

UKSA FAQs for young people

What if I can't swim?

Don't worry, you won't have to be able to swim to join in the activities at UKSA. We'll give you a wetsuit and buoyancy aid to wear – these will help you to float. We start the trip with team games in the water to get you confident.

What will I wear for activities?

For water activities everyone wears a wetsuit, a buoyancy aid and a helmet. We provide these and we'll check they fit and you feel comfy before you go paddling or sailing. You'll need a pair of wetsuit shoes or old trainers (not your best, they'll get very wet!) and under your wetsuit you'll wear a swimming costume and maybe shorts and a t-shirt.

What is a wetsuit?

A wetsuit is like a onesie with long arms and legs, and it zips up the back. Wetsuits are made of warm rubbery material called neoprene. Neoprene has tiny bubbles that makes it feel slightly squishy and the bubbles act as insulation, keeping you warm. The neoprene also helps buoyancy (floating) so you'll be able to swim better wearing a wetsuit! Wetsuits don't keep you dry.

What is a buoyancy aid?

A buoyancy aid helps you to float – it 'aids your buoyancy'. They're a bit like life jackets, but easier to wear. Buoyancy aids look like a vest with a foam panel in the front and back. You pull it on over your head like a vest and wear it on top of your wetsuit.

Will I share a bedroom?

You'll sleep in a bunk bed in a room with friends. Your teachers will decide who sleeps in what room and they usually try to put friends together. Girls and boys have separate bedrooms and bathrooms.



Will I be scared?

It is OK to be worried about something you've never done before, whether that is sleeping away from home or going sailing. Your teachers and friends will be there to help, and all our instructors want to make sure that everyone is happy and having fun. If you have any questions, just ask an instructor.

What if I don't like the food?

You'll be active all day and evening, and that means you need good food to give you energy. You'll have a choice of food at mealtimes, and if you're hungry you can go up for seconds. We'll ask your adults if there are foods you're allergic to or don't like eating, so you won't be hungry.

Is it cold?

Sometimes, but you'll be wearing a wetsuit and doing lots of activity to keep you warm. Tell an instructor or teacher if you feel cold. The Isle of Wight is the sunniest place in the UK, and in the summer you'll need sun cream and a sun hat.

What is kayaking?



Kayaks are lots of fun. They're different from canoes because you sit on top, not inside. You'll paddle the kayak with a friend – it is a good test of teamwork to coordinate your paddles and steer in the right direction.

What is dinghy sailing?



Dinghies are little sailing boats, usually with one sail to make it go – there's no paddling! You'll learn how to steer and make the dinghy go in the right direction. You and one or two friends will be the crew, in charge of the dinghy.

Will I be made to do activities?

It is OK to be nervous of trying new things, but sometimes worries can get in the way of having a go at something that turns out to be fun. Talk to your teachers and instructors and tell them about your worries. Maybe see if your friends are having fun and then give it a go?

My friend has different needs, will they be able to come?

We welcome everyone to UKSA, and we want everyone to have a great time.

What is paddleboarding?



Paddleboarding is also called SUP (short for stand-up paddleboarding). The idea is to paddle the board around – you don't have to stand up! We also have a giant paddleboard that lots of you can paddle at once.

What is keel boating?



A keel boat is bigger than a dinghy and you'll sail with up to five friends and an instructor. Keel boats have two sails and a little engine, and you'll take it in turns to steer.

What if I get my period?

Please don't worry. Speak to a teacher or one of the watersports instructors and they will happily help you.

Can I bring my phone?

Don't bring anything expensive or precious on your trip. It is easy for things to get lost or broken. We don't let anyone take mobile phones on the water, even waterproof ones.

Are there sharks in the sea?

We don't get any at sharks at UKSA. If you're very lucky you might see a fish, a seal or a dolphin, but they're usually scared by all the noise of fun school trips, so they hide!