

Training Courses - Information

Adult Courses

Buoyancy aids

Buoyancy aids must be worn at all times when sailing or on the beach or pontoons. The club does not provide buoyancy aids so you need to provide a properly fitting buoyancy aid, in good condition, which **MUST** be marked with the appropriate European standard. All new buoyancy aids should be CE marked and meet the appropriate standard (see below) but take care when buying second hand.

For adults a “50N” buoyancy aid meeting EN393 is by far the best. 100N, 150N or self inflating lifejackets are not really suitable for dinghy sailing.

The most important thing about a buoyancy aid is fit. You need to be able to do up all the fastenings and get it snug enough so that it does not slide up if you enter the water.

What to wear

You will get wet when you go sailing. As we launch from a beach you will get wet up to your knees every time you go out. At least once during the course you will get completely wet when we teach capsizing. It is possible to sail in old clothes with some water / wind proofs over the top. In early spring and late autumn most people find it more comfortable in a wetsuit. Wetsuits work much better with waterproofs over them to keep the wind off.

Footwear

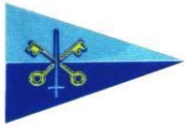
We require course participants to have some kind of suitable footwear (flip flops, sandals or wellies are not suitable). Many people wear an old pair of trainers or beach shoes. Wetsuit boots make a big difference in keeping feet warm, and are certainly recommended outside of the summer.

Gloves

Sailing gloves are available in a range of types and sizes, most people go for ‘fingerless’ ones. Most regular sailors wear gloves.

Hats

Hats can be a pain when sailing and are very easy to lose. Many people always sail with a hat and equally many think they are not worth the hassle. Hats with a peak are really handy on sunny days but they do need to be attached with some kind of lanyard.



Dorchester Sailing Club



Medical conditions, disabilities and special needs

We want to make sure as many people as possible get the chance to learn to sail and we will do everything possible to accommodate any particular needs you may have. Please just let us know.

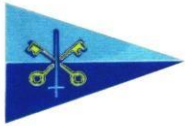
All of our instructors are trained in first aid, and have to take regular refresher courses. To help them keep everybody safe we need to know about any medical conditions that could be relevant, for example asthma or epilepsy. If you normally carry a medical device, such as an inhaler, then ideally this should be on your person at all times. Some buoyancy aids have reasonably sized pockets on the front and several people sail with an inhaler in that pocket.

Swimming ability

You don't need to be able to swim to be able to sail but you do need to be able to cope with being in the water in a buoyancy aid as capsizing is a normal part of dinghy sailing. Although it is rare these days to find a child who cannot swim, we do get quite a few adults who are non swimmers and not very confident in the water. If this applies to you then just let us know.

Refreshments

Our clubhouse has tea and coffee making facilities, and we have a small "tuck shop" with chocolate bars. For all day courses you need to bring your own lunch. There are nearby petrol stations that sell sandwiches and there is a small supermarket in the village of Dorchester, but it is not really practical to drive to them during the day, so pick something up on the way to the club!



Youth Courses – Advice to Parents.

The advice below attempts to answer most of the questions parents of children who are new to sailing usually ask. Most of it is advice and suggestions. The only firm rules are connected with buoyancy aids and footwear.

Buoyancy aids

Buoyancy aids must be worn at all times when sailing or on the beach or pontoons. The club has a limited supply of buoyancy aids that can be borrowed, but we would much prefer that children have their own, properly fitting buoyancy aids in good condition, which **MUST** be marked with the appropriate European standard. All new buoyancy aids should be CE marked and meet the appropriate standard (see below) but take care when buying second hand. .

Buoyancy aid - types

By far the best type of buoyancy aid for inland dinghy sailing is a “50N” buoyancy aid, which should comply with EN393. There is a vast range to choose from in all but the smallest sizes, and fit is more important than any other factor (see below).

Less preferable in most cases are “100N” buoyancy aids. They are more bulky and have a collar, and both of these are a disadvantage when sailing. For the smallest children it is impossible to get a 50N buoyancy aid to fit and, in this case, a 100N can be used. The RYA also suggest 100N for young children who are not confident in the water. The standard for 100N is EN394

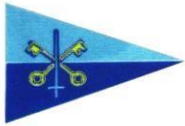
Buoyancy aid - fit

A buoyancy aid must not ride up very much when the wearer falls in the water. Most have a waist belt that is tightened up to hold them in place, and this must be effective. Smaller buoyancy aids often have leg straps to stop them riding up but these should not be used as a substitute for a good fit. It is much better if they are not needed and in this case they should be removed. In a few cases, the body shape of the youngest children means the straps are the only way to hold the jacket down, and in this case they must be done up tight with no long trailing ends.

Medical conditions, disabilities and special needs

We want to make sure as many children as possible get the chance to learn to sail and we will do everything possible to accommodate any particular needs children may have so please let us know.

All of our instructors are trained in first aid and have to take regular refresher courses. To help them keep everybody safe we need to know about any medical conditions that could be relevant, for example asthma or epilepsy. If your child normally carries a medical device, such as an inhaler, then ideally this should be on the child’s person at all times. Some buoyancy aids have reasonable size pockets on the front and several of our regular children sail with an inhaler in that pocket.



Dorchester Sailing Club



Session timings

At the start time for a session your child should be with their instructor, changed and ready to go on the water. Sessions always start with a briefing and this is essential to the running of the session. It is really frustrating to have people arriving late causing us to have to repeat the brief.

At the end of sessions there will always be a debrief and we often have equipment to put away. We have been known to overrun slightly, especially when the weather is nice and we are having fun, if you need to leave on time for some reason let the instructor know.

What to Wear

Body

Children on our sailing courses will almost always get wet up to their knees, and will sometimes end up fully in the water, occasionally accidentally, but more often for fun. Capsizing is a normal part of dinghy sailing.

Cold children don't learn much, and are not much fun to teach either, so keeping warm is important! In the Spring, Summer, and early Autumn it is possible to sail in old clothing with some old waterproofs over the top, however it is much better to have a wetsuit. Full length wetsuits (sometimes called 'steamers' by surfers) are better than shorties (with short sleeves and legs) because of the warmth and protection they offer the lower leg, but are quite a bit harder to put on. 3mm thickness is about right and the ones with some parts made of 3mm and some of 2mm are even better. They can be bought for anywhere from £25 to £50 in children's sizes. On windy days in particular a wetsuit is much more effective with waterproofs over the top to keep the wind off.

Feet

We require children to have some kind of suitable footwear (flip flops, sandals or wellies are not suitable). Many children wear an old pair of trainers or beach shoes. Wetsuit boots make a big difference in keeping feet warm, and are certainly recommended outside of summer. In the smallest sizes they are quite hard to find, and really really hard to get on and off.

Hands

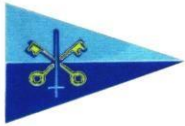
Sailing gloves are available in small sizes, but quite hard to find, and they help keep hands warm, but the only real way to keep hands warm is to keep the upper body and arms warm. If your arms are cold nothing is going to keep your hands from feeling cold. Many children happily sail without gloves.

Hats

Hats can be a pain when sailing, and are very easy to lose. Many people always sail with a hat, and equally many think they are not worth the hassle. Hats with a peak are really handy on sunny days, but really need to be attached with some kind of lanyard.

Sun cream

As with any water based sport, good waterproof sun cream is essential on sunny days.



Dorchester Sailing Club



Winter sailing

We try and enable our young sailors to sail all year round (unless we have ice cover). Several children in the past have sailed quite happily all winter in a full length wetsuit with waterproofs over and wetsuit boots, and in December to March we insist on this as a minimum. For the ultimate comfort in winter sailing a drysuit is required, these are the best part of £200 new but much less second-hand.

Swimming ability

We do not require children to be able to swim, but we do need them to be confident in the water wearing a buoyancy aid. We have had a few children who could swim fine in a pool but did not like being in a lake, but they got used to it very quickly.

Progress and RYA levels

The RYA youth scheme has 3 stages (and then a Stage 4 mainly focussed on sailing in double handed boats). All children will be given a logbook to record progress towards the certificates and to hold the certificates themselves. We award certificates as children achieve the required level, rather than having a stage 1 course or a stage 2 course. This means that sometimes in a 6 week course some of the children will get a certificate and some will not. We always record progress in the logbook so getting most of the way to a certificate should still be seen as an achievement.

There are one or two Scout and Guide badges that require a particular RYA qualification so if you are particularly keen for your child to get to a certain level for this, or any other reason, do let us know.

Many children forget quite a bit over the winter and we are quite used to dealing with this.

Where to buy – Adults and Youth

There are a number of local shops that sell suitable equipment

- The boat hire at Benson Waterfront
- Go Outdoors at Redbridge
- Decathlon, Botley Oxford

There are many good online retailers, some of the larger ones are:

<http://www.sailboats.co.uk/>

<http://www.tridentuk.com/>

<http://www.wetsuitoutlet.co.uk/>

<https://www.sailingchandlery.com/>