



# GUERNSEY YACHT CLUB

FOUNDED 1890

## *PIRATES – OPPIE SAILING FROM 5 YEARS OLD*

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**Pirates is organised for young novice sailors learn to sail “Oppies” on the Model Yacht Pond, later progressing onto the sea. Sessions run on a Saturday morning in the summer and autumn terms. Pirates is organised by the Guernsey Yacht Club LBG and parents; parental help is very important to the smooth running of these sessions and so we ask you to commit to provide support.**

### **Qualifications**

The Pirates groups are open to children 5 - 11 years old by the start of term, subject to space.

We are unable to offer a space to those under age 5, though we can add younger sailors to our waiting list.

Sailors need to be able to swim (at least 10 metres) or be ‘water confident’, but there is no other qualification for membership. Sailing is an activity for boys and girls.

### **Objectives**

We aim to deliver the opportunity for young children to learn to sail in a safe, fun and friendly environment. Sailors concentrate on enjoying themselves, gaining the experience of being afloat and learning to steer so that hopefully they will want to further their sailing experience. Our aim is to help sailors to develop their sailing skills so that they can progress to training on the sea and start to participate in simple coached racing.

Pirates sailors can progress through the following groups :

Bronze – beginner

Silver – some experience

Gold – more experience, preparing to move onto the sea

### **Membership of the GYC**

You do not have to be members of the GYC to participate in these sessions, but you (and/or your children) are encouraged to join. Once your child moves on to sail on the sea, this requires the sailor to be a member.

Please be aware that it is a requirement of the Guernsey licensing laws that non-members must be signed in as guests before using the GYC's bar and catering facilities.

### **Oppies and Optimists**

Oppie dinghies that we use on the Pond are of very robust construction (polyethylene or a similar material) that will withstand the rigours of the concrete walls of the Model Yacht Pond! But they are relatively heavy and have a small and simplified sail arrangement. Once sailors progress to sail on the sea, we use separate Sea Oppies designed with a more powerful sail set-up and foot straps. The minimum age for sailors to move to the sea is 8 years old, though more usually it is 9 or 10.

Once sailors are competent and have reached the required standard, we will encourage them to move on to sail in an International Optimist. This boat looks similar at first glance but is much lighter, being made of fibreglass (GRP), and has a larger, laced sail. The GYC has a few boats that can be borrowed for a short period to trial, but you will need to consider purchasing one at this stage.

Parents should note at this point that, if you wish your child to progress beyond Oppie sailing stage (usually aged about 9-11), then purchase of your own Optimist will become necessary. Information on Optimists available for purchase in Guernsey can be obtained from the Juniors Coordinator (contact details below).



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## Time and Venue

Dates and times for Pirates classes for the year are available in the Useful Documents section at the bottom of the Pirates page, at [www.gyc.org.gg/juniors/pirates](http://www.gyc.org.gg/juniors/pirates)

The children will be put into skill level based groups (the coaches decide who can move up a group), and skills will be taught according to a training programme.

Pirate groups from Bronze to Gold take place on the Model Yacht Pond.

If the weather is too windy or if it's raining then a classroom session will be held usually in the Sailing Trust building otherwise in the Club Room in the GYC.

During the Bronze sessions we are hoping to get the children into the Pond, playing walking games and pseudo capsizing, as this seems to help allay any fears. And usually once during the term Bronze, Silver and Gold groups will practise a capsize. So it will be necessary to bring a towel and change of clothing.

Places will be allocated firstly to existing sailors with us; then to sailors who may have missed a term; then to new sailors by the date at which you added your child to our Waiting List (first come, first served), and then by age. If you join our list having had other sailing experience and require a space in a Silver or Gold or a sea-based group, this will usually be allocated once we have space after catering for our existing sailors.

## Communication

All changes to the programme, rotas and further information will be sent to you by email. Please check your emails regularly.

## Responsibility

Parents are reminded that their children remain their (or a suitable guardian's) responsibility while participating in Pirates, and parents are particularly advised to watch their children whilst they are on the pond and supervise their children on or near the public road around the Model Yacht Pond; it can be busy.

***Unsupervised children will not be permitted to take part in sailing with Pirates.***

### Practical sessions :

Supervision is provided by parents standing in the water or around the edge (and if a boat looks like it is about to crash into the wall please push it away).

Parents for each group need to work together to ensure that the following matters are covered:

- Rigging (for the first session of the day) – all the boats need to be rigged in order for the children to sail them; therefore you will need to start the rigging about 15 minutes before the session starts. Rigging adjustments for weather conditions, sailor numbers or skill level may also need to be made between groups. You will be shown how to rig and derig an oppie if you have not done it before;
- Derigging (for the last session of the day) – this is a case of putting all the sails, dagger boards and tillers away, and pulling the boats onto the pontoon at the end of the session.
- Registration – ensure that each sailor is registered on arrival, and ensure that the “children slow” barrels / signs are put out for the traffic,
- Pontoon; help children in and out of the boats (buoyancy aids are available should you want one); and
- Pond; you will need to put on waders and a buoyancy aid (we have some stored in the white shed if you don't have your own) and help out in the pond, to stop anyone from crashing, keep the boats in the sailing area, and to assist as requested by the lead instructor. If unsure, please ask what you can help with.

