

# OPTIMIST

## Get kitted out!



**When you first go sailing you can probably borrow all the kit you need, but sooner or later you might want your own sailing clothes. Here's a look at some of the basics for Green Fleet...**

**As your sailor progresses then the kit that they will want to use will depend upon what level they are wanting to sail.**

### TOP TIP

Club members often have lightly used gear that sailors have outgrown that they are willing to onsell or gift.

### Clothes

What a sailor wears is a matter of preference and the weather! The following are all good options: neoprene/ thermal/ kayak pants and tops and/ or skiff suits. Many sailors like to wear hikers to protect their legs.

Hikers (also known as hiking pants) have stiff battens with a padded covering positioned on the back of the thighs, which spreads the weight load over a larger area and also supports your legs, meaning that a sailor can hike harder for longer.

It's a good idea to talk with your coach or other parents to find what is best for the conditions you are sailing in.

### Buoyancy Aid

Even if you learn in shorts and old trainers, make sure you wear a proper approved Buoyancy Aid at all times and remember to tie in a whistle and your NZIODA Tag.

A Buoyancy Aid is needed rather than a lifejacket as a buoyancy aid is easier to move in and also the collar of a lifejacket can interfere with the boat's boom.

### Boots

Boots are advisable to prevent stubbing of toes or slipping over. Proper sailing booties are designed for good grip in the wet.

### Hats

Rain or shine, you need to keep your head protected. In cold weather you lose most of your body heat through your head. In the summer you need to protect your face and neck

A wide brimmed hat is a must-have to keep the sun out of your face and eyes and off your neck – don't forget to tie it on if it's breezy.

Many sailors wear baseball caps or visors and these are also good options.

Sailing helmets are also available and some yacht clubs are making it mandatory for junior sailors to wear helmets. So be sure to check the rules at your club.

Neck gaiters offer wind/sun protection.

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### Spray Top

A spray top is a really good investment because it will keep you warm and protect you from the wind. Dinghy tops that have a soft neck and snug neoprene wrist and waist bands keep the water out but have plenty of room to move in.

Remember Spray Tops don't keep you completely dry if you capsize. But do keep you warm and the worst of the wind from chilling you further.

### Rash Vest

A rash vest or UV top is ideal for wearing under a wetsuit, or with shorts or swimsuit when you're sailing at the height of summer. White is a great colour in the summer as it reflects the heat rather than absorbs it on a hot summer day.

Rash leggings/SUP leggings will protect legs over the summer months and reduces the risk of missing a spot when relying on sunscreen.

For colder days on the water a thermal rash is a good addition to have under your spray jacket.

### Sun Cream

Essential as soon as you're outdoors – make sure you choose a high factor waterproof formula if you're on the water and look out for kids-specific sunscreen specially designed for sensitive skins.

Chemical sunscreens do damage our sea life so where practicable do consider using a reef safe sunscreen.

### Sunglasses

No self respecting adult sailor goes out without a decent pair of sunnies and you can now get proper junior sunglasses with UV protective lenses.

Remember for your eyes not wearing sunglasses is like heading out on the water without sunscreen. There are many eye conditions associated with prolonged exposure to sunlight, UV rays and intense glare.

Ensure that sunglasses are wraparound style with polarised lenses and if the frames don't float make sure your sailor has a sunglasses strap. Prescription sports sunglasses are available from most optometrists.

### Gloves

Gloves are a really good idea to help protect your hands from the ropes and also keep you warm in winter. There are lots of different styles/fabrics. Find what works best for you.

### Bag

You need a bag to keep all your wet kit in and also a dry bag for your coach to take out on the water with your lunch in it and any additional items e.g spray jackets and woolly hat.

Trugs, washing baskets or other plastic bins are also very practical for taking home wet gear from clubs and regattas.