



AKARANA
SAILING ACADEMY

OPTIMIST LEVEL 1

Student Handbook

Version 1
September 2021

LA SALT
WEAPON

You're about to become a sailor!

Welcome to the Royal Akarana Yacht Club
Home of blue water sailing and Olympic medallists

IT ALL BEGAN IN 2001...

Established in 2001, the Akarana Sailing Academy was founded to provide opportunities to the children of current members, giving parents the option to go sailing themselves, while the kids learnt to sail in a safe and friendly environment.

For 20 years we have been offering a range of courses which has resulted in our sailors becoming local, national and world champions.

The Royal Akarana Yacht Club is one of the New Zealand's oldest yacht clubs and occupies a unique place in this country's

sailing history. Throughout the last 125 years it has been at the forefront of New Zealand sailing.


RAYC is where many Olympic sailors choose to train including gold and silver medallists Peter Burling and Blair Tuke and silver medallists Alex Maloney and Molly Meech.

Sailing is a sport for life, whether you're sailing for fun or if you are planning on a pathway to race on the world stage.

The Akarana Sailing Academy offers a range of sailing opportunities so the whole family can be on the water together.



*After a few weeks,
this will be you!*



This handbook will assist with learning and retaining your new skills as a sailor with the goal of being able to sail a boat all by yourself!

At the back of this handbook there is a checklist dedicated to your level of sailing. In your RAYC Optimist Level 1 course, your coach will help you work on all the basics from learning how to rig your boat and understanding capsizing recovering techniques.

To pass your Level 1 course your coach will assess whether you completed the skills in the checklist consistently.

Get ready to enjoy your time on the water learning lots of new skills!

SAFETY & SAILING GEAR

Safety is no accident! To be safe on the water we ALWAYS wear the following:



LIFE JACKET

Life jackets, otherwise known as a PFD, or Personal Floatation Device, helps to keep your head above water.



HELMET

You need your brain when sailing, and helmets protect you from moving parts, especially the boom! Helmets are compulsory for all learn to sail levels.



SHOES / SAILING BOOTS

Wearing shoes protects your feet and toes from all those bits and pieces in the boat that will step on from time to time. Shoes also assist with safety launching and retrieving your boat.



HAT

Help to keep the sun out of your eyes by wearing a hat! You can wear hats under your helmet and of course hats help with sun protection. We sell hats at the club and on our online store.



SUN BLOCK

Sun block can help keep away sunburn! We require all sailors to wear sun block, and even provide it at all classes so you can reapply.



GEAR TO KEEP YOU WARM

Make sure you have enough gear to keep you warm, like a wetsuit, spray jacket or smock, beanie and gloves

Can you spot our
Sailor with his
BLUE helmet
and lifejacket?



STEERING & TURNING

When steering and driving your boat you need to sit up on the side facing towards the sail. This way we can see everything and won't get hit by the sneaky sail and boom when it changes sides!

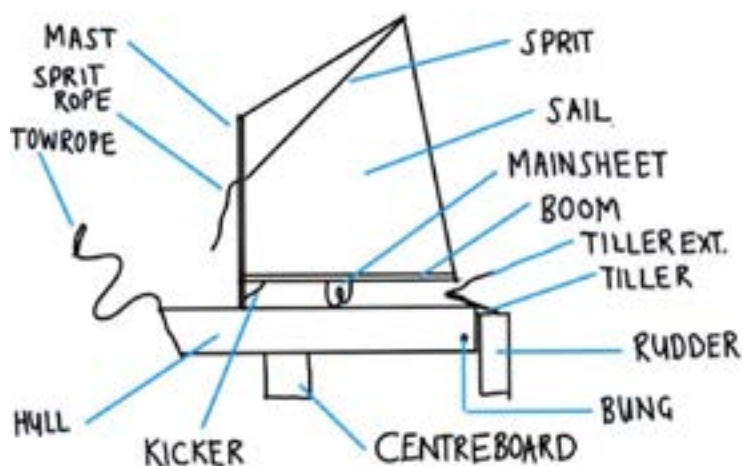
You steer your boat using your Tiller Extension. This is how you steer your boat and it is how you turn your boat or go in straight lines.