A rota may be used so parents know for which sessions and dates they have specific responsibility. Otherwise parents are requested to help out as needed for each session.



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## Theory sessions and standards of behaviour :

The courses include significant theory content, as well as briefings and land drills necessary to prepare for practical work. Usually these are combined with an on-the-water session, but occasionally due to weather conditions or course requirements, a whole session may be used for theory and shoreside work.

We expect good standards of general behaviour at all times and, for theory sessions, need calm and attentive children.

Parental assistance may be needed to keep the children focused and learning - and to counter any disruption if you have an excitable child.

If behaviour is a problem, we reserve the right to limit attendance or request that particular parents accompany their children during theory, to ensure a good learning experience for all.

Please ensure your child is well aware of the above requirements when joining Pirates.

## Our Instructors / Instructor Training

The Guernsey Yacht Club LBG run our sail training sessions with RYA (Royal Yachting Association) qualified instructors in ratios set by the RYA.

However we rely largely on parents to run the Pirate and Junior sailing.

The instructors that teach our groups are a mixture of qualified parents, who have a background in sailing themselves, and older or former junior sailors who are learning to teach - starting as helpers, then as Assistant Instructors and later as Dinghy Instructors. All sessions are run or supervised by an RYA Senior Instructor.

We are aware that many of the parents of sailors joining our groups have a sailing background themselves.

We need your help, to continue to run the Pirates and Junior sailing into the future !

We can now offer those parents with sufficient sailing experience the opportunity to qualify (or re-qualify) as Assistant Instructors or Dinghy Instructors; if you are interested please get in touch for a discussion.

If you have sailing or boating experience but do not wish to teach, it is still helpful for us to know something of your experience, to help us organise efficient helper rotas in the pond and later on, on the sea.

For these reasons we may survey parents from time to time.

## Costs

A termly charge is made for each participant. This will include the hire of the Oppies and a donation to the Junior section of the GYC for providing instruction. Please can you complete the form sent to you on offer of a place, and send payment before the course starts.

Bronze / Silver / Gold : £115

## Cancellation

If a sailor decides not to start a course, a full refund will normally be made.

Once a course is under way, no refund will be due if the sailor stops attending.

However in certain circumstances, if a sailor is unable to complete a course we will consider a partial or full refund. Any such refund would be at the discretion of the GYC.

## Clothing

### Mandatory :

- Life jackets or buoyancy aids must be worn by sailors on the pontoon and in the pond.
- Buoyancy aids are available but it is recommended that your children have their own, clearly marked with their name so that the coaches can identify the children.
- Long hair needs to be tied up securely.
- Dinghy boots or closed-toe shoes which can get wet must be worn at all times.

### Recommended :

Wet suits with a fleece and spray top. A "shortie" wetsuit is simplest and recommended for beginners in warmer weather in summer / early autumn.

Woolly hat, and sunscreen. A fleece / spray top / jogging bottoms, as needed on the day to layer up.

Remember, it is usually colder on the pond than you think.



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Always bring a change of clothes and towel in case of an accidental 'tipping'. It is advisable for the children to have a shower after being on or in the pond.

As the pond contains sea water, wet clothing and wetsuits should be rinsed in fresh water and hung to dry after sailing.

## Changing rooms

We encourage sailors to arrive dressed for sailing. In most cases they will finish the session dry or just slightly wet so can leave in the same clothing.

The GYC has male and female changing rooms with toilets and showers which are available if needed. Please note both adults and children may use these facilities. Please use discretion when changing, and leave the changing rooms tidy.

## Social Events

As Pirates is run very much by parents and children, ideas for events (fancy dress, etc.) are very welcome.

We may organise a sponsored mini-marathon in the summer or autumn term, where children race in teams as many times around the pond as they can in a set time.

We also hold a Pirates Party towards the end of the year, with activities, awards and food.

## Further Information

For further information on the Pirates, and Optimist / Feva / Tera / Laser sailing for older children contact:

|                                                                            |         |                                                                            |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Mike Chapple<br>Rear Commodore Junior Sailing                              | email:  | <a href="mailto:rcjuniorsailing@gyc.org.gg">rcjuniorsailing@gyc.org.gg</a> |
| Rebecca Sheldon<br>and Victoria Harvey<br>Pirates and Juniors Coordinators | email:  | <a href="mailto:juniors@gyc.org.gg">juniors@gyc.org.gg</a>                 |
| Sarah-Jane Mcgrath<br>Safeguarding Officer                                 | email:  | <a href="mailto:safeguarding@gyc.org.gg">safeguarding@gyc.org.gg</a>       |
| Elaine Mahy<br>RYA Senior Instructor                                       | email : | <a href="mailto:pirates@gyc.org.gg">pirates@gyc.org.gg</a>                 |

The Guernsey Yacht Club Junior Section web pages are at <http://www.gyc.org.gg/juniors/>

The Pirates page with documents and forms is at <https://www.gyc.org.gg/juniors/pirates/>

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