

Mission Statement

The mission of the California State Parks Refugio Junior Lifeguard Program is to provide quality water safety & environmental education to children ages 7-17.

The Junior Lifeguard program introduces young people to safe marine and aquatic recreational opportunities and is an educational program designed to improve young people's physical conditioning, their understanding and respect for the environment, and their respect for themselves, their parents, and their peers.

The mission is accomplished through activities that include instruction and practice in open water swimming, beach running, paddle boarding, body surfing, surfing, kayaking, snorkeling, self-rescue, and much, much more. Respect for the environment increases by the understanding gained through daily physical contact with the environment and through lecture and discussion of pertinent marine and aquatic topics. Increased respect for themselves develops through their personal progress and accomplishments. Respect for others is accomplished by contact with compassionate Instructors and by working with other youths in a team-building environment.

Furthermore, the mission of the Refugio Junior Lifeguard Program embraces opportunities for community involvement and partnerships in educational instruction. The mission includes seizing special opportunities that introduce non-traditional user groups to the wonders of marine and aquatic recreation environments.

Program Dates and Times

In 2025 the Refugio Junior Lifeguard will run two sessions, both sessions will run 10AM to 3PM. This year we are experimenting with a one-of-a-kind program aimed at providing participants with competition focused skills and training. Competition Week will run from 10AM to 1PM.

Session 1: June 23 – July 11 (Friday, the 4th of July off)

Competition Week: July 14 – 18

Session 2: July 21 – August 8

California State Parks and the Refugio Junior Lifeguard Program are not responsible for students outside of scheduled program hours and activities. Parents are responsible for their children immediately prior to and immediately following scheduled Program hours. If riding the bus, parents are responsible for their children at the bus stops before and after the Program. Parents are expected to be prompt at dropping off and picking up their Junior Lifeguards.

*** Please, do not park in handicapped parking, red zones, double park, or leave car unattended in a loading zone when picking up or dropping off children. Law Enforcement will strictly enforce all parking regulations. ***

Program Location

This year the Refugio Junior Lifeguard Program will run both sessions and the competition week out of Refugio State Beach. Throughout the program we will be travelling to a variety of beaches to provide unique environments and learning opportunities for the JGs. A tentative field trip schedule is as follows.

Due to periods of inclement weather, erosion and lack of sand or other hazards, we may opt to move the program to neighboring beaches for safety reasons or field trips may be cancelled. If this occurs, notifications to participants occur as soon as possible. Please refer to emails from the Junior Lifeguard Coordinator for the most up-to-date information (Refugio.Guards@Parks.CA.Gov)

Session 1

- Friday, June 27 – Gaviota State Beach
- Tuesday, July 1 – Goleta County Beach
- Thursday, July 3 – Jalama County Beach
- Friday, July 11 – Carpinteria City Beach

Competition Week

- Friday, July 18 – East Beach (City of Santa Barbara)

Session 2

- Friday, July 25 – Gaviota State Beach
- Wednesday, July 30 – Goleta County Beach
- Friday, August 1 – Jalama County Beach

Program Fees

Tuition - \$400 for your first child and \$380 for each additional child

* In order to receive the sibling discount all children must be registered together *

Bus Pass - \$285, this is in addition to your child's tuition and is required for your child to ride the bus

Group Structure

Some program instruction/activities will be conducted in a single large group (i.e. special guest lectures and morning workouts [workout repetitions will be adjusted for A, B and C groups]). The bulk of the instruction and activities will happen in smaller groups, which are loosely based on USLA Junior Lifeguard Competition ages.

A Group – 12 + year olds | B Group – 9 to 11 year olds | C Group – 7 and 8 year olds

Bus Transportation

The Refugio Jr. Lifeguard Program provides bus service to and from the Program to most areas in Santa Ynez Valley for an additional fee. Fee information is located in the “Program Fees” section of this handbook. At present, we offer bus service to and from the following areas:

- Vandenberg Village
- Lompoc
- Buellton
- Santa Ynez
- Solvang

The Refugio Jr. Lifeguard Program has calculated the cost of riding the bus to be dramatically less expensive and far less time consuming than driving one’s personal vehicle to and from the Program each day.

