

Snorkel Guidelines



The Experiencing Marine Reserves (EMR) programme empowers schools and communities by providing hands-on experience in the ocean. The programme involves investigating marine biodiversity and the local marine environment before venturing to a fully-protected marine reserve. After this experience, students are able to compare unprotected and protected areas and are encouraged to put their knowledge into action within the community.

The programme:

- Promotes environmental education
- Builds capacity to enhance awareness and understanding of marine conservation issues in New Zealand
- Provides opportunities for community development
- Inspires action *for* the marine environment

EMR – SNORKELING

The Experiencing Marine Reserves programme is exactly what the name implies. It is about experiencing, first hand, the difference between local beaches and fully protected marine reserve areas. Snorkeling enables an insight into the marine world. Even standing in waist deep water looking about with a mask on is an experience!

Objectives:

- Experience marine life first hand
- Build water confidence in the real environment
- Encourage snorkelling as a recreational and fun activity
- Instil caring attitudes and passion for the conservation of the ocean
- Encourages emotional connection to marine environment



OUTLINE

The first part of the EMR programme is learning about the marine environment in the classroom. If possible, it is encouraged to practice snorkeling in the school pool with an EMR leader/coordinator, confident teacher or New Zealand Underwater Minidippers trainer. The second stage is an introductory snorkel in shallow water at the local beach. Your EMR coordinator will have already snorkeled at your local beach (or have previous experience in the area) and will have identified any hazards or risks. After your local experience, you will then investigate a marine reserve.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

Sensible assessment of environmental conditions, clear instruction and adequate supervision are the keys to the Experiencing Marine Reserves snorkel risk management policy. If participating in the programme with an EMR snorkel leader, then all risk management policies will be worked through with the teacher well before any field trips/camps commence. The snorkel leader undertakes pre-site inspection and obtains up-to-date weather reports before field trips commence. Snorkel leaders/coordinators will make recommendations to the teacher in charge, and decisions will be made cautiously.

The school provides a first aid kit, and EMR also carries a specialised kit. All students must have permission from their parent/guardian to attend field trips/camps. Medical conditions should be disclosed, especially since students with, for example, epilepsy, diabetes or asthma are not supposed to snorkel great distances and require special attention.

The EMR leader/coordinator will explain the use of equipment. Wetsuits must be worn to protect your body from any cuts, heat loss, abrasions or sunburn. They also keep you warmer, help buoyancy and reduce the risk of hypothermia. All students should wear wetsuits with no weight belts, unless accompanied by a parent or guardian.

THE SNORKEL AREA

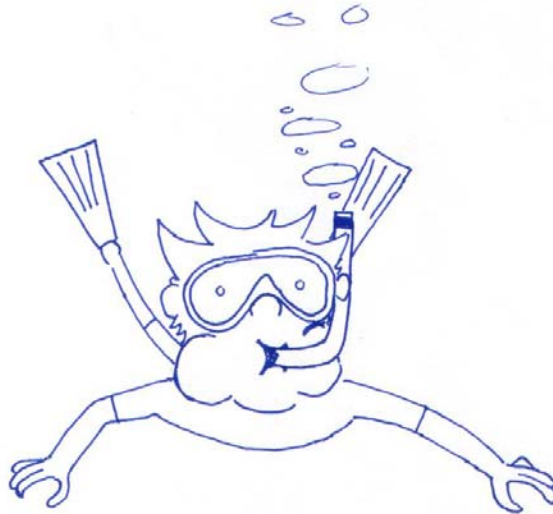
The area for snorkeling will be well defined for students, adults and helpers, with a dive flag displayed to warn any passing boats. Areas where there may be large tidal flows, strong currents, large waves, poor visibility or numerous power boats will be avoided.

The EMR leader/coordinator will explain the safest entry and exit points and proposed route for snorkeling. The EMR leader/coordinator will also explain what the snorkelers are likely to see. Hazards such as sharp rocks, slippery boat ramps and oyster- or kina-covered rocks will be identified and any danger with currents, rips or waves explained, along with an explanation of the need for caution.



There must always be someone on the look out from shore. This person must be ready and equipped to handle any emergency (for example, knowing the location of first aid, medical and emergency information).

TRAINING THE SNORKS



EQUIPMENT

Wetsuits are essential for your safety and warmth. Please take care when fitting wetsuits, and ease the suit on – do not pull. Your mask should feel comfortable and water-tight. A good test is to place the mask on your face (without straps) and inhale gently through your nose. If the mask fits well it will cling to your face. Your snorkel allows you to breathe while you are swimming on top of the water. A mask places a layer of air between your eyes and the water and allows you to see clearly. When using a mask objects appear to be larger and closer.

