

## Buoyancy Aid Demonstrations

Prior to the children going on the water, we run through a couple of Demonstrations with them.

Firstly the buoyancy aids, and the difference between a Life Jacket and a Buoyancy Aid, then The correct fitting a buoyancy aid, followed by what is suitable and unsuitable clothing for being in the water. Let's begin with the Buoyancy Aid Demonstration.



### **This is a Life Jacket.**

The most obvious difference between the life jacket and buoyancy aid is the collar. It is designed to keep your face and head above the water, acting like a floating pillow. Also they usually have a thicker padded front, combined with being a bit longer in the body, making them extra buoyant and more able to keep your face out of the water. There are many different brands of life jackets, the collars and padded front may vary, but they all have these important features. They are ideal for motor boating and offshore sailing.

But for small boat sailing, with a low boom, like an optimist, and kayaking, a life jacket is too bulky, too long and the collar could get caught on the boom.



### **This is a Buoyancy Aid.**

It does not have a collar, or bulky padding, it is shorter in length for quick movements around a small cockpit, and ideal for kayaking.

It will not roll you over face up, but it will keep you on top of the water so in a WW situation you can always be seen.



To start this demonstration, hold a **Life Jacket** in one hand and a **Buoyancy Aid** in the other, then ask the children, what the differences between the two are?

You will be able to point out and show all the features mentioned above.

**Neither of these floatation devices will be any good in the water if they are too small, or too big.**

### **Demonstration Of How To Correctly Fit A Buoyancy Aid**

**This is very important.**

Choose a variety of vest sizes from the locker, making sure 1 of them will fit your chosen volunteer. Stand where the class can see you and your model, with the vests laid out on the ground.

We want to teach the children that if they were going out on a boat of any kind, they must ask the skipper before stepping onto the boat, if they “do you have a buoyancy aid on the boat that fits me please?”



They may show you a large size..



Try it on, try to tighten all the straps.



Now sit down, (on the ground is best), instantly you can see the vest is too long and rises over their face and ears.

What do you all think?



The Instructor, standing behind sitting child, grasps the shoulder straps, and gives it a little tug, using two fingers, see how loose it is. This is what would happen if you were in the water, you will stay in the water and the vest will float up and off you. Carefully pull the vest right off the child. This vest will not do.





Next you try a smaller vest. Buoyancy aids have an approximate weight guide inside. Repeat the above scenario, adjusting straps etc, this time it might get stuck over their ears. This vest will not do either



Lastly using a buoyancy aid that is the correct size for the child, repeat the scenario. Standing behind the child tug on the shoulder straps, using two fingers demonstrating how it will not move. How snug it is without being too tight. How the crotch strap will stop the vest rising. Even sitting down on the ground it fits comfortably. The arms have lots of room to move freely.



**This is what a correctly fitted Buoyancy aid looks like!!**

You are now safe to go out on the boat.

**Remember;**

Always use a life jacket/buoyancy aid that is:-  
The correct size and fitted properly.  
Crotch strap must be done up.

At the children's first session extra time will be spent fitting their Buoyancy Aids, ensure they know what size they are, so that they can remember for the next time, though they may still need help fitting them. All children must always be checked by instructors before crossing the white line, heading to the beach.

Also, in the wetsuit and buoyancy aids locker, on the right hand side, are a selection of Kayak Buoyancy Aids with tow belts attached, and simple tow belts should instructors need them for kayaking. The tow belts are worn with your normal buoyancy aid.