



ENGLISH SCHOOLS' SWIMMING ASSOCIATION

Patron: H.R.H. The Prince of Wales

Secondary Schools' Team Championships

1) **Regulations** (Effective from September 2026)

The Secondary Schools' Team Championships shall take place under Swim England Judicial Regulations and Technical Rules of Swimming as amended by the ESSA Regulations and ESSA Technical Rules of Swimming for these championships as published on the ESSA website (Events | Regulations and Rules).

2) **Eligibility**

- a) Entry is open to all Schools in England.
- b) Competitors must be 'on the roll' of the School entering the Championship and in full-time attendance there on the closing date for the Qualification Round entries.

3) **Transfers**

- a) Pupils that transfer from one school to another between qualification stage and the Championship finals are only eligible to swim for the School for which they were first entered.

4) **Age**

- a) Competitors must only swim in the appropriate age group. Age limits for these events shall be as at midnight August 31st/September 1st at the commencement of the academic year of Championships.
- b) Events shall be organized in three age groups plus a para age group:
 - i) Junior aged 11 years and under 13 years (Normally Y7 & 8)
 - ii) Intermediate aged 13 years and under 15 years (Normally Y9 & 10)
 - iii) Senior aged 15 years and under 18 years (Normally Y11, 12 & 13)
 - iv) Para aged 11 years and under 18 years (Normally Y7-13)
- c) The upper and lower age limits are applicable at every round of the Championships.
- d) Where a school has no sixth form (Y12 & 13) educational provision through the same URN (unique reference number), the Senior team may include swimmers aged 14 years.
 - i) This allows swimmers normally in Year 10 to swim up and be part of the senior age group.
 - ii) A swimmer can only swim in one age group per academic year of the competition.

5) **Control**

- a) The sole control and management of the Championship Finals will be in the hands of the ESSA Council.
- b) Arrangements for the qualification stage of the Championships will be in the hands of the ESSA Divisions.
- c) The organiser of each qualification gala may impose additional conditions to ensure the safety and smooth running of the gala, and support for fair selection of entries to the Championship Finals.
- d) In the qualification stages, schools will have at least two weeks' notice of the date, time and venue.

6) **Entries**

- a) Entries should normally be made through the ESSA Division in which the school is located
 - i) Entries shall be made on the official entry form, which will be obtained from, and returned to the representative of the Division in which gala the school is participating.
 - ii) It is the responsibility of the school organiser to ensure that the Headteacher is aware of the swimmer's participation.
 - iii) An ESSA Division may accept entries from out of area schools and 'B teams' at their sole discretion.
- b) School entries shall be limited to the following team(s) per age group from each school for Freestyle Team and/or Medley Team:
 - i) single gender – comprising four swimmers of the same gender (i.e. a Female Team of 4 Female swimmers and/or an Open/Male team of 4 Open/Male swimmers)

OR

 - ii) mixed gender team comprising two Female swimmers and two Open/Male swimmers
 - iii) A school is not permitted to enter a mixed gender team in the same age group as that in which it has entered a single gender team. It may enter a mixed gender team in one age group while entering a single gender team in another.
- c) Entries for the para events are based on two categories:
 - i) Category 1 – The sum of the classifications for the stroke swum does not exceed 37.
 - ii) Category 2 – The sum of the classifications for the stroke swum is between 38 and 56.

- d) Each Division may put forward up to two Para Freestyle teams and/or two Para Medley teams covering both categories.
 - i) Para teams comprise four swimmers made up of any combination of genders.
 - ii) Each para athlete must have a classification for the stroke that they are swimming.
 - iii) Para teams can only enter through the ESSA Divisional Representative.
- e) Multiple entries in the same event may be made by a school in the qualification round, subject to any constraints set by the gala organiser.
 - i) The school must nominate an 'A Team' at entry, this team is the only team in this event that will be considered for selection to the National Finals.
 - ii) No other team that has been entered by the school in that event will be considered if the nominated 'A Team' is disqualified or otherwise does not qualify for the finals.
 - iii) The school must submit the nominated 'A Team' list prior to the start of the competition.
- f) Each competing team in the national final will be charged a fee per team swim to compete in the national finals in addition to the fee that was collected during the qualification round.

7) Team Lists

- a) At each gala a team nomination form shall be submitted to the Organiser by a representative of the School. The form shall include:
 - i) the names and dates of birth of all swimmers representