

Age Groups, Preliminary and Competition Evaluations Factsheet

Junior Age Groups

Listed below are the age groups members will be in for the 2021/22 season. These age groups are determined as at midnight on 30 September 2021.

BIRTHDATE BETWEEN THESE DATES	AGE GROUP
1st October 2015 to 30th September 2016	U6 (Surf Play One)
1st October 2014 to 30th September 2015	U7 (Surf Play Two)
1st October 2013 to 30th September 2014	U8 (Surf Aware One)
1st October 2012 to 30th September 2013	U9 (Surf Aware Two)
1st October 2011 to 30th September 2012	U10 (Surf Safe One)
1st October 2010 to 30th September 2011	U11 (Surf Safe Two)
1st October 2009 to 30th September 2010	U12 (Surf Smart One)
1st October 2008 to 30th September 2009	U13 (Surf Smart Two)
1st October 2007 to 30th September 2008	U14 (SRC)

Note: Proof of age/birth certificate must be sighted for all new children joining a SLSC.

A child may join a SLSC as soon as he/she turns five years of age. No SLSC is to accept membership of a child until they have reached the age of five years to comply with insurance requirements. A child who reaches five years of age after 30th September may join nippers at that time for the remainder of the season; however, this child will be required to stay in the U6 nippers age group again the following season. It is the SLSC's responsibility to explain this to the parents of the child.

Junior Preliminary Evaluations

Many activities that will be completed by children as part of Junior Activities will be conducted in the water. To ensure that all children have a suitable swimming ability to allow them to participate in these activities, SLSA has developed a Junior Preliminary Evaluation for each age group. Every junior member is required to participate in this evaluation prior to any water-based activities being undertaken. Clubs can set standards that go over and above the requirements set by SLSA, but not below this standard.

Note: It is not an assessment which if not completed competently precludes the child from becoming a member or continuing with junior surf education or training activities. Any child that does not meet the required evaluation level will require a higher level of supervision when involved in water-based activities at the discretion of the club. Refer to SLSA Water Safety Procedure 1.01.

A member who is delegated to assess Junior Preliminary Evaluations must:

- Be proficient in SRC (at minimum) and have an understanding at the requirements of the evaluations for juniors
- Be familiar with the process of reasonable adjustment
- Adhere to the program of skills maintenance requested by the SLSC
- Complete any paperwork required accurately and return in a timely manner
- Delegate names must be minuted at a SLSC Management Team meeting annually.

Conducting the Evaluation

Evaluations should be conducted in a low-risk environment, as determined by a completion of a pre-activity risk assessment. All new junior members should be supported by a 1:1 water safety ratio (water safety personnel: activity participant) when completing their evaluation. For all returning junior members, where knowledge of their ability is known by the SLSC, a 1:5 water safety ratio (water safety personnel: activity participants) may be used (Refer to SLSA Water Safety Procedure 1.01).

Following the Evaluation

Any child that does not meet the required evaluation level will require a higher level of supervision when involved in water-based activities at the discretion of the club.

Any child that does complete the Preliminary Skills Evaluation competently can progress to water based junior activities noting a 1:5 water safety ratio (water safety personnel: activity participants). For still water / pool activities or low-risk conditions (ascertained after a formal risk assessment) the ratio may be expanded to 1:10 water safety ratio (water safety personnel: activity participants) as per SLSA Water Safety Procedure 1.01.

A maximum supervision ratio of 1:5 (WSP: participants) applies as per SLSA Water Safety Procedure 1.01 to ensure the evaluations are conducted in a safe aquatic environment. Refer to the SLSA Age Managers Learner Guide and SLSA Water Safety Procedure 1.01 for more information on Junior Preliminary Evaluations.

Junior Competition Evaluations

From the age of 7 (Under 8) juniors can begin to compete in intra-club, inter-club and branch competition, while from the age of 8 (Under 9) juniors can participate in state competition. To ensure that all junior members that wish to compete in any inter-club, branch, state and national events/championships have the required ability, strength and fitness to compete they must be able to complete the junior competition evaluation for their age group.

Note: The definition of 'Open Water' is sourced from NSW Maritime and refers to 'navigable waters' which includes beaches. It does not include inland and coastal rivers, lakes and enclosed bays, harbours or rock pools.

Junior Evaluations can be completed on the Surf Life Saving NSW Skills Maintenance Work Card. The card for the 2021/22 season is yellow. Please contact your club's Chief Training Officer if you do not have any cards.

Refer to the documents below on the [SLSA Members Area](#).

- SLSA Policy 5.04 – Competition Eligibility Policy
- SLSA Surf Sports Manual

Branch and State Competition Requirements

Any competitor wishing to compete at Branch or State carnivals (water and/or beach events) must have successfully completed:

- Junior Preliminary Evaluation
- Junior Competition Evaluation
- Appropriate Surf Education award for their age group by 31 December 2021.

