

The logo features the word "MARCHING" in large, dark blue, sans-serif capital letters. Below it, the words "NEW ZEALAND" are written in white, sans-serif capital letters inside an orange rectangular box. The entire logo is set against a purple background that is part of a larger, tilted rectangular shape.

MARCHING NEW ZEALAND

NEW COACHES HANDBOOK

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WHAT IS EXPECTED OF A COACH?

- Communication – Keep everyone informed and be clear in your instructions
- Consistency – Maintain regular training times, standards, and expectations
- Respect – Show respect to others to build a respectful team culture
- Positive Attitude – Focus on what marchers can do and build confidence
- Fairness – Demonstrate fair play, honesty, and sportsmanship
- Maturity – Be a positive adult role model at all times
- Willingness to Learn – Listen, take feedback, and admit mistakes
- Composure – Stay calm and in control under pressure
- Support – Build genuine, caring relationships with your team
- Self-Discipline – Be reliable, on time, and follow through on commitments
- Safety – Ensure a safe training and competition environment

ADDITIONAL KEY EXPECTATIONS:

- Preparation – Plan trainings and come organised
- Knowledge – Understand the rules and requirements of your grade
- Leadership – Set clear expectations and guide your team
- Adaptability – Adjust your approach to suit different learners
- Encouraging Team Culture – Promote teamwork, inclusion, and enjoyment

COACHING IS:

90% ATTITUDE AND 10% TECHNIQUE

BUILDING GOOD RELATIONSHIPS:

As a coach, it is important to actively build and maintain positive relationships with the parents of your marchers. Strong communication and mutual understanding create a supportive environment that benefits both the team and individual members.

Here are some practical tips to help you:

1. **Share contact information** – Compile and circulate a list of parents' names and contact details to support clear communication.
2. **Invite early engagement** – Send an invitation to parents for a meeting at the start of the season to outline your goals and discuss fundraising ideas.
3. **Align expectations** – Talk with parents about what they—and you—want the marchers to gain from the experience. It is also valuable to discuss this with your team beforehand so their perspectives are included.
4. **Create shared team guidelines** – Develop a set of team rules and expectations for trainings and competitions. Involve marchers by asking each of them to contribute a rule.
5. **Encourage parent involvement** – Invite parents to assist where needed, such as with transport or support roles (e.g., chaperone, manager, treasurer). Be mindful not to place too much responsibility on any one person.
6. **Communicate regularly** – Keep parents informed about team progress, upcoming events, and any important updates throughout the season.
7. **Promote participation** – Encourage parents to attend competitions and public performances to support and engage with the team.

FIRST TRAINING:

Your first training session should be fun, welcoming, and engaging. Avoid starting with highly structured drills such as a pace ladder where marchers repeatedly practice while being corrected on basic faults. For newcomers—and those still deciding if they want to return—this can feel repetitive, overwhelming, and may discourage them from continuing.

There will be plenty of time later to focus on refining technique and correcting basic drill once marchers are more confident and committed.

Instead, focus on creating a positive first experience:

- Incorporate fun, skill-based games that naturally introduce key marching concepts
- Allow time for marchers to get to know each other and build connections
- Encourage a relaxed and supportive atmosphere where everyone feels included

By prioritising enjoyment and team bonding early on, you help build confidence, strengthen relationships, and increase the likelihood that marchers will stay engaged and motivated to improve.

Team Tag – Use a Netball/Basketball Court

- Marking time (walking on the spot)
- Pivoting (turning corners to get away from a tagger)
- Keeping in time with music (have music playing and make a rule that you have to keep in time with the music)
- Regulated paces (make a rule that any curved lines on the court have to be done with shorter paces i.e. moving mark times)

Memory Challenge

- Listening to and following instructions
- Side Paces (March to the tree and side pace around it and March back to Base)
- Marking Time (March to the nearest fence and mark time 6 beats, turn around to face opposite direction by marking time 6 beats and March back to Base)

PLANNING A TRAINING SESSION:

Components of a training session should include:

