

---

As an organization run and staffed by people with a passion for youth enrichment the San Juan Island Sailing Foundation is committed to providing a safe, fun, educational, fulfilling, challenging, and healthy activity for all who choose to join. This packet discusses how we do that, what we expect, and the nature of specific health conditions as they relate to sailing.

## **REQUIREMENTS OF YOUTH SAILORS**

All sailors are required to:

- NOT attend Sailing Club if they have any of the following:
  - A serious communicable disease (e.g., Covid-19, measles, mumps)
  - Known or suspected exposure to a serious communicable disease in the previous 5 days
  - Orders to quarantine from their medical providers or the county health dept.
- Follow health and safety instructions of the coaches and instructors
- Wear a Coast Guard approved personal flotation device (PFD, or life jacket) whenever on a dock, sailing, or riding in the coach boat
- Wear coach- or instructor-mandated gear, such as a wetsuit or neoprene booties, in order to be safe in the environment in which activities take place
- Alert the organization to any emergency condition, whether that's a sailor in trouble, an equipment failure, or an outside factor (large boat approaching, weather change, etc.)
  - A sailor should use whatever means are possible to alert the organization, including telling a coach or organizer, telling another responsible adult, telling a fellow sailor who is in a better position to alert the organization, blowing a whistle, pointing, yelling — *whatever it takes* to let someone in charge know
- Treat equipment with respect; for sailors, the equipment is not only the way we sail but also our safety equipment
- Participate within their limits, and alert the coach or instructor whenever they believe those limits are being pushed or exceeded
- Take care of their own health, mental health, and safety to their ability.

## REQUIREMENTS OF PARENTS/GUARDIANS OF YOUTH SAILORS

Parents/guardians are required to:

- NOT permit their children to attend Sailing Club if their children have any of medical conditions listed above, in the section on sailor responsibilities
- Inform program leaders of all health concerns of their children, including changes to their children's health, in order that program leaders can provide appropriate precautions and, if necessary, make appropriate decisions on their children's behalf
- Inform program leaders of the cell phone numbers of responsible adults who can speak and act on their children's behalf and who are immediately available to answer calls from the program leaders during the entirety of the time when the children are in the SJISF's care
- Pick up their children at the appropriate time
- Be aware of the possible transmission of Covid-19 and other communicable diseases, and practice safe behavior to avoid transmission as much as possible
- Communicate any concerns regarding health and/or safety to the program leaders, in order that they may take appropriate action.

### SPECIFIC SAFETY ISSUES

Certain medical conditions may increase a person's risk of harm when sailing. Most of these — asthma, musculoskeletal conditions or injuries, or cardiovascular conditions — are challenges for a participant in any physical sport. Dinghy sailing requires physical exertion — it's not just sitting in a sailboat and steering — and although it's suitable for people of all sizes, it does take effort. It requires sudden and controlled whole-body movement. It can result in bruises and abrasions and sometimes even cuts. On rare occasions, more significant injuries, such as broken bones or concussions, can occur. The injuries associated with dinghy sailing are within or below the normal range one can expect from high school sports.

The SJI Sailing Foundation takes the risk of any form of injury very seriously and works diligently to reduce risk for all participants.

### Concussions and head injuries

Participants in dinghy sailing do face some risk of concussion and traumatic brain injury. The US Sailing Sports Medicine Committee reviewed data and information on severe brain injuries in competitive and recreational sailing, and investigated whether helmets should be worn when sailing. The committee concluded:

There is no data to confirm that helmets will prevent concussions. Helmets have been shown to reduce the incidence and severity of facial and skull fractures, contusions and lacerations, but not concussions. Concussions seem to occur more easily in pre-teen

and teens. We also need to be aware that wearing a helmet makes the head a “larger” target and could possibly lead to more head strikes.

Therefore, it is the position of the Sports Medicine Committee of US Sailing that helmets should be considered and encouraged but not mandated for aggressive competitive sailing, crew positions at increased risk for strikes to the head, and sailors who are learning the sport and thus unfamiliar with the position and movement of rigging and equipment.

Following this advice, the SJI Sailing Foundation emphasizes that the decision to wear or not to wear a helmet should be a thoughtful choice made by each sailor with their parents.

The Sailing Foundation has a number of helmets of varying sizes available for student-sailors to borrow and try, in order to determine whether wearing a helmet is the appropriate choice. The helmets the Sailing Foundation provides to student-sailors are available solely to assist the sailor in determining if he or she wishes to wear a helmet. The Sailing Foundation stresses, though, that **sailors who decide to wear a helmet while sailing are responsible for purchasing and wearing their own personal helmet**. It is only in this way that the sailor can be secure that the strap adjustments are set correctly and are not changed; that the helmet is properly cared for; and that the helmet is replaced if it is dropped or damaged. Additional information about concussions can be found here:

- <https://tinyurl.com/USSailing-helmets>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/index.html>
- <https://www.rya.org.uk/knowledge-advice/safe-boating/look-after-yourself/Pages/Concussion.aspx>

SJISF does not make recommendations on what head safety gear any individual sailor should utilize. However, if a parent informs the Sailing Foundation’s representatives that their child is required to wear a helmet, the staff and volunteers will endeavor to enforce the parent’s requirement and will deny the student-sailor sailing privileges if they fail to don the helmet.

### **Drowning**

Drowning is fortunately extremely rare in youth sailing activities. Nonetheless, sailors must pass a swim test in cold water prior to participating. Sailors are required to wear Coast Guard approved PFDs whenever there is risk of falling in the water. The Foundation will provide power safety boats operated by trained leaders on the water at all times that sailors are outside the sheltered bay between the net shed and the end of the Jackson Beach peninsula. Sailors are not to leave that sheltered area until such supervision is available and ready.

**DO NOT RETURN THIS TO SJISF. This is for your information. Please retain it for your reference.**