



2026

Summer Youth Sailing Program Little Guppies

Parent Handbook





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WELCOME TO SAIL NEWPORT



What is Sail Newport?

Sail Newport is Rhode Island's premier public access community sailing center. Sail Newport's purpose is threefold:

- I. To provide public access to the sport of sailing by providing low-cost, high quality sailing instruction and rentals,**
- II. To provide a fully equipped facility with hoists, ramps and drysail storage for local and regional and visiting sailors,**
- III. To serve as a site for local, national and international regattas and sailing events.**

Since 1983, Sail Newport has been a guiding force for sailing in Newport, promoting sailing competition and fostering community involvement and instruction at all levels of the sport from the Volvo Ocean Race stopovers and America's Cup World Series, to local events here in the South Bay. In this short time, Sail Newport has become a recognized model for community sailing centers around the country.

Our Commitment to Diversity

Our commitment to inclusion across race, gender, age, religion, identity, and experience is the wind that fills our sails and drives us forward every day. As the leader in community sailing, we promote greater diversity and inclusion within the sport of sailing through increasing pathways to recreational and competitive sailing for individuals from all backgrounds.



Where is Sail Newport and Where Do I Go for Class?

The center is located across the harbor from downtown Newport, in Ft. Adams State Park, on waterfront property leased from the State of Rhode Island. The body of water that is Sail Newport’s “classroom” is Newport Harbor and Narragansett Bay.

The Little Guppies Program meets at the Dr. Robin Wallace Youth Sailing Boathouse, a green barn-like structure, located adjacent the beach at Ft. Adams and the Sail Newport fenced storage lot (there will be signage and staff to guide you when you first come on day 1!)

Program Goals

Sailing is truly a unique sport: skills learned now can be used and enjoyed for a lifetime. Sailing challenges both the mind and body, allowing individuals with different strengths and weaknesses to “find their niche”. It can be competitive or recreational; you can sail on big boats or little boats, by oneself, with a friend or on a team. Most importantly, everyone has the capacity to learn to sail on some level, no matter what individual challenges or goals they have.

The Primary Goals of the Little Guppies Program:

- Learn and incorporate good safety and water-based skills. Little Guppies is less about learning how to sail, and more about giving kids an introduction to sailing and developing an interest in and comfort level with sailing little boats and being on the water.
- Instill a sense of responsibility for the boats and equipment.
- Develop a respect for the sea and the environment.
- Create a fun atmosphere in which the students want to participate using games and other hands-on activities



Parental Involvement

To help your child get the most out of any Sail Newport Youth Program, first and foremost, parents should be involved with their children in the program. Talk with your child about what they are doing in class. The opportunity to share newly learned experiences and skills is invaluable for several reasons:

- It reinforces the skills learned.
- It increases a child's confidence and self-esteem through support and encouragement.
- It provides an opportunity to find out how classes are going generally, so that if there are problems or issues, they can be addressed sooner, rather than later.

Parents in the Little Guppies program often stay at Ft. Adams while their kids are participating given the short nature of the program. If you do elect to stay and watch, we would ask that you do so from a long distance so that the kids do not even know you are there and get distracted.

Let the Head Instructor know if you have questions! Hearing about the feedback you get each day on the ride home from sailing can be helpful in ensuring that your child is getting the best possible experience. The instructor staff at Sail Newport is very experienced, and there are precious few situations that we have not previously encountered.

Daily Reminder Checklist

Following is a handy checklist of important daily "To Do's" for you to remember in preparing your child for class each day!



1. Have a good breakfast or lunch, after a good night's sleep!



2. Come prepared with a healthy snack.



3. Bring a drink (No glass containers please - we are huge fans and supporters of re-useable plastic or metal water bottles, just label with your child's name!). Water, juice, low-sugar and non-caffeinated beverages are best. There is a Zip-2 filtered water station where everyone can refill their water bottles.



4. Have sunblock (look for "reef-friendly"), sunglasses, hat and other sun protection.



5. Adequate and appropriate clothing including a change of clothes and a jacket or fleece, and a towel. Remember, It's usually much cooler on the water than at your house!