Bus information (including pick-up & drop-off times and precise bus stops) is available on our website under the “Bus Information” tab. Space on the busses is limited. Therefore, we urge you to reserve your spot as early as possible. To reserve your spot you must complete a Jr. Lifeguard Program application and pay your fees for both the bus and the JG Program. If you do not pay the bus fees, you cannot ride the bus (no exceptions).

General Bus Rules:

- No eating, touching, yelling & screaming, or name calling
- ALWAYS Follow the driver's directions
- You may bring equipment **WITH** driver's permission and **IF** there is room
- Stay seated at all times
- Students who behave inappropriately will lose bus privileges and will forfeit fees
- Parents are responsible for dropping off and picking up children at scheduled times

Instructors

The Junior Lifeguard Program is taught by professional State Park Lifeguards and specially-trained support personnel. The Lifeguards have extensive experience and rigorous training in surf and ocean rescue, beach safety, first aid, and CPR. The Instructors also have teaching, and interpretation experience with children. Throughout the session, guest lecturers are utilized to share their knowledge and experiences with the Junior Lifeguards to further enhance their learning experience. **Safety and education while having fun are our primary objectives.** There are 5-8 paid Junior Lifeguard Program Instructors and 6 volunteer Assistants with the Junior Lifeguards at all times during the Program (based on full capacity). This supervision level adheres to the statewide

standard ratio of 20 students to 1 paid Jr. Lifeguard Instructor at the absolute lowest level of supervision. A majority of the time the student to Instructor ratio will be much lower with increased supervision. The increased supervision will be provided by Lifeguard Supervisors, extra Lifeguards, parents, and guest lecturers present on the beach periodically throughout the 4-week session.

The following are the names and titles of the Junior Lifeguard Management Staff:

Benjamin Donahue: Seasonal Lifeguard 2 | Director of Youth Outreach and Programming

Dion Von Der Lieth: State Park Peace Officer | Program Advisor

Tryout Test

The Junior Lifeguard Program is not a “learn to swim” school. Therefore, prospective students are screened at a tryout test to see if they have the minimum skills needed to benefit from the Junior Lifeguard Program. The instructors approve a child's skill level based upon successful completion of the test as well as the child's swimming competence and confidence.

**** Please, understand that a child may physically complete all phases of testing and still may not be accepted into the JG Program ****

The Instructors approve a youth's skill level based upon the youth's swimming ability, competence, and confidence. This process is for the safety of the child, as well as the success of the Program. The 2025 tryout tests will be held at Refugio State Beach in May and June.

Tryout dates, times, locations, and other information are located on our website under the “Tryout Info” tab. At the tryouts, students should have a bathing suit and a towel and be ready to get wet. Wetsuits and goggles are permitted but swim fins will not be allowed.

The tryout test consists of the following:

- 1) Swim 100 yards continuously (under 3 minutes)
- 2) Swim 10 yards underwater (pass/fail)
- 3) Tread water for 3 minutes (pass/fail)

In the past, there were different swim time requirements for different age groups. This is no longer the case. Instead, we have one time standard and the Instructor staff has the discretion to pass or fail a child based on the level of swimming proficiency (not relative speed). We have found this to be a much better indicator of ability.

***** Note: All new students entering the Program must successfully complete the testing process to be eligible for the Program (NO EXCEPTIONS). *****

Tuition Assistance

If your child, or the child of someone you know, cannot participate in the Junior Lifeguard Program without tuition assistance, please contact us for a Tuition Assistance Application.

Scholarship and tuition assistance requires completion of the California State Parks Tuition Assistance Application and qualification under its guidelines. Due to funding and availability for this program fluctuates, only a limited number of candidates receive assistance for this program each year.

California State Parks is happy to be able to provide you with the finest of Junior Lifeguard Programs. However, as our Junior Lifeguard Program grows, you can help support deserving youths in need of scholarships, field trips, equipment, and supplies.

