC and is a great opportunity for wider community participation to develop water safety skills. The camp teaches vital skills needed to rescue and resuscitate a person. It also teaches basic first aid skills. The minimum age to become an active lifesaver is 13 years of age.

Youth Development

BLSC is a big supporter of the development of young members. Each year we send Nippers and ‘Bronzies’ on state development camps which aim to develop leadership, interpersonal and confidence skills. Look out on Facebook for when applications open. These camps are partially funded by the club, with the Pirate Pete Development Fund set up to help support the development of BLSC youth. This was set up in memory of Peter Stevens.

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IRB Competition

IRB: Inflatable Rescue Boat (the red blow up boats!)

The basic procedure for IRB racing is for crews and their IRBs to start from near the shore, proceed out to the turning buoys, retrieve the patient on the seaward side of the buoys and return to shore. The main aim of IRB racing is to improve the abilities of the IRB drivers and crew members.

BLSC has a strong team that races against other clubs from Victoria and Australia, and each year have had members selected for State Teams. Competition is run through winter and is hosted all across the coast.

BLSC CALD Day

Each year BLSC hold a water safety day for newly arrived immigrants. Lifesavers introduce the women and children (mainly Afghanis, Sudanese, Burmese, Chilean and Somalian), to the great Australian tradition - a day at the beach.

The program on the CALD Day features water based activities including survival skills, floating and using Nippers boards as well as an introduction to lifesavers and the importance of swimming at patrolled beaches between the flags.

BLSC Peter Stevens Annual Ball

Each year the club hosts an annual Peter Stevens Ball. With a two course meal and apple pie dessert, the night is a celebration of BLSC. There is live music, raffle prizes to be won and a bar open to those over the age of 18. Pirate Pete began the tradition of the annual black tie 'Reel and Line Ball'. For those who didn't know Pete, he was an icon around BLSC for years, a friendly face around the club every day of the year and our resident photographer documenting the club's fun history. The name of the ball was changed to honour Pete's legacy after he passed away.

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FAQs for new families

Q: My child is aged 9 today (born 5th October), what age group will he be in?

A: The age group that your child is calculated to be in is the age they are as at the 30th September, therefore your child was 8 on the 30th September and therefore are classed as being in the U9 age group

For example, John turned 9 on the 28th August this year – John is therefore registered as an Under 10. Emma turned 9 on the 2nd October this year – Emma is therefore registered as an Under 9.

Q: Does my child change age groups if their birthday is during a season?

A: No.

Q: My child's friend's birthday puts him in different age group and they want to be together.

A: Sorry the rules are that the children are placed in the age groups where their birthday falls – it may be good for them to be in different age groups, they can make new friends and still socialise before and after the training sessions. We are required to follow the LSV guidelines on this and cannot make any exceptions.

Q: What does my child need for Nipper sessions?

A: Bathers, rash vest, a sun hat, towel and sunscreen. Keep in mind weather, so on cold nights bring trackies, jumper and a wetsuit. Please see the BLSC website, online shop (Home Page, Top Right Tab), www.brightonlsc.com.au if you would like to purchase any club apparel or bathers.

Q: What do they do in surf lifesaving?

A: Running & flags, swimming, board paddling, wading, basic first aid skills, Surf Education and lots of FUN activities.

Q: Can my child join in for one session to see if they like it?

A: Unfortunately, the answer is no. Only those financial members of the club are covered for insurance purposes. You and your child are welcome to observe the session and talk to any of our Nipper Team about whether or not you would like to join up as a member to participate.

We also have our open day where we run short trial sessions throughout the day.

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Q: Does it matter if my child has not been to nippers for some time?

A: No. Each child will be taught what is required for their relevant age group. If for some reason they are not keeping up, we have the '***newbies'*** group that's inclusive of all skill levels and aims to bring kids up to speed.

Q: Junior Awards – what are these for my child?

A: Each age level award has sessions that they participate in to acquire relevant skills and knowledge. They will need to attend and participate in all the compulsory sessions to attain the award.

