



**COOKS HILL**  
LIFE SAVING & SURF CLUB

# NIPPERS HANDBOOK

**2025-26  
SEASON**

Photo credit: Brittany Millen Photography

**FOR EVERYTHING YOU  
NEED TO KNOW!**

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We encourage all Members to follow us on Facebook and Instagram as it's a great source of information, announcements, and a place to share photos of our Nippers.



# **Welcome to Cooks Hill Nippers!**

Welcome to all new Nipper members and families on behalf of the Junior Activities Committee, Age Managers and Cooks Hill Life Saving & Surf Club.

Over the past few years our Club has continued to expand its numbers, be a leader in surf education, and enhance its competitive performance, culminating in Cooks Hill Nippers being crowned the overall Club point score winners at the 2019 and runners up at the 2021 Surf Life Saving NSW Age Championships.

The position the Club is in, comes from the extraordinary effort put in by parents and guardians, coaches and helpers of our great Club. Every year we rely on the assistance of all families and parents. I applaud all those parents that have expanded their own boundaries by stepping up to complete various SLSA awards such as Bronze/Silver and or Gold Medallion, Officials, IRB, coaching etc.

All the committee members, Age Managers, and most of our coaches volunteer their own time. Like any voluntary organisation, Cooks Hill Nippers relies heavily on the active involvement of parents and guardians. As is often the case year after year a lot of the work is left to the same few individuals who devote their time tirelessly to keep the junior activities program functioning. Many hands make light work, and it would be tremendous assistance if you could contact your age manager with an expression of interest to assist in one of the numerous roles essential for the on-going operation of the junior program. I invite 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.

Our Nipper Program provides competition, training, recreation and interaction with peers in an environment in which they share a common interest. Like any club, its future is in its youth. 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, I hope nippers is the start of a long Surf Lifesaving Club experience. I hope we can instill 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.

The Surf Club is also passionate in being able to better connect people with disabilities to the greater surf lifesaving and local community. Something that's not always been able to be achieved. Unlike other beach based special needs programs, our Same Waves program is not held on a special day, at a special time, at a special beach. It's conducted within the Cooks Hill Nipper's program. While this inclusivity is amazing for the children, it's invaluable for the local community volunteers, and families. We always welcome helping hands to become a Same Waves buddy. If you would like to take part in these exciting sessions, please let us know.

Ryan Mander  
Director of Junior Activities





## OUR AIMS

At Cooks Hill Life Saving & Surf Club (Cooks Hill LS & SC) we focus on having fun, teaching, enhancing skills and emphasising community awareness. We aim to ensure that Bar Beach is a safe place to swim; to prevent the loss of life and to develop and educate our youth.

The vision for our Nippers Program is to provide a safe, friendly, and welcoming environment where both Nippers, parents and guardians can learn about surf lifesaving and to prepare our Nippers to eventually be patrolling members of our Club.

The aims of the Nippers Program are to:

- Develop surf awareness;
- Increase confidence and skills in beach related activities;
- Offer training to those wanting to pursue competition or awards;
- Instill 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;
- And to meet and create lifelong friends



# NIPPERS

There are over 60,000 (2019 season) Nippers in Australia. Nippers start learning about surf awareness and safety through the Surf Life Saving Surf Education Program. They participate in board paddling, swimming, running, wading and other fun activities and games.

We **DO NOT** teach children how to swim, however we will teach them surf skills.

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.**

Nippers season starts from around October and runs through until around March. Please see the calendar attached.

## 1. WHAT TO BRING

Each week the Nippers will be required to bring the following:

- Swimmers
- **Age Group Nipper cap\***
- **Compulsory Hi-vis pink vest or rashie\***
- Towel
- SPF 50+ Sun Protection
- Hat
- Goggles (if they choose to swim)
- Warm clothing including rash vests if parents feel conditions suit such attire
- Water Bottle



\*NOTE: Nippers will **NOT** be able to take part in any activities **UNLESS** they are wearing the compulsory pink hi-vis vest or rashie and the Nipper coloured cap (U6-U13's) or tri coloured cap (U14's).

## 2. START TIME

As shown in the OVERVIEW OF EACH AGE GROUP TABLE on page 16, each age group has a designated time slot. It is expected that Nippers arrive at the beach approximately 15 minutes before their start time.

### 3. COMMUNICATION

The Cooks Hill SLSC Nippers [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and the [Cooks Hill LS & SC webpage](#) are the main sources of any communication between the Club and Parents/ guardians relating to Nippers activities.

### 4. SAFETY

Safety is our first priority for ALL activities. This includes on the beach, in the water and also gives consideration to the protection of all children.