6. Shoes: An old pair of sneakers that can get wet, or water shoes. Sandals are acceptable if they have a heel-strap. **NO FLIP FLOPS.**



7. Bring a Coast Guard-approved Type III or life-jacket (PFD) with a whistle attached. It is important the life-jacket fits well (do not buy one for them to grow into!). We have PFDs on hand for Little Guppies participants to use if you would prefer to use one of ours.



8. Arrive at class on time!



9. Sail Newport provides shelf space for each student's belongings.



10. REMEMBER TO LABEL ALL PERSONAL BELONGINGS! Water bottles, lifejacket etc., so that we can help it find its way back to the rightful owner if it gets separated.



Behavioral Rules and Guidelines

Sail Newport has developed the following behavioral rules and guidelines to help ensure a safe, rewarding, and fun learning environment. It is important that both you and your child review these rules and guidelines. Appropriate behavior is expected at all times.

1. Classes start promptly. Student should be dropped off at the designated drop-off point no more than 10 minutes before the start of class. Sail Newport will not take responsibility for children who have been dropped off at a different location other than that stipulated above. Class ends 2 1/2 hours later. Students must be picked up promptly, and should be collected from the designated pick-up point. We will send you an email two weeks in advance of the course that will designate the drop-off/pick-up with a map.
2. Follow established rules and regulations of Fort Adams State Park.
3. The word of the instructors is absolute, and students are expected to obey the instructors at all times. Safety is our priority.
4. All students must take a short water comfort check the first day of class, with life-jacket on that most certainly not a test – it is an opportunity for the instructors to gauge the comfort level of each participant in the water – for many, salty Newport Harbor is a new experience!
5. Life-jackets will be worn at all times whenever a student is on the docks, in a boat, or in the water.
6. Observe the boundaries, both on the water and on shore, as established by the instructors.
7. No running on the docks, no climbing on the boat racks, or the rocks along the shore, and any and all other areas as identified by Sail Newport staff



Behavioral Rules and Guidelines (continued)

8. Students are expected to pick-up their own trash, as well as contribute to the overall health of the environment of Fort Adams State Park, Sail Newport and Narragansett Bay, by helping collect other trash where possible, and are expected to keep their belongings in a neat and orderly fashion.

9. Students will show respect for the equipment and property.

10. Students will show respect for their peers, the instructors and other individuals.

Bullying will not be tolerated.

11. No physical violence towards other students or staff.

12. No obscene language.

13. Absolutely no throwing of objects allowed.

Consequences for failure to observe the above rules and guidelines vary according to the nature of the infraction, but can include loss of privileges, and “time-out” from activities during class.

Any verbal or physical abuse, or if your child’s behavior jeopardizes his/her own safety or that of anyone else in the program, will result in early dismissal from class with a warning to both the parent and student.

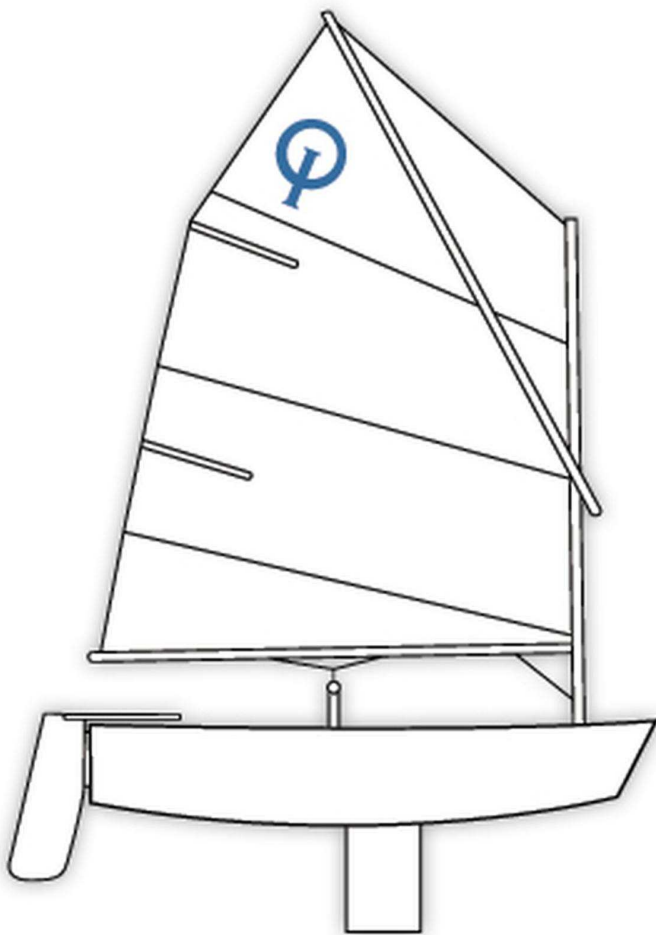
A second incident will result in the student’s dismissal from the remainder of the session. There will be no refund of tuition



