

5. Organisations of Training Courses

5.1. Senior Instructors

For all sailing courses, an SI or the CI must be present. They are responsible to the RYA Principal for ensuring that course delivery meets RYA standards.

The SI must work closely with the DIs to ensure they are confident, competent, and delivering high-quality, safe sessions in line with the relevant RYA syllabus.

At the start of the day, the senior instructor will hold a briefing to coordinate the following with the instructional team:

- Allocation of resources: safety boats, dinghies, training buoys, classroom space
- Allocation of sailing areas
- Weather and tides of the day
- Teaching plans and session aims

5.2. Staffing

The CI assigns a Lead Instructor to each course. Supported by DIs and AIs at RYA ratios, the Lead Instructor manages daily delivery, liaises with the SI/CI for any equipment or staffing needs, and ensures the course meets RYA standards.

5.3. Teaching Ratios

These are laid down by the RYA in the Recognition Guidance Notes:

Single Handed Dinghies:	1 Instructor for up to 6 boats
Crewed Dinghies:	1 Instructor on board for up to 3 beginners 1 Instructor for up to 9 pupils but maximum of 6 boats
Powerboats:	1 Instructor for up to 3 pupils
Safety Boat:	1 Instructor for up to 6 pupils, if 2 boats

Assistant Instructors are included but need to operate under the supervision of a Senior Instructor.

5.4. Code of Conduct for Instructors

All instructors, assistant instructors, and volunteers are expected to uphold the highest standards of professionalism, safety, and integrity at all times while representing the club. The following expectations apply to all staff during RYA training courses and related activities:

Professional Conduct

- Arrive on time, prepared, and appropriately dressed for the day's activities
- Treat all students and staff with respect, fairness, and patience
- Follow the RYA syllabus and centre procedures as instructed by the Senior Instructor or Chief Instructor
- Avoid the use of inappropriate language or behaviour
- Maintain clear, appropriate boundaries with students at all times

Safety & Supervision

- Conduct thorough briefings before each session, including aims, hazards, and signals
- Maintain constant awareness of group welfare, conditions, and surroundings
- Actively supervise students, adjusting sessions as needed for weather, tide, or group ability
- Ensure equipment is checked, suitable, and used correctly
- Report incidents, near-misses, or concerns promptly to the SI or CI

Teamwork & Responsibility

- Support newer instructors, AIs, and volunteers in a constructive and respectful manner
- Attend staff briefings and contribute positively to the day's operation
- Accept feedback and adapt practice where necessary to meet centre standards
- Uphold all club policies, including safeguarding, health and safety, and radio procedure

Accountability & Consequences

Where expectations are not met:

Instructors will be given clear feedback and an opportunity to improve.

- Repeat issues may result in being stood down from instructing duties.
- Serious breaches that place students or staff at risk may result in immediate removal from instructing roles.

These measures ensure we maintain a safe, supportive, and high-quality learning environment for everyone.

5.5. Student Briefings

Upon arrival, at the start of a course, students will be briefed on:

- Club layout, changing rooms and boundaries
- Course content and aims
- Expected behaviour during courses
- Use of personal buoyancy aids and protective clothing (wet weather gear and footwear)
- Emergency procedures (fire alarm)

Before each session, instructors must brief their students on the session aims, safety signals and any specific hazards. Instructors should assess whether reefing is appropriate based on group ability and conditions; in some cases, reefing may be mandated by the SI

5.6. Decision to Sail

For any training session, the decision to sail rests with the Senior Instructor present. They will decide if training on the water will take place and any decision they make will stand. To support their assessment, guidance is shown below. The Senior Instructors assessment will include but not be limited by: instructional staff and student experience; wind speed; water temperature; waves/swell; tidal stream; visibility and density of river traffic.