*Note: If you or your business is interested in donating to our Junior Lifeguard Program, please contact us at Refugio.Guards@Parks.CA.Gov

Refund and Fee Policies

- If a participant fails to pass the swim test, a full Enrollment Fee refund will be issued.
- If a participant must cancel for any reason prior to 7 calendar days of the start date of the training a \$50.00 Enrollment cancellation fee will apply.
- If a participant must drop out of the training for any reason within 7 calendar days before or after the training has started a 50% Enrollment Fee refund will be issued. For programs less than 7 days in length no refund will be issued after the program has begun.
- If a participant must drop out of the training after 7 calendar days of the start date of the training no refund will be issued.
- If a participant is injured while participating in the training a pro-rated Enrollment Fee refund will be issued based on the number of training days that were started.
- No refund will be issued to any participant that is suspended or expelled from training for disciplinary reasons.
- There is no refund for uniform items.
- There is no refund for the Registration Fee.

Junior Lifeguard Daily Requirements

All Junior Lifeguards need to report to Refugio State Beach at 10:00 AM and will leave the beach at 3:00 PM. Parents and guardians are responsible for their children after 3:00 PM. The Lifeguards leave the beach at 3:00 PM and cannot stay to watch your child after JG Program hours.

*NOTE: Field trip days may have different reporting times and locations. Field trip info will be emailed to parents and guardians by the Junior Lifeguard Coordinator.

Participation: All JGs are expected to participate in all activities, unless they have a valid note from their parents saying otherwise. Refusal to participate may result in the child's removal from the

Program. Participants should be on time, in full uniform, and prepared for a full day on the beach (i.e.: sand, sun, fog, cold weather, cold water, exercise, lectures, etc.) & **JGs' names should be clearly written on all gear.**

Junior Lifeguards should bring the following items to the beach everyday:

- Be in full uniform (JG t-shirt & royal blue swimsuit) required
- Foot protection (sandals, shoes, booties, etc.) required
- Sun protection (sunscreen, hat, etc...)
- Large lunch (sack lunch and lots of drinking water)
- Back pack & towel (to keep all your stuff together) highly recommended
- Boogie board, fins, etc. (optional)
- **Positive & enthusiastic attitude required!!!**
- Surf Style wetsuit (highly recommended)

Program Updates

The Refugio Jr. Lifeguard Program strives to keep parents and participants informed. Therefore, we utilize weekly emails as a primary communication tool to help pass on vital information about the Program & its many activities (i.e. field trips, competitions, location changes, directions, scheduled guest speakers, etc.). If you are not receiving periodic email, check your SPAM folder or contact the JG staff at Refugio.Guards@Parks.CA.Gov

Attendance

Attendance is taken twice daily. Regular attendance is encouraged and will allow students to fully benefit from the Program. Please notify us if your child will be absent for more than three days in a row.

Participation

STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO PARTICIPATE IN ALL REGULAR JG PROGRAM ACTIVITIES!!!

Parents should be aware that rigorous physical exercise and ocean swims are a daily part of the Program. Refusal to participate may result in removal from the Program. If a student is unable to participate in certain activities, the student should give a note (from a parent or guardian) to one of the Instructors first thing in the morning. Exercise and activities will vary for the children depending on their age, size, strength, ability, confidence level, and ocean conditions. The younger, smaller students will not have the same opportunities as the older students to utilize the paddleboards and

other equipment, which require body weight and strength. If you have questions, please see one of the Instructors.

Certificates of Completion

Certificate of Completion: At the end of both sessions, each participant of the Refugio Jr. Lifeguard Program will receive a certificate of completion signifying their efforts over the course of the session. In addition, each student who completes the “Patch Swim” on the last day will receive an embroidered patch with the JG Program’s logo in acknowledgment of their efforts.

Powerguard: Students who wish to push themselves physically and intellectually have the opportunity to do so by participating in the “Powerguard” program. Powerguards are highly-motivated JGs who voluntarily participate in extra activities and set a higher standard of behavior for themselves. Powerguard is a designation that must be earned over the course of the Program and cannot be insincerely claimed or debated, and missed requirements cannot be made-up later. To achieve the Powerguard designation, students must:

- Complete 90% of the “Powerguard” vitamins – long or more strenuous versions of the daily vitamins
- Voluntarily participate in extra activities and assignments (announced in advance)
- Maintain 90% attendance
- Put forth a maximum effort daily
- Maintain a positive attitude
- Have no discipline problems

The Powerguard patch is a source of great pride among the students and staff.