Learning all the parts of your boat

Our Level 1 course is sailed in an Optimist dinghy.

We can sail these with two sailors on board while you are learning your skills and before you start to sail by yourself.

Here is a diagram with all the names you need to know on your boat!



Remember to give the boat a wash after you've gone sailing. Anything that gets wet by the sea needs a rinse with fresh water to protect it from salt water and corrosion!

BODY POSITION

Learning the correct body position and sailing technique from the beginning is very important. We want to focus on learning good habits from the start so we can progress faster to the next level.

- Sit with your legs together facing the boom
- Sit a bit forward so you can move the rudder to any side
- Hold the tiller extension with your back hand and the mainsheet with your front hand
- Try to have your two hands close to each other so it's easier to pull the sail in
- If the boat is heeling (tipping) over hike (lean out) to balance the boat. This can be super fun!



TACKING

We can't sail in a straight line forever so we need a way to turn our boat around.

This is called a TACK and it's when we PUSH the Tiller towards the sail.

As we push the tiller our boat will turn and our sail will swap sides.

As the sail swaps sides so do we!



Remember how to tack using the "5 P's"

Prepare • Plant • Push • Pivot • Position

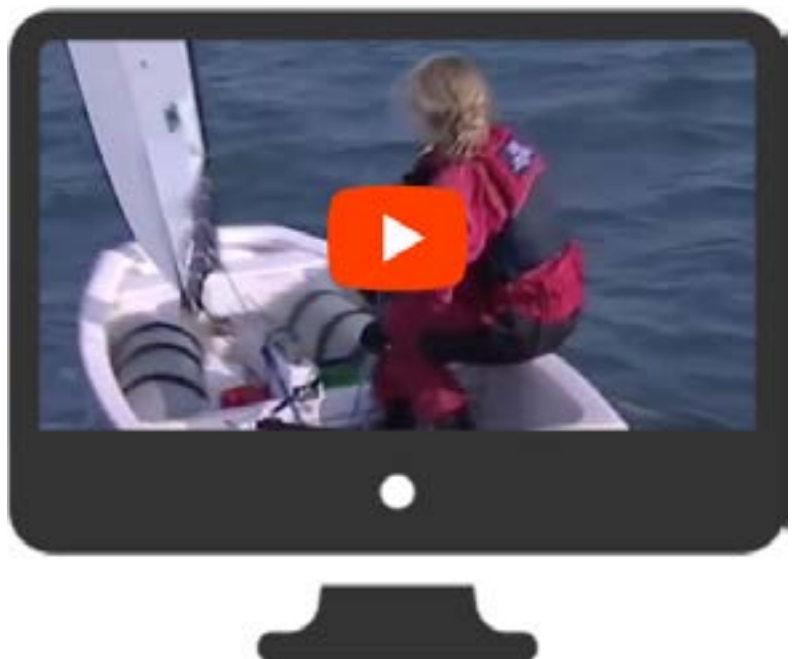
To **Prepare** we look outside of the boat to make sure we won't hit anyone or anything as we get ready to Tack.

We **Plant** our back foot across the boat (this helps us face forwards when we change sides).

Then we **Push** the Tiller Extension across the boat towards the sail.

The sail will then slowly change sides and we need to **Pivot** and change sides, facing the front of the boat.

And finally sit down and **Position** ourselves. Sitting on the side and holding our tiller extension and mainsheet.