### 5. 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 NCC Lifeguard, as applicable, and JAC (Junior Activities Co-ordinator) may cease any activity if conditions become unsafe. The decision of the Patrol Captain, or NCC Lifeguard, as applicable, and 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

### 6. WATER SAFETY

We endorse the guidelines laid down 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 rash vests and their ORANGE cap.



We require as many parents to hold their Bronze Medallion (BM) as possible to assist in these activities. An inflatable rescue boat (IRB) will be operational, when practicable, during all water events however, it must be understood that if water safety staff are not available, Nippers will not be able to take part in water activities.

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

**PLEASE NOTE THAT PARENTS ARE NOT TO ACCOMPANY SWIMMERS  
UNLESS THEY HAVE ACHIEVED THEIR BRONZE MEDALION**

If parents enter the water, then it must be assumed that they will replace one of the Nippers under the supervision of water safety.

### **How do you become a water safety official for your child's Nipper group?**

To be a water safety officer you need to hold a Bronze Medallion or Surf Rescue Certificate (SRC) and have completed your annual skills update (proficiency for the current season. This is a great way to become involved with your children and we would appreciate any assistance. Many parents complete their BM and in doing so enjoy the learning experience and getting a greater understanding for the surf environment. By doing so they guarantee the water activities for their child are not confined to sand activities. We regularly run courses so please contact our Director of Education at <mailto:education@cookshillsurfclub.com.au> if you are interested.

The JAC and Director of Education at Cooks Hill LS & SC will be happy to answer any questions. If you are concerned about what it takes or whether you could do it, simply ask one of the water safety team on the beach and they will be happy to tell you what it was like.

All water safety officers must wear an orange cap during water activities and must sign the Water Safety Logbook on each occasion.

## **7. NIPPER PROTECTION**

Any adult wishing to assist with the running of Nippers is asked to review the following [www.surflifesaving.com.au/members/members-info/working-children-check-requirements/](http://www.surflifesaving.com.au/members/members-info/working-children-check-requirements/) as to whether their role is required to hold a valid Working with Children Check (WWCC). To learn more about the WWCC and should you need to apply, go to <https://wwccheck.ocg.nsw.gov.au/Apply>

## 8. AGE MANAGERS

Age Group Managers are usually volunteer parents and are allocated to each age group with responsibility for organising and conducting the various Nipper activities.

Age Managers will wear bright green sun shirts and can be found on the beach. Many of our patrolling Club Members started as Age Members accompanying their children to Nippers each week.

All we need is enthusiasm and an open mind for you to start the Age manager process. The JAC and existing Age Managers will assist all new Age Managers while they are learning the ropes.

### 8.a) AGE MANAGER REQUIREMENTS

All age managers must:

- Be a current registered member of Cooks Hill LS & SC and be at least 15 years of age.
- Have completed a WWCC (if required as per the guidelines)
- Completed the online Child Awareness Course in their Members Portal
- Complete the Online Age Manager Course  
**Or**
- Complete an Age Manager course which is run by the Cooks Hill Education Team



The main responsibilities of the Age Group Managers are as follows:

- 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
- Attend and organise the children and teams to compete at interclub carnivals (Under 9 – Under 14)
- Instruct the children in their age group of the necessary requirements for the National Awards
- Keep children and parents informed of the requirements of the age group and of Club activities, carnivals, competition dates, etc.
- Ensure the children of the age group are aware of and encourage sun protection.

Parents are encouraged to make themselves known to their child's Age Group Manager and to offer assistance 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.



## 9. PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

It is important that you **NEVER** leave your child **unattended** at Nippers. If a child is left unattended, we may exclude that child from future participation in the program.

**Age Managers are not babysitters. Parents are required to be on hand during Nippers and to retain responsibility for their children at all times.**

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.

A parent/ guardian must remain on the beach and assist the Age Group Managers when requested and as required (except where a parent(s) is involved as an Age manager with another group, is on General Life Saving Patrol or is participating in another Active Member role).

As parents, you have a clear responsibility to act in a constructive and encouraging manner at all times. **ANYTHING OTHER THAN CONSTRUCTIVE SUPPORT MAY RESULT IN THE MEMBERSHIP BEING CANCELLED FOR ALL OFFENDING MEMBERS.**

### Parents, Carers and Supporters Code of Conduct

As parents, you have an important role in the delivery and support of sporting activities for your children. We encourage you to share the experiences of the Nippers program with your children, especially with the younger age groups.

We welcome involvement within other aspects of the club. This may include gaining various qualifications to assist in providing water safety, coaching specific disciplines, officiating, assisting with general administration and participating in social and fundraising activities.