Q: Does my child have to be able to swim?

A: It certainly helps. However, they will complete a preliminary skills assessment including a swim and a float. This is usually carried out night one or two, and all children must complete prior to participating in any water activities.

BLSC does not have the personnel or program to provide swimming lessons to non-swimmers and may ask that these children seek swimming lessons externally (recommended anyhow) and then return to join in junior activities when the preliminary skill assessment can be competently completed.

Q: Is this a 'Learn to Swim' program?

A: NO. Although your child will benefit enormously and increase their confidence from exposure to water based activities including swimming and board paddling we do not provide specific learn to swim training or stroke correction. This is strongly encouraged to be taken up externally. Please advise your child's Age Manager if your child is not a competent swimmer.

Q: What and who are Age Managers?

A: An Age Manager is a member of the club who takes responsibility for a particular age group throughout the season. All Age Managers have participated in the Age Managers Course and have a WWCC. All Age Managers are volunteers.

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Q: What can I do to help?

A: Parents can become involved in many areas of club activity. Areas can include – helping with training, coaching, officiating, fundraising, providing water cover (if you gain Bronze Medallion), cooking the Club BBQ, etc., but most of all supporting your child in their junior activities.

Q: What happens when my child finishes all the various junior age groups?

A: The Nipper Program is designed to gradually introduce your child into the role of a qualified surf lifesaver and assist in patrolling the beaches. They can continue to be involved in a variety of competition events if desired. They will undertake various other awards and learn many facets of community service involvement. They can be taught specialist areas of competition and compete both at a state and a national level.

Q: Why are VIT registered teachers and Victorian Police Officers required to get another WWC check for their lifesaving club?

A: The reason that LSV insists all teachers obtain another Volunteer WWC Check is due to the following. If a Victorian Institute of Teachers (VIT) registered teacher or Victorian Police Officer commits an offence we as an organisation need to be notified. If LSV is not listed as the volunteers' employer or relevant organisation, the Department of Education and Department of Justice (DoJ) would be informed but LSV would not. As a result, a teacher or police officer who is a member of a club could have committed an offence and still be interacting with children. This has occurred in the past and we are not willing to take the risk again. Hence, the reason that we stipulate all members must have an LSV specific WWC Check.

BLSC Code of Conduct

The Brighton Life Saving Club adopts the Code of Conduct as set by SLSA as attached. The Codes should be followed at all times and by all Members and all people involved in any way with BLSC and SLS.

Members and all people involved in any way with SLS will:

a) Respect the rights, dignity and worth of others—treat others as you would like to be treated yourself

b) Be ethical, considerate, fair, courteous and honest in all dealings with other people and organisations

c) Be professional in, and accept responsibility for your actions

d) Be aware of and follow—at all times—SLS standards, rules, policies and procedures and promote those standards, rules, policies and procedures to others

e) Operate within the rules and spirit of the sport, including the national and international guidelines that govern SLS

f) Understand the possible consequences of breaching the Codes and/or this Policy

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g) Report any breaches of the Codes or this Policy to the appropriate PPA

h) Refrain from any form of Abuse, Harassment, Discrimination and Victimisation towards others

i) Raise concerns regarding decisions of PPA through the appropriate channels and in a timely manner

j) Provide a safe environment for the conduct of activities in accordance with any relevant SLSA policy

k) Show concern, empathy and caution towards others that may be sick or injured

l) Be a positive role model to all

m) Respect and protect confidential information obtained through SLS activities or services; whether individuals and/or organisational information

n) Maintain the required standard of accreditation and/or licensing of professional competencies, as applicable to the role(s)

o) Ensure that any physical contact with others is appropriate to the situation and necessary for the person's skill development

p) Refrain from intimate relations with persons over whom you have a position of authority

q) Agree to abide by the Codes

r) Maintain a duty of care towards others

s) Be impartial and accept the responsibility for all actions taken.

t) Members are expected to familiarise themselves with this policy and further policies relating to SLSA code of conduct revised May 2018 on the SLSA website.

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