POINTS OF SAIL

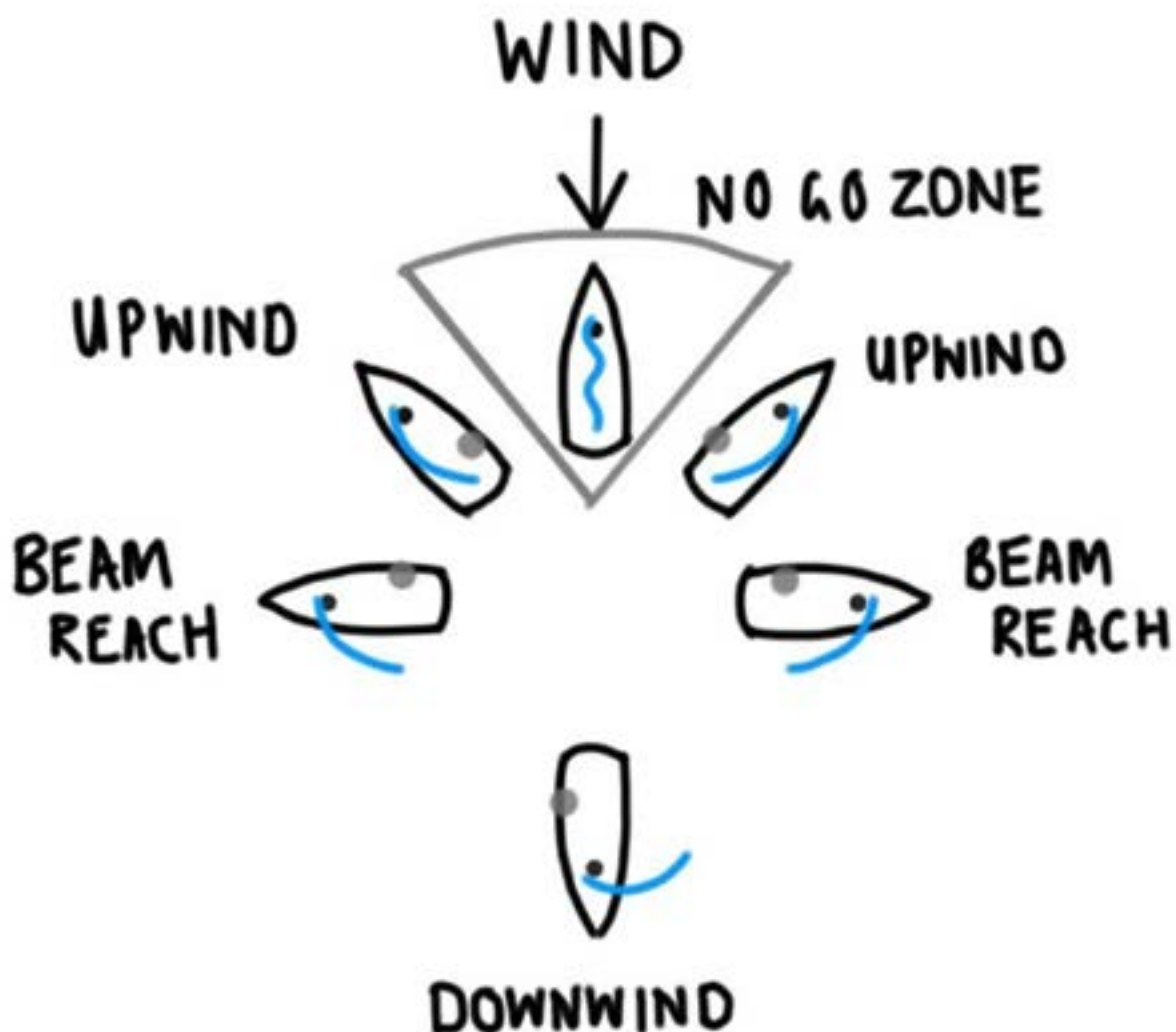
Our boats only move forwards because we use the wind and our sail to drive our boat.

To do this we need to know where the wind is coming from both on the water and on land.