- **Warm up and Stretches** – (approx. 10 mins) Start each training with 2 games, they are fun and will help develop the simple skills. (Mark time swinging your arms is a quick way to warm up)
- **Simple Skills** - Development of all simple skills, revise all simple skills learned and teach new ones.
- **Complex Skills** – Incorporate simple skills into a Technical Drill Movement. E.g. If a halt mark time 10 is a movement in the Technical Drill Routine, then train this count while training mark times.
- **Training Stations** – Set up different stations around the training area, Mark times, Arm swings, Side Paces
- **Display** – Each Training session should include display as it is only with repetition that your team will be proficient at performing it. Start with a basic display and keep adding to it as your team improves.
- **Warm down and Stretches** – Stretch and Shake it all out (approx. 4 mins) put on warm clothing.
- **Feedback** – Always end your training with positive feedback from you, the coach, and ask for feedback from your marchers as to how they interpreted the training.

IMPORTANT – Children can only remember up to three instructions at one time (Adults up to seven)

- e.g. Halt, Mark time 2, Step out

SIMPLE AND COMPLEX SKILLS:

Simple Skills

A simple skill is a skill that requires only one action

Simple skills should be always be taught first

Simple skills should be performed well to enable the progression to complex skills.

- Marching in time with the music
- Step out
- How to halt
- Pivot
- Side paces
- Moving to attention
- Standing at ease
- Mark Times
- Regulated Pace

Complex Skills:

A Complex skill is a series of simple skills connected together, e.g. a left turn

In a left turn the step out, pacing, pivot and halt would have already been learned.

Therefore, these simple skills have only to be joined together in conjunction with the step out

THE SEQUENCE OF TEACHING A SIMPLE AND COMPLEX SKILL:

- **Model** - Show the marchers the correct picture of the skill you wish them to learn
- **Cues** - Give the marchers clear short coaching cues or counts that they can count while performing each part of the skill
- **Space** – Once the marchers have grasped the skill in its simplest form send them off to practice in their own space
- **Feedback** – Stand where you can watch all the marchers and give them feedback on their performance
- **Team** – Once the marchers seem confident enough place them in a block and perform the skill as a team, reinforcing the coaching cues or counts you have taught them
- **Ranks** – Then work individually in ranks, pairs or groups of differing abilities
- **Reinforcement** – If possible reinforce three times within three days so that the marchers retain learning.

Always give positive feedback and praise the way they have performed the skill, even if they have not quite mastered the skill, they have attempted it and it will get better with praise and positive training.

COMPETITIONS:

Entry: [MNZ Rules of Participation RAC3](#)

Entry forms should be sent to you upon registration of your team, if you don't receive any, then contact your Coaching Co-ordinator or Association Secretary.

Most Associations have a cut-off date of when your entry forms are required, check with your Coaching Co-ordinator for these dates. An electronic copy of your Display music at least 2 weeks prior to the competition to enable them to create the competition draw and check your music is compatible.

Competition Draw:

You should expect to receive the competition draw 7 days prior to the competition date. The draw will tell you what time the competition starts, the reporting time, the format and where your team is placed in the draw.

Reporting Time:

This is usually around 30 minutes prior to the competition start time.

Tip:

Try to arrive at the competition approx. 2 hours before start time, to ensure your marchers have time for a proper warm-up and to allow chaperons time to dress the girls and get them ready for the competition.

REMEMBER, the warmup is just a run through not a training.

JUDGES INTERVIEWS:

MNZ Rules of Participation NZC12

At the conclusion of the competition, Judges sheets will be available and Coach/Judge interviews **may** be held.

Interviews are for clarification on the current competition sheets only, don't compare awards from previous competition dates or judges.

Have a thorough read of each sheet and highlight any areas of concern, if you don't understand a comment you have been given or disagree with an award, first step is to approach your Association Coaching Co-ordinator or Association Chief Judge and see if they can assist you.

Always refer back to the Policy and Operations Manual (Technical) and read the requirements carefully.

Don't get too caught up and think you need to fix everything in a week.

Take the time to correct the basics and then the complex drills and the movement structure will improve with time.

Once you have finished interviewing you can then collect your Master Sheets along with your Team Registration card.

IMPORTANT – DO NOT collect the Master Sheets until you have finished interviewing the Judges, as once you have collected your Master Sheets with the day's results on it, you can no longer interview the judges.