We need help every week with the following activities (and many more):

- Setting up the beach 30 minutes before hand
- Assisting with "sign on" and "sign off" sheets
- Washing surf boards at the end of the day
- Assisting with packing up beach equipment
- Assisting with fundraising activities
- Assisting with the BBQ on Sundays
- Assisting with water safety (by first gaining a Surf Rescue Certificate or Bronze Medallion)
- Becoming an Official to assist at carnivals (short training courses are provided by Surf Life Saving SA)
- Sponsorship of Junior Equipment such as boards

## 10. AGE GROUP ALLOCATION

At the start of the season on day one, Nippers will be allowed to choose the group they wish to be a part of. We recognise the need for Nippers to participate in groups with their friends and will try to allow this to occur wherever possible. PLEASE be mindful we are volunteers doing our best to facilitate many enquiries. In many of our age groups we have over 100 children so we will try to get equal numbers of Nippers between the five colour groups. These groups will be fluid up until Week three at the latest.

## 11. NIPPER COMPLETION

At the end of your designated time, Nippers are required to have their name marked off the role by their Age Manager. They are to remove their cap, signifying that they have finished Nippers and be handed to their adult/ guardian on the day. At the completion of nippers, caps **are not to be worn in the water**.

**NO NIPPER WILL BE ALLOWED TO LEAVE NIPPERS UNSUPERVISED**

## 12. EQUIPMENT

In order 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.



### 13. GRIEVANCES

Cooks Hill 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, and/or parents are to approach the Age Co-ordinator, or,
3. Parents can contact the Director of Junior Activities, to receive the final point of decision relating to the Nippers Activity either face to face on the Beach or via Nippers email.
4. If there is a continued discrepancy, members may take this up with the Director of Members Services or finally
5. Contact the President and Chairman of the Board.



**For any further information and email address for Directors, please see the Cooks Hill LS & SC Webpage on: <https://cookshillsurfclub.com.au/>**

**Nipper's registration enquiries:**  
[nipperrego@cookshillsurfclub.com.au](mailto:nipperrego@cookshillsurfclub.com.au)

**Functions and venue hire:**  
[events@cookshillsurfclub.com.au](mailto:events@cookshillsurfclub.com.au)

**Junior activities/ Nippers:**  
[nippersadmin@cookshillsurfclub.com.au](mailto:nippersadmin@cookshillsurfclub.com.au)

**Nippers/ Competition enquiries and entries:**  
[surfsports@cookshillsurfclub.com.au](mailto:surfsports@cookshillsurfclub.com.au)

**Education and training:**  
[education@cookshillsurfclub.com.au](mailto:education@cookshillsurfclub.com.au)

Our management team are volunteers, so often responses may take a couple of days. We will however get back to you as soon as we can.

## NIPPERS BBQ AND SET-UP/ PACK-UP ROSTER



Cooks Hill is a volunteer organisation. We need a hand from all Nipper parents each week for beach set-up/ pack-up.

Each week a group will be rostered on to help with the BBQ and set-up/ pack-up duties. This will be co-ordinated by your Age Manager and you will give your name and details to them before leaving the beach on the week before you are down to help. Parent help is essential, and we appreciate and value your time. **Please note: your childs nipper session will not start until the volunteer roles are filled.**





## **BEACH SET-UP**

### **Arrive at clubhouse by 7:45am**

- Meet at Nipper Room located on the timber deck beach side
- Each group is required to assist

### **At Clubhouse**

- Open Nippers room
- Set up BBQ and Harris Farm Tent
- Set up Beach Tent
- Set up water safety sign-in table
- Set up Age Manager Folders in boxes

### **Transfer following gear from board cage to the beach**

- Age group flags for U6, U8, U14's
- Transfer Foamy Boards from cage to beach area

### **On the beach:**

- Set-up muster Age Group banners
- Set up area for Foamy Boards

## **BEACH PACK-UP**

Each group is responsible for returning and washing all gear used

### **On the Beach**

- Parents met with Age Manager
- Transfer boards back to cage, wash prior to storing – do a sweep of beach to check for boards.
- Pack up, BBQ, Tents and Water safety table
- Return age manager flags to store.

### **At the Clubhouse**

- wash-down down boards
- Stack boards back into store-room
- Pack-up Age Manager Folders and table
- Return Water Safety beach tent
- Lock up Nipper storeroom



### **Want to get involved in Surf Sports Competition?**

The Surf Sports program offers a wide range of competition events for all ages culminating in the NSW State Age Championships each year for juniors. Surf Sports is an active, healthy lifestyle choice, which builds camaraderie and allows for the further development of skills learnt at Nippers in a team environment.

There are both beach and water events for the athletes, with a wide range of carnival locations throughout the season.

To learn more, go to our website at <https://cookshillsurfclub.com.au/competitor-info/>

For any questions you have about Surf Sports, email – [surfsports@cookshillsurfclub.com.au](mailto:surfsports@cookshillsurfclub.com.au)