Sometimes the wind can change the direction its coming from and this can be a bit confusing.

Depending on what way you're sailing you need to adjust your sails and steering to keep them full of wind!

This diagram is called Points of Sail and it helps us learn what direction we can sail and how much we should pull our sail in.



CAPSIZING - UPSIDE DOWN BOATS!

Sometimes when we are sailing our boat can tip over. We call this a capsize.

Capsizing may seem scary but it can be lots of fun and it's easy to fix!

When we capsize, our boat will fall onto its side or completely upside down.



All we need to do is grab onto our Centreboard (which sticks out the bottom of the boat) and give them a pull!

Slowly the boat will tip back upright and we can climb in. **Easy as that!**

Here is a video to help understanding capsizing a bit more!

***Capsizing is all part of sailing - It happens to the best of us!
Just follow the steps to get your boat back upright and you'll
be good to go!***

GYBING - THE SECOND TURN

We also have a second turn we use when sailing called a Gybe.

The difference between a Tack and Gybe is that we PULL the Tiller away from the sail.

As we pull the tiller our boat will turn and our sail will swap sides and so do we. This will happen a bit faster than a Tack.



We need to make sure we duck our heads to avoid the boom.

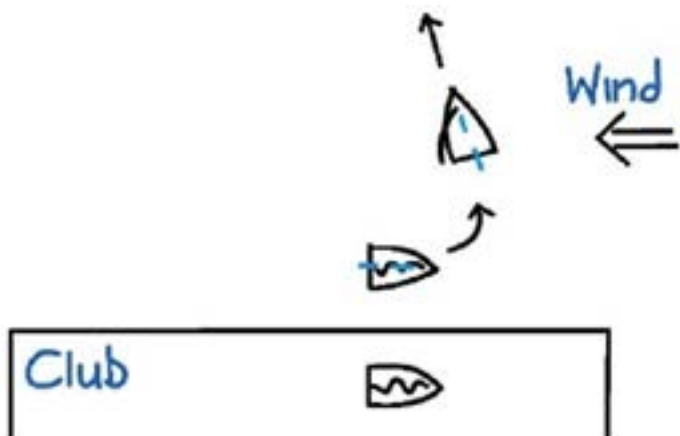
We also need to add an extra step when Gybing which is grabbing our mainsheet and pulling it across the boat to help the sail change sides and stay in control.

Here is a video to help understand what a Gybe is.

Some of the language they use might be a bit different or complicated but don't worry about it!

LAUNCHING & RETRIEVING

Launching and **retrieving** is how we get our boat from the shore to the water and back safely.



When you're ready to **launch** your boat and leave the shore, you need to do a couple of things.

Make sure we ALWAYS have our boat pointing into the wind.

Make sure there is enough water under the boat and it is floating then we put our centreboard down and our rudder down this way when we jump in its super easy to steer our boat.

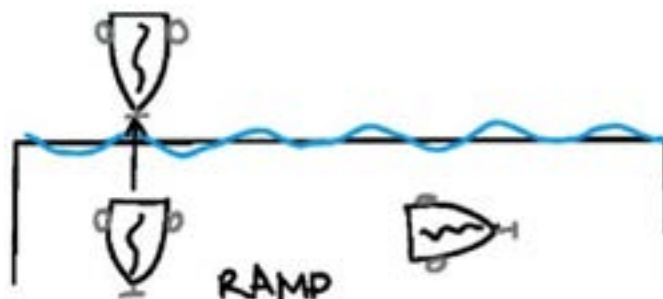
When we get ready to **retrieve** our boat heading back to shore, we need to do the same things but in reverse.

We pull out centreboard out before the water gets to shallow – making sure it doesn't hit the ramp!

We slow down our boat by letting our mainsheet out.

When we get close enough to the ramp to jump out, we lift our rudder up and then quickly jump out!

Catch our boat and point it into the wind.