Junior Activities members (i.e. members comprising Under 14 and below), are not required to perform patrol hours to compete in junior activities competitions. However, if eligible members wish to compete in Under 15 competition, they must fulfil their patrol hour obligations as set out in SLSA Policy 5.04 – Competition Eligibility. This Policy can be found in the [SLSA Members Area](#).

These three components must be entered into SurfGuard prior to close of entries. For assistance in uploading this information into SurfGuard please contact the SurfGuard helpdesk on 1300 724 006 or ithelp@slsa.asn.au.



SLSA Age Group Evaluations and Surf Education Awards

The following table outlines the national standard for preliminary and competition skills evaluations. Some branches may set distances above the standard below. Please ensure that you liaise with your respective branch for confirmation of the specific requirements.

AGE GROUP	PRELIMINARY EVALUATION	COMPETITION EVALUATION	AGE AWARD
Under 6	From a standing position in waist-deep water, perform a front glide and recover to a secure position. Perform a back or front float holding a buoyant aid and recover to a secure position.		Surf Play 1
Under 7	From a standing position in waist-deep water, perform a front glide, kick for 3m and recover to a secure position. Perform a back or front float for a few seconds and recover to a secure position.		Surf Play 2
Under 8	25m swim (any recognised stroke) 1-minute survival float	Nil (no water competition, except for wade which takes place in waist-deep water)	Surf Aware 1
Under 9	25m swim (any recognised stroke) 1 minute survival float	Minimum 150m open water swim (any recognised stroke)	Surf Aware 2
Under 10	25m swim (any recognised stroke) 1.5 minute survival float	Minimum 150m open water swim (any recognised stroke)	Surf Safe 1
Under 11	50m swim (any recognised stroke) 2 minute survival float	Minimum 200m open water swim (any recognised stroke)	Surf Safe 2
Under 12	100m swim (any recognised stroke) 2 minute survival float	Minimum 200m open water swim (any recognised stroke)	Surf Smart 1
Under 13	150m swim (any recognised stroke) 3 minute survival float	Minimum 200m open water swim (any recognised stroke)	Surf Smart 2
Under 14	200m swim (any recognised stroke, in less than 5 minutes) 3 minute survival float	Minimum 200m open water swim (any recognised stroke)	Surf Rescue Certificate (SRC)
Assessors	Club Executive delegate authority		
Recognised (Swim) Stroke Definition	Recognised swimming/survival strokes) i.e. front crawl, breast stroke, back stroke, side stroke, survival back scull, butterfly) may be demonstrated using one or more combination of strokes. Both the preliminary and competition evaluations should be undertaken in a continuous fashion.		
Notes	Every junior member is required to participate in this evaluation, conducted by the club, prior to any junior water activity training or competition being undertaken. Any child that does not meet the required evaluation level will require a higher level of supervision when involved in water-based activities at the discretion of the club.	The open water competition evaluation must also be achieved before any members are eligible to compete. Every junior member must achieve the relevant Surf Education Award appropriate to the age group to compete in championships.	Every junior member should achieve the relevant Surf Education Award appropriate to their age group.

SLSA Junior Activities Preliminary Skills Evaluation

COVID-19 Exemptions

Due to the circumstances presented once again by COVID-19, these temporary changes which were endorsed for last season are able to be used again for the 2021/22 season to ensure that we are able to continue lifesaving activities. One such impacted process is the Junior Activities Preliminary Skills Evaluation, which due to limited access to pool facilities and clubs not being able to congregate in groups at a pool has become difficult to conduct. Therefore, it is necessary to provide some exemptions for conducting Junior Activities Preliminary Skills Evaluations for this season.

The pool evaluation conducted “in a safe constructed pool environment with a water safety ratio as per the SLSA Policy 1.01 – Water Safety – a 1:5 water safety ratio is to be implemented for all members under evaluation.” may now also be conducted in open water (ocean, rock pools and ocean baths) away from surf conditions for both new and returning nippers, effective immediately.

To ensure the safety of members, the following strategies should be followed:

- a. All Local, State and National Government restrictions must be abided by
- b. All state COVID-19 restrictions must be abided by
- c. This exemption will be available to returning members with a water safety ratio of 1:3, and new members will have a water safety ratio of 1:1.

This evaluation should be conducted in a safe aquatic environment with appropriate participant to water safety personnel ratios. A 1:1 water safety ratio is especially important for new members where clubs may not be familiar with the ability of the participant.

In instances where evaluations cannot be completed a qualified and accredited swim coach can be endorsed to sign off the preliminary skills pool assessment. Swimming coaches are required to provide their Australian Swimming Teachers and Coaches Associate (ASTCA) number, their name and email address and the name of the children who have successfully completed the swim.

Note: For the 2021/22 season the requirement for Age Awards to be completed as a pre-requisite for Country Championships will be waived due to COVID-19 restrictions delaying start of season. SLSNSW will also provide an extension that allows Age Awards to be completed by the close of entries for State Championships (likely 4th week of January TBC).