Behavioral Expectations & Discipline

The Refugio Jr. Lifeguard Program strives to have a positive impact and create a safe and sound environment for its young participants. In order for this to occur, students must exhibit behavior that demonstrates a respect for the program’s rules, our staff, other students, and our equipment and facilities. Examples of expected behaviors include but are not limited to:

- Respect of Instructors and other staff
- Respect of other students; no shoving, hitting or insulting
- Respect of the facilities, equipment and property of others
- Cooperation with others and good sportsmanship
- Following all safety rules and all instructions
- Listening quietly to directions and announcements
- Not being disruptive during program lessons and activities
- Actively participating in regular program activities

*Please note: The intent of discipline at JGs is to gain compliance while instructing the student of acceptable forms of behavior. Accomplishing this requires effort on the part of both the student and staff, and at times, parents/guardians.

Safety is the primary concern at the Refugio Junior Lifeguard Program, and as such, failure to adhere to program rules and/or staff requests will not be tolerated. A student who fails to follow the rules not only disrupts the smooth and safe operation of the program, but can diminish the overall enjoyment, education and safety of other students. Therefore, the Refugio Jr. Lifeguard Program has developed the following as its discipline policy:

Progressive Steps of JG Program Discipline

Step 1 - Verbal warning and counseling: When a minor discipline incident occurs, the student will be counseled and given a description of the behavioral change that is required. Examples of incidents related to Step 1 can include failing to follow instructions and/or failure to adhere to general program rules.

Step 2 – Time out, physical fitness reprimand, or loss of privileges: If subsequent or more serious incidents occur, the student may be asked to “take a time out”, “take a lap”, and/or perform a series of push-ups. For more serious incidents, the student may be asked to sit out for the duration of an activity such as “free play”, in addition to the previously mentioned actions.

*Please note: A “time out” is generally a 5-10 minute period that the student spends quietly reflecting on the incident; a “lap” is a supervised swim or run of reasonable distance; and a “series of push-ups” is one or more sets of push-ups within the ability level of the student. Like all discipline situations at JGs, incidents in this category will include a verbal counseling and a description of the appropriate/expected behavior.

Step 3 – Parent Contact: If a series of discipline situations occur, or in the event of a serious discipline incident, the child’s parent or guardian will be contacted. The intent of a parent contact is to enlist the help the student’s parent or guardian in order to correct the behavior.

*Please note: Failure to participate in regular activities such as the daily run or swim can also result in a parent contact.

Step 4 – Suspension: A student who continually disregards rules or instructions will be suspended for 1 day. If this occurs, the parent or guardian will be advised as to when the child can return to the program and what steps will be taken if the child fails to improve.

Step 5 – Expulsion/Termination from the JG Program: If the child’s behavior remains unacceptable, then the parent or guardian will be informed and the child will be dropped from the program.

*Please note: Major first time incidents may progress the student directly to steps 3, 4, or 5. Students who receive a step 4 or 5 discipline response will not receive a refund for their participation in the program and may be disqualified from participating in the program in the future. Examples of major (level 4 or 5) incidents include but are not limited to the following:

- Insubordination/disrespecting staff
- Fighting

- Truancy
- Cheating on runs and/or swims
- Failing to follow the bus rules
- Unlawful or non-consensual touching of another person
- Vandalism of equipment or facilities
- Safety violations
- Other conduct which brings disrespect to the Refugio JG Program or California State Parks

Just like in a classroom or on a sports team, discipline at JGs requires a collective effort on the part of students, parents/guardians, and the program's staff. Please assist us in providing an environment that is positive and free from incidents that will inhibit our ability to provide your child/children with an exceptional and unique summer experience!!!

Anti-Bullying Policy

This Refugio Junior Lifeguard Program is completely opposed to bullying and will not tolerate it. It is entirely contrary to the values and principles we work, live, and teach by. All participants of the JG program have a right to be in a safe and caring environment at all times. They also have a responsibility to contribute, in whatever way they can, to the protection and maintenance of such an environment for themselves and others.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is an act of aggression, causing embarrassment, pain or discomfort to someone. It can take a number of forms; physical, verbal, making gestures, extortion and exclusion. It can be planned and organized, or it may be unintentional. It may be perpetrated by individuals or by groups.