The Boats: about the Opti

Sail Newport uses several different boats in its youth sailing program. Different boats “handle” differently, and certain boats lend themselves to sailors of different sizes and experience levels.

For the Little Guppies Program we use:



The Optimist Pram

This boat is used for sailors in the Youth Program from rank beginners to racers, who weigh less than 110 lbs.

The Optimist is a 77lb., 8 foot, sprit rigged pram. Easily set-up and rigged, it is designed to be sailed by one sailor, although for the first day or two of class, students are often doubled up till they gain a certain comfort and skill level.

The Optimist is the largest one-design class in the world with more than a half million boats being sailed and raced competitively around the world by kids ages 5-15!



Answers to Commonly Asked Questions!

Q. I have a concern or issue who should I talk to?

Serious concerns should be brought to the direct attention of the Program Director. That said, the Head Instructors should usually be your first stop for resolving most issues. S/He is the hands on day- to-day program facilitator, and usually will have the answer, as well as being empowered to make decisions and correct problems.

The best time to talk to the Head Instructor (and your child's individual instructor) is at the end of class. If this is not convenient, please, call and leave a message at the Main Office asking that the Head Instructor follow-up with you.

Q. It's raining!

A. Classes are held in all kinds of weather: even if it's raining. The one exception is if there is a threat of severe storm or hurricane. In this event, class participants will be called at home, and informed of the decision to cancel class.

Q. We're late!

A. Please call the Dock Office at 401-849-8385 and let them know your child will be late getting dropped off, or being picked-up, so that the instructor can be informed.

Q. My child is sick!

A. Please call the Dock Office at 401-849-8385 and let them know your child will be out for the day so that they can inform the instructors.

Q. My child is reluctant to come to class!

A. A student's unwillingness to come to sailing can be caused by any number of things: fear, an incident with a fellow classmate, or simply being tired. Sail Newport instructors are well versed in the art of coaxing and motivating reluctant students. If you can get them to Sail Newport, in all but exceptionally rare cases, we can get them out and sailing, and enjoying it too!



Answers to commonly Asked Questions - Continued

Q: Learning Disabilities and Special Medications

A: Should your child have any learning disability or medication that might not be included on their medical form, or that needs further clarification, please speak with the KPM. This will enable us to help your child have a positive and rewarding experience at Sail.

Q: My child was hurt!

A: Any time an instructor is required to administer first aid they will complete an injury report. A slip indicating the nature of the injury and what treatment was given will be sent home at the end of the day with the student. In the rare instance the injury is more serious and may require a doctor's attention, SN Staff call the parent, guardian or other contact indicated on the emergency information form.

Q: Graduation Day!

A: The last day of each session we hold a Graduation Party sailors and families. You will receive further information at the time of your child's session.

Q: I want to volunteer!

A: Contact the Sail Newport Main Office, or check-out our website: www.sailnewport.org as volunteers for different activities and events are always needed and welcomed!

WHO TO CONTACT

Please call us if your child will be late or absent:

Sail Newport Dock Office

401-849-8385

We check messages very frequently during business hours.

Head Instructor

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Kim Hapgood, Program Director

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Direct Line

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