When rigging, launching or de-rigging, be careful with your boom swinging around as it can hit you other sailors or other boats around you.

When leaving your boat unattended, make sure it doesn't roll away down the ramp! Don't point the boat straight into the wind and unclip the mainsheet.

KNOTS

It's time to learn some knots! In our Optimist Level 1 course, we focus on two knots that are using in sailing, and everyday life.

These knots are called a **Figure 8** and a **Reef Knot**.



A **Figure 8** is used in the end of a rope to stop it coming undone or slipping through gaps.



A **Reef /Square Knot** is used to tie two ends of rope together in a loop. So, we use these to tie on sails to our booms and masts.

Practice your knot tying! It's a skill that always comes in handy
Check out the videos for information



RULES OF THE ROAD



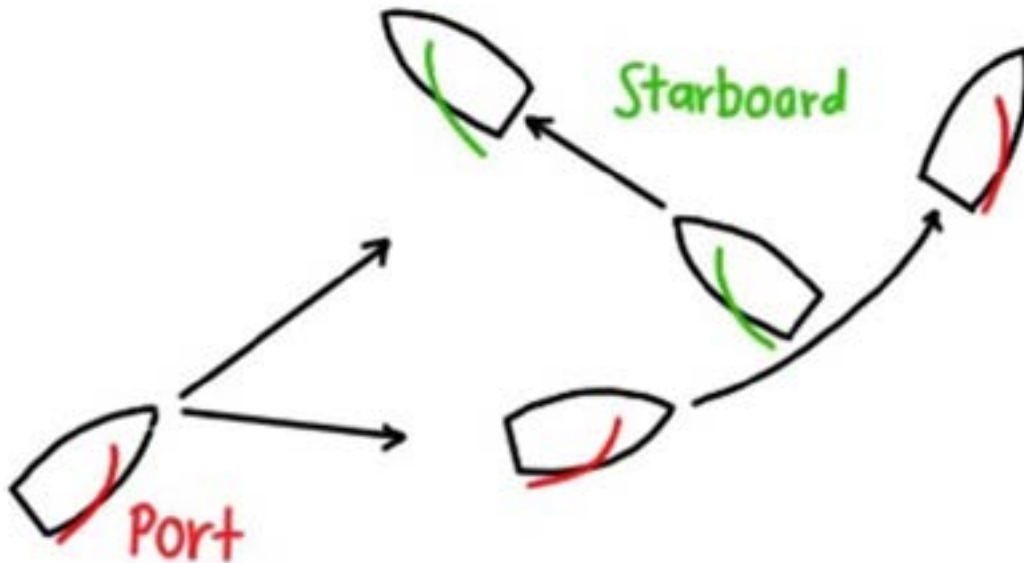
In sailing we have defined rules to ensure that everyone is kept safe while on the water. These rules are internationally recognised, so no matter where you are sailing in the world, we all understand the rules.

The Number 1 Rule of Sailing *Always Avoid Collisions*

Understanding the “rules of the road” (sailing rules) is an extremely important part of learning. It is the same as on the road. We have to follow the rules so we don’t crash into other cars – and same goes for when you’re on the water. Your coach will explain these rules as part of your Level 1 course.