Snorkels have a soft mouthpiece with tags called spriggots for you to grip with your teeth while breathing. The fins help us to propel ourselves through the water. Never walk with your fins on land, as this is a recipe for disaster.

PRESSURE

When diving down under the water the pressure increases, which in turn increases pressure on the ear drum. Air in the middle ear is trapped and can expand and contract inside the ear, causing pain in your ear drum. Therefore, we must 'equalise' the pressure. You can equalise by pinching your nose and gently blowing. Equalisation can also be achieved by swallowing or wriggling your jaw or moving your neck. If pain persists when you dive down, then you should stay on the surface of the water. It is also important not to dive under if you have a cold, as this blocks the ear and makes equalisation difficult. Always equalise on your way down gently – never blow hard and do not equalise on your way back up.



SOUND

Sound travels much faster underwater than on land, and this increased speed makes the direction of the sound difficult to determine. This means that the snorkeler must be very aware of boats. As they sound much closer than they are, there is every opportunity to sight them well in advance of their approach.

COMMUNICATION



OK on Surface



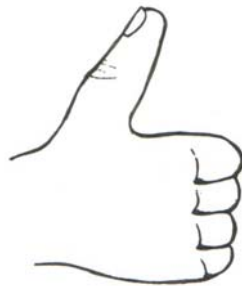
OK (checking your buddy)



Distress Signal



Going Down



Going Up

MOVEMENT

The best way to move through the water while snorkeling is to float face-down while breathing through your snorkel. Fin kicks should be slow, steady and even. Try not to thrash around, as you may scare the fish! Your hands are best by your side to conserve energy.

TEMPERATURE

An hour in the water is like a day in air of the same temperature! As we lose heat much faster in the water, it is very important to get out of the water if you begin to shiver.

BUOYANCY

When objects are placed in the water, they will usually sink or float. We float because there is a force called up-thrust pushing us up.



When we have lungs full of air we float, and lungs with less air will start to sink under the surface. When we wear a wetsuit, it makes us positively buoyant. To enable us to dive down and look around, we need a weight belt to achieve negative buoyancy.

BUDDY SYSTEM

When snorkeling, we must always go with a buddy. The EMR programme recommends a ratio of 1:2 (one adult to two students). You must stay one arm's length from your student and adult buddies. In your buddy group, your adult will have a body board. The body board is not a rescue device, but it allows you to hang over the front and get used to seeing and breathing through your mask and snorkel. The body board can be used for resting on or holding on to keep your group together. The use of body boards also makes EMR groups identifiable.

FLOATING

Imagine that you are a starfish, and breathe in and out with arms outstretched - you will float!

DIVING

Take a deep breath, duck dive underwater (head first), kick your legs into the air and use your legs to force you down, equalise on your way down and point your hand up on return on the way up to avoid collisions.

The best way to clear your snorkel is to use the blast method when you reach the surface. To do this you must hold your tongue over the mouthpiece while duck diving and then take your tongue out of the mouthpiece and blow!

If you have water in your mask this can be cleared without taking it off. By using the top of the mask as a hinge and the bottom as a door, tilt your head back and open the door to let water out, while exhaling at the same time.

BUDDY COOPERATION

When snorkeling with your buddy, it is important for you to watch out for each other. While one duck dives down, the other keeps watch from the surface and vice versa. This is called the 'one up one down' rule. Practise your up and down hand signals to each other. Make sure you stay together - within one arm's length. Inform your adult buddy if one of you is getting cold. If one person needs to go back to the beach, then the whole buddy group must go back. Never snorkel alone!

Before entering the water – remember:

LOOK – be aware of the environment around you

LISTEN – for instructions and any emergencies

FEEL – if you are getting cold



Remember 'Tiakina Tangaroa'
(Care for the Ocean and Seas)

Pair up and start the discovery!

KARAKIA - KI TE MOANA
(PRAYER TO THE OCEAN)

E karakia ana ki a Io Matua Kore kia tau mai ōna manakitanga ki a mātou katoa
(We ask for the blessings of the creator to embrace us all)

Kia tiākina ē mātou ngā uri ō Tangaroa i nga wā katoa
(So that we will care for Tangaroa's children at all times)

Amine
(Amen)

Karakia

E te Atua
(dear lord)

Manaakitia mai mātou i tenei ra
(Bless us this day)

E harikoa ana mātou ki te haere mai ki konei
(We are pleased to be here)

Tukuna mai ki a mātou he wheako pai, ki te ata titiro i nga mea ataahua o te Moana. Kia kore mātou i te takahi i nga uri o Tangaroa i tenei ra

(We are wishing for a safe experience in the ocean today We hope to see many amazing things and will not hurt any of Tangaroa's children).

Amine
(Amen)

