

Lifesaving course for teens proves popular

by Juliet Pouteaux

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A NEW lifesaving course for teenagers has been heavily over-subscribed, with young people clamouring to learn new skills.

Originally it was planned that the new survive and save programme would have one session a week with 12 students.

But lifesaving instructor Brian Aplin soon found that around 30 teenagers – aged between 13 and 17 – wanted to take part.

It was decided to divide the young people into three groups of 10 and extend the planned one-hour Saturday session to two hours and add a Wednesday evening session as well.

Young people were invited from all the schools to take part.

In the past teenagers have undertaken the bronze medallion award with the Guernsey Lifesaving Club.

But Mr Aplin said lifesaving had changed.

'We were teaching children to go out and save someone, but there is a high risk of the rescuer drowning,' he said.

'That is the real change for lifesaving. Think of yourself, then the casualty.'

That means changing how young people have being taught these skills. Now they are encouraged to learn how to throw ropes to people in trouble, look for buoyancy aids and emergen-



The Guernsey Aquatic Rescue Club in training at the Grammar School. Left to right, back row: David Miller, Georgia Petralia, Marcus Buchanan, Louis Pike, Dylan Koypinaur, James Lowe, Jonty Carnachan. Front, left to right: Ellie Purves, Nick Wright and Zach Petralia.

cy rafts and even use kayaks to reach someone drowning.

The sessions focus on beach lifesaving, which are most relevant in Guernsey.

St Sampson's student Tom Vaudin, 14, is one of the pupils taking part.

'I use the beach a lot and I want to be able to help someone if they need it,' he said.

'I'm also in Year 9, doing my

options, so this looks good on my CV. We've learnt how to coil a rope and how to throw things to help someone. I have been enjoying it. Mr Aplin is really nice and explains things really well.'

The Jersey Aquatic Rescue Club is very active and last year took nearly 80 young people to compete in the UK. Mr Aplin said he would like to see the local group – renamed the Guern-

sey Aquatic Rescue Club – rise to that level in the future and be able to show off their skills at a national level. While this term the students are in the Grammar School pool, in the summer the sessions will move outside to the beach.

More volunteer instructors are needed. To find out more contact Mr Aplin, 07781 112102.