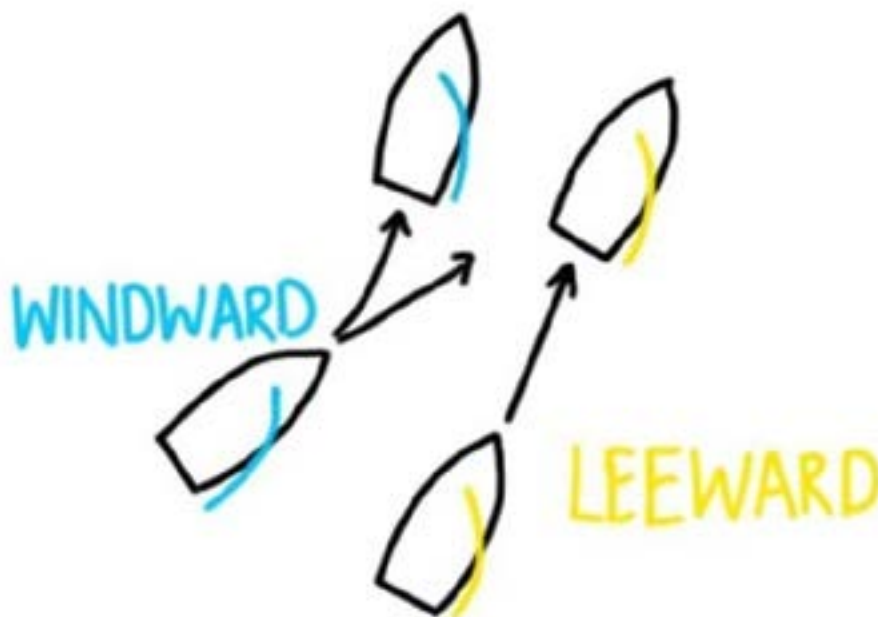


Port / Starboard



In this rule our Starboard boat (green) always has right of way and the Port boat (red) is required to give way. So red must stay out of the way of green.

Windward / Leeward



In this rule, Windward (blue). is closer to the wind and has 'more wind' to control their boat so must stay out of the way of the Leeward (yellow) boat which has its wind blocked by the Windward boat.

COURSE CHECKLIST

Safety & Sailing Gear

- I know what safety gear to wear
- I can do the swim test while wearing a lifejacket

Steering & Turning

- I can steer in a straight line using my tiller extension
- I always sit on the correct side of my boat when sailing

Gybing

- I always face the front when I gybe
- I always pull my mainsheet across when I gybe

Launching & Retrieving

- I always point my boat into the wind when launching
- I land my boat with my centreboard and rudder up
- I launch my boat with my centreboard and rudder down

Understanding the boat

- I know the parts of my boat
- I can rig my boat without any help

Tacking

- I always tack facing forwards
- I use my tiller extension when I tack

Points of Sail

- I know all the points of sail
- I can find the wind direction and no-go zone
- I can sail around a triangle course

Capsizing

- I can capsize my boat on purpose
- I can right my boat and get back in
- I have been in my boats air pocket

COURSE CHECKLIST

Rigging Checklist

- Point the boat into the wind
- Check the centreboard is tied on
- Check that the rudder is clipped on properly
- Check that the bungs are in
- Check you have a bailer on board
- The mast is secure and safety ropes/ bungee is secure
- The painter/ tow rope is attached and secure
- Mainsheet is free from tangles
- Sail ties are fastened

Pack Up (derig) Checklist

- Wash down your boat, sails & fittings so they are free from salt water
- Remove the bung(s)
- Empty the boat of water
- Sponge out all the remaining water
- Place your centreboard & rudder under the hiking straps
- Free the mainsheet of knots & clip to the front of the boat
- Put the mast away in it's rack & hang the sail for storage
- Put the sprit in the sprit storage bin
- Ensure the boat is put away in the shed properly

A couple of very important items to check off

- I am always listening to my coach, both on and off the water
- I'm always respectful of other sailors

MY OPTIMIST LEVEL 1 LOG BOOK

Date	Wind Direction & Strength	Activities We Did	What I Did Well	What Can I Improve On

MY OPTIMIST LEVEL 1 LOG BOOK

Date	Wind Direction & Strength	Activities We Did	What I Did Well	What Can I Improve On



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WHAT'S NEXT?

OPTIMIST LEVEL 2

Optimist Level 2 is where we build on the skills from Optimist Level 1 course and introduce new concepts and practical learnings. Advanced boat handling and perfecting techniques are a key focus.

rayc.co.nz/academy