Daily Risk Assessment					
Course/Session					
Date					
Lead Instructor					
Number of Participants					
Number of Craft					
Type of Craft					
Description	1 – Low risk	2 – Medium risk	3 – High risk	4 – Very high risk	Score
Wind strength	0 – 10 knots	10 – 15 knots	15 – 20 knots	20+ knots	
Tidal Flow	Slack Water	Neap/Weak	Moderate Spring	Strong Spring	
Sailing area	Short Gull	Chantry/Rayden	Moorings	Blackstakes/Havergate	
Air temp (inc. wind chill)	15+°C	10 - 15°C	5 - 10°C	<5°C	
Sailing standard	Elite Sailor	Good Sailor	Intermediate sailor	Beginner sailor	
Total sailing time	0 – 1 hours	1 – 3 hours	3 – 4 hours	4+ hours	
Safety boat : dinghy (ratio)	1:1	1:3	1:6	On Standby	
Instructor : student	1:1/2 (Instructor Onboard)	1:1	1:3	1:6-9	
Other:					
Subtotal					0
Prepared By					
Reviewed By					

Environmental Conditions Guidance

Wind speed and direction must be assessed alongside tide, group ability, instructor experience, and safety cover. As a general guide, training for early-stage students will normally be limited in sustained winds above 20 knots unless additional control measures are in place. High-level training may proceed beyond this threshold with CI or SI approval.

In addition to wind, the following environmental conditions must also be considered:

Lightning

- All on-water activity must be suspended **immediately** if lightning is seen, or strikes are within 5 miles of club.
- Boats should return to shore as safely and quickly as possible.
- Activity may only resume 30 minutes after the last strike in the 5 mile radius

Fog / Poor Visibility

- Training should be suspended if visibility drops to the point where the end of the moorings is not visible from the bridge.
- Instructors must maintain line of sight with all participants.

Tide and Tidal Flow

- Strong tide with light wind may prevent students from making progress or returning safely.
- Wind-against-tide conditions can create steep, choppy water even in moderate wind speeds, especially near channel bends.
- Sessions must be adjusted for tidal strength and timing. Instructors should avoid sending weaker groups into main channels or against fast flows.
- Instructors must factor in drift, grounding risk, and the potential need to tow groups to safe areas.

Extreme Heat or Cold

- Adjust session length, hydration, and clothing requirements:
 - **Hot:** Encourage water bottles, hats, shaded breaks. Monitor for heat stress.
 - **Cold:** Require warm layers, dry kit access, and shorten wet sessions. Monitor for hypothermia.

Heavy, Sustained Rain

- Training may continue, but instructors must assess for:
 - Reduced visibility
 - Lowered morale/fatigue
 - Increased chill and hypothermia risk, especially post-capsize
- Sessions should be shortened or moved ashore if conditions deteriorate.

5.7. Start of Day Checklist

Equipment/Area	Task
Bridge	Flags are put up
Kit Shed	Door unlocked, pinned open then key returned
Club Dinghies	Prepared as needed for the day, covers stowed securely
Safety boats	Launched/Retrieved from moorings, keys and kill cord present, fuel level and safety equipment checked, safety boxes onboard
VHF Radios	Retrieved from bridge and allocated to staff
Day Board	Filled out/Updated
Slipway	Clear of debris/hazards
Registers	Ready to sign in students

5.8. End of Day Checklist

Equipment/Area	Task
Bridge	Flags taken down and folded
Kit Shed	Lights off and door locked
Club Dinghies	Returned to their allocated spaces, covers on and equipment returned to kit shed
Safety boats	Re-fuelled, washed, equipment/rubbish removed, recovered/placed on moorings, keys and safety box returned to bridge.
VHF Radios	Returned to bridge and placed on charge
Clubhouse/training tent	Clean and tidy
Galley	All washing up completed, and everything put away
Changing rooms	Cleaned

5.9. Powerboat Training

Powerboat training may take place at any time throughout the year as determined by the Chief Instructor. Training must not proceed beyond the limits of Area "A".