PRINCIPLES

- JGs have a right to learn free from intimidation and fear.
- The needs of the victim are paramount.
- The program will not tolerate bullying behavior.
- Bullied JGs will be listened to.
- Reported incidents will be taken seriously and thoroughly investigated.

Examples of Bullying:

- Physical violence such as hitting, pushing or spitting at another person.
- Interfering with another person's property, by stealing, hiding or damaging it.
- Using offensive names when addressing another person.
- Teasing or spreading rumors about another person or his/her family.
- Belittling another person's abilities and achievements.
- Writing offensive notes or graffiti about another person.
- Excluding another person from a group activity.
- Ridiculing another person's appearance, way of speaking or personal mannerisms.

- Misusing technology (internet or mobiles) to hurt or humiliate another person.

The Responsibilities of JGs | We expect our JG students to:

- Refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity.
- Intervene to protect a child who is being bullied, unless it is unsafe to do so.
- Report to a member of staff any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying, to dispel any climate of secrecy and help to prevent further instances.

Anyone who becomes the target of bullying should:

- Not suffer in silence, but have the courage to speak out, to put an end to their own suffering and that of other potential targets.

The Responsibilities of Parents:

- Watching for signs of distress or unusual behavior in their children, which might be evidence of bullying
- Advising their children to report any bullying to (any member of our staff) and explain the implications of allowing the bullying to continue unchecked, for themselves and for other children.
- Advising their children not to retaliate violently to any forms of bullying
- Being sympathetic and supportive towards their children and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken
- Keep a written record of any reported instances of bullying
- Informing the JG program of any suspected bullying, even if their children are not involved
- Co-operating with the JG program, if their children are accused of bullying, try to ascertain the truth, and point out the implications of bullying, both for the children who are bullied and for the bullies themselves.

The Responsibilities of the Program

- Instructors are expected to identify and intervene bullying in the program
- If bullying is suspected but not witnessed, instructors shall elevate the issue to the JG Coordinator and LG Supervisor
- Document, document, document
- Once an instance of bullying is brought to the Program's attention, the Coordinator and LG Supervisor shall launch an internal investigation
 - If bullying is confirmed, the Coordinator shall activate the afore mentioned 'Steps of Discipline'

The Responsibilities of All

- Work together to combat and eradicate bullying.

LIMITATIONS OF THIS POLICY

The Refugio JG program's Anti-Bullying Policy has been established in response to a few mild incidents of bullying in our program in addition to other, more severe incidents of bullying in schools and children's programs throughout the country. It is our goal to stop incidents of bullying wherever and whenever we can, and we rely on the vigilance of our staff, our parents, and our JGs to do their part to help us achieve this objective. In short, if we are not aware of a bullying incident, we cannot do anything about it. Therefore, we urge you to take some time to review this policy and the policies listed in our Parent Handbook with your child, and to keep the lines of communication open. The Refugio Junior Lifeguard Program can be reached at (805) 968-3834 (office) / (805) 331-8018.

*PLEASE NOTE: This policy, like all of the Refugio Junior Lifeguard Program's policies, extends beyond the program's primary location (Refugio State Beach) to include any/all of our busses, bus stops, field trips, events and activities. If you have any questions or would like more information about this policy, please feel free to contact us anytime at (805) 331-8018.

Special Accommodations

Prospective students desiring special accommodations or services under the Americans with Disabilities Act must notify the Program supervisor at least sixty (60) days prior to the start of the Program, or as soon as reasonably possible.

Notice of Nondiscriminatory Policy

The California State Junior Lifeguard Program admits students of any race, color, national or ethnic origin to all the rights and privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the program. The state does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in administration of educational policies, scholarships, athletic and other program-administered programs.

Comments

Your comments, suggestions, input, and ideas on our program are welcome and greatly appreciated. Please feel free to email the program leaders anytime!

Contact Information

Refugio Junior Lifeguard Program Director: Benjamin Donahue

Phone: (805) 331-8018

Email Address: Refugio.Guards@Parks.CA.Gov

Mailing Address: 10 Refugio Beach Rd., Goleta, Ca. 93117

Web Site: <https://www.parks.ca.gov/refugiojgs>