SPORT SAFETY:

Keep Marchers Safe by Ensuring the Following -

- Record the medical history of your marchers
- Warm up, cool down and stretch before and after each session
- Stretch again between drill and display, especially the neck and back muscles.
- If training on concrete switch to soft sole shoes for display
- Eliminate too much repetition of any drill especially jerky display movements
- Use flat safe training grounds
- Train indoor in extreme heat or cold
- Keep moving if cold weather
- Drink plenty of water and keep re-applying sunblock if hot weather
- Eat plenty of healthy snacks
- Shorten training times in Extreme Heat or Cold Temperatures.

There is a **Sport Safe** Module that is available online through Sport New Zealand, there is no cost, you just need to sign up. It takes approximately 30mins.

The link to this module is on our Marching New Zealand Website under Coaching.

<https://www.marching.co.nz/coaching/become-a-coach/>

ADMINISTRATION:

Team Registration: [MNZ Rules of Participation A15-1](#)

Team Registration Links can be obtained from your Association Membership Officer along with a copy of registration cost and any team levies. It is recommended that registration is completed and paid at least two weeks prior to your first competition march.

If you have a marcher that is 12 or older as at 1st October and is wanting to march in the Under 13 Grade, you will need to provide confirmation from their school verifying that they are still in year 8

If you have a marcher that is 17 or older at 1st October and is wanting to march in the Under 18 Grade, you will need to provide confirmation from their school verifying that they are still in year 13

All *new* marchers will need to provide confirmation of age either by Birth Certificate or Passport.

Criminal Conviction Checks: [MNZ Policies](#)

All Team Officials are to be Conviction Checked upon their initial membership registration with Marching New Zealand and renewed every three years of continuous registration.

Should membership lapse, then a Conviction Check would be required immediately upon re registering.

Team Officials are not deemed formally appointed to a position with the Team until a suitable Conviction Check outcome has been received by Association Membership/Privacy Officer.

<https://www.justice.govt.nz/criminal-records>

Protection of Young People: [MNZ Policies](#)

ALL Team Officials **must complete** Sport New Zealand's [Child Safety Management Online Module](#) upon their initial membership registration with Marching New Zealand.

Following three years continuous registration, the Young Person Safety Training must be repeated if members are still Relevant Members.

This is a free online module and takes approximately 30mins. The link to this module is on our Marching New Zealand Website under Coaching.

<https://www.marching.co.nz/coaching/become-a-coach/>

Team Reports: [MNZ Rules of Participation A18-7](#)

Each month you are required to email a team report to your Coaching Co-ordinator with a copy to the Association Secretary. In this report you should outline how your team is progressing, any fundraising you are undertaking and any rising concerns.

Also in your report, you need to ask permission to travel if you are planning an away trip.

These reports are submitted to the Association Committee Meetings, CEO of Marching New Zealand and the Technical Working Party (TWP).

Team Bank Statements: [MNZ Rules of Participation A19-8e](#)

Each Team Treasurer is required to forward a team bank statement to the Association Secretary each month.

This required so the Association can ensure the team is carrying sufficient funds in order to meet its marching commitments.

TEAM OFFICIALS:

A Team Coach: [MNZ Rules of Participation A20-1, A20-2, A20-3, A20-4](#)

Can't be a Team Chaperon and can't hold more than two official titles within a team.

All Coaches must have the approval of an Association and have completed the Coaches Induction Programme before commencing to coach a team.

The Coach is responsible for the training of the team, selects the team, arranges formations and decides where and when the team is to participate.

In order to obtain a membership as a competitive Team Coach, a person must be a holder of the MNZ Level One accreditation within 12 months of registering as a Team Coach.

A Team Chaperon: [MNZ Rules of Participation A20-5, A20-6](#)

Is responsible for the welfare and behaviour of the Team at all times, except when the Team is in the hands of the coach, ensures the team is ready, neatly and correctly dressed when required by the coach.

The Chaperon must take up the required seating position at all phases of a competition, such position **MUST** be maintained by at least one Team Chaperon. If due to some unforeseen circumstances, no Team Chaperon can take up the required seating, then you must appoint another member of Marching NZ (who is at least 20 years of age) and inform the Secretary of the conducting authority as soon as possible.

A Team Manager: [MNZ Rules of Participation A20-7](#)

Is responsible for making all Team travel and accommodation arrangements as required by the coach and will be responsible for organising the Team's fund-raising activities.

TEAM OFFICIALS CONTINUED:

A Team Treasurer: [MNZ Rules of Participation A19-8,A19-9](#)

Is responsible for keeping and maintaining appropriate records and books of accounts, receipt and bank all incoming monies and pay all accounts.

The Treasurer must present a copy of the audited income and expenditure account/balance sheet to their Association by 30 June.

The Audit may be carried out by a person who possesses suitable skills, does not have to be a qualified accountant. This often referred to as a "Review of Accounts" as opposed to an audit.

COMPETITIVE TEAM STRUCTURES:

MNZ Rules of Participation MG1

U13 Grade:

Minimum age 7 or School Year 3

Maximum age 12 or if still attending school, up to and including school year 8 as at, 1 October

One or Two coaches, (one of whom must be no less than 18 and the other not less than 16 years of age)

One or Two chaperons, One Manager and One Treasurer (not less than 20 years of age)

U18 Grade:

Minimum age 12 or School Year 8 as at, 1 October.

Maximum age 17 or School Year 13 as at, 1 October

One or Two coaches, (one of whom must be no less than 18 and the other not less than 16 years of age)

One or Two chaperons, One Manager and One Treasurer (not less than 20 years of age)

Senior Grade:

Minimum age 17 or School Year 13 as at, 1 October.

One or Two coaches, (not less than 18 years of age)

One or Two chaperons, One Manager and One Treasurer (not less than 20 years of age)

Masters Grade:

Minimum age 30

One or Two coaches, (not less than 18 years of age)

One Manager and One Treasurer (not less than 20 years of age)

One or Two chaperons, (not less than 20 years of age)

NON-COMPETITIVE TEAM STRUCTURES:

MNZ Rules of Participation MG2

Introductory:

Minimum age 5 or School Year 1 as at, 1 October

Maximum age 10 or School year 6 as at, 1 October

One or more coaches, (one of whom must be no less than 16 and the other not less than 14 years of age)

One Chaperon (not less than 20 years of age)

One Manager/Treasurer (not less than 20 years of age)

Open Free Choice:

Minimum age 4 as at, 1 October

There is no maximum age.

One or more coaches, (one of whom must be no less than 16 and the other not less than 14 years of age)

At least One Chaperon/ Manager (not less than 20 years of age)

PHASES:

The Technical phase is where teams demonstrate the core skills of marching. This includes set movements such as Quick March, Mark Time, Halts, Turns, and (for some grades) Review & Inspection.

The focus is on:

- Accuracy – performing movements correctly
- Timing – moving together as one unit
- Spacing and alignment – maintaining clean lines and formations
- Consistency – keeping the same standard throughout the performance

This phase is less about creativity and more about showing a strong foundation of technique and discipline.

The Display phase is where teams bring their performance to life through music, movement, and creativity.

The focus is on:

- Presentation and style
- Choreography and variety of movement
- Musical interpretation
- Overall visual impact and engagement

Teams are encouraged to be creative, while still maintaining control and teamwork.

This phase allows teams to express their identity and connect with the audience.

Teams may choose to enter either the Technical Drills section **or** the Display section, **or** both.

TECHNCIAL PHASE:

Competitive Requirements

[Policies & Operations Manual \(Technical\)- Section 1](#)

In the Technical Drills section, your team must perform all the required movements as set out for your grade.

- Under 13, Under 18, and Senior teams must also do Review & Inspection (R&I)
- Teams must have the same number of marchers in both R&I and Q/C/M
- Masters teams do not need to do R&I

Team Numbers

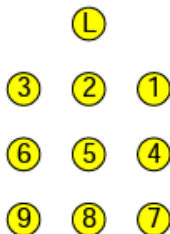
Not less than SEVEN or more than TEN members

Teams with only 7–9 marchers will remain competitive, but their scores will be normalised to a 10-marcher equivalent based on the average points per marcher.

Teams with fewer than 7 or more than 10 marchers in the Drill phases will be deemed non-competitive in that phase.

Placement of marchers

Leader and No's 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 and any rear rank positions No's 7 / 8 / 9 may be filled.



Non-Competitive Requirements:

Introductory

[Policies & Operations Manual \(Technical\)- Section 8](#)

Not less than FOUR or more than TEN members

Leader is optional and does not need to be out front of the team.

Open Free Choice

[Policies & Operations Manual \(Technical\)- Section 14](#)

The emphasis for this grade is recreational participation.

There is no set format.

DISPLAY PHASE:

Competitive Requirements:

[*Policies & Operations Manual \(Technical\)- Section 9*](#)

Time:

U13 – Not less than TWO MINUTES and not more than TWO MINUTES FORTY-FIVE SECONDS

U18 – Not less than TWO MINUTES FORTY-FIVE SECONDS and not more than THREE MINUTES FORTY-FIVE SECONDS

Senior – Not less than THREE MINUTES and not more than THREE MINUTES FORTY-FIVE SECONDS

Masters – Not less than TWO MINUTES FIFTEEN SECONDS and not more than THREE MINUTES FORTY-FIVE SECONDS

Team Numbers:

Under 13, Under 18, Senior & Masters

Not less than SEVEN or more than FOURTEEN members

Display Music:

Teams may use their own choice of music for the Display section. The music can begin with a team name, command, lyrics, or a short introduction of up to 16 beats, and may be instrumental or include lyrics. It must finish with a complete stop, with enough music remaining for the team to march off the field without commands.

All music must be of good quality, submitted as instructed to the Competition Secretary, and coaches must have a backup copy available at every competition.

Non-Competitive Requirements:

Time:

Introductory – Not more than ONE MINUTE THIRTY SECONDS

Team Numbers:

Introductory

Not less than FOUR or more than FOURTEEN members

HELPFUL TIMELINE:

June

- Advertise for new team members
- Coaches to start making a Season Plan

July

- Attend Local Association Annual Meeting
- Muster/Get together Day/First Training
- Coaches to appoint Team Chaperone and Team Manager
- Team Officials (Coaches, Chaperones & Managers) meeting to discuss, fundraising, explore funding opportunities, travel and accommodation needs.

August

- Prepare Team Registration
 - Collect Birth Certificates for New Members
 - Collect School Verification for Members that are bordering on the age requirements
 - Criminal Convictions for all Team Officials
 - Child Protection in Play, Active Recreation and Sport Module for all Team Officials
- Uniform Fittings and Boot Fittings

September

- Competition Entries to Association Secretaries

October

- Online Registration Complete
- Association Opening Days

November

- Local Competitions

December

- Island Championships

January

- NZ Championships Entry to MNZ

February

- Local Competitions
- Last minute preparations for NZ Championships

March

- New Zealand Championships

April and May

- Relax and Recuperation

KEY CONTACTS:

Association Coaching Co-ordinator

Name:

Phone:

Email:

Mentor or Team Buddy

Name:

Phone:

Email:

Association Chief Judge

Name:

Phone:

Email:

Association Secretary

Name:

Phone:

Email:

Association Treasurer

Name:

Phone:

Email:

HELPFUL LINKS:

Marching New Zealand Official Website

<http://www.marching.co.nz/>

Marching New Zealand Official Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/marchingnewzealand/>

Marching New Zealand Official Instagram Page

<https://www.instagram.com/marchingnz/>

Marching New Zealand Rules of Participation

<https://www.marching.co.nz/assets/Uploads/2025-MNZ-Rules-of-Participation.pdf>

Marching New Zealand Policies

<https://www.marching.co.nz/assets/Uploads/2025-MNZ-Policies.pdf>

Marching New Zealand Constitution

<https://www.marching.co.nz/assets/Uploads/2025-MNZ-Constitution-NEW-Signed.pdf>

Policy & Operations Manual (technical)

<https://www.marching.co.nz/reference-library/mnz-policy-and-operations-manual/>

Coaching Resources

<https://marching.sharepoint.com/sites/AllCoaches>
<https://www.marching.co.nz/coaching/coaching-resources/>

Judging Resources

<https://marching.sharepoint.com/sites/AllJudges>
<https://www.marching.co.nz/judging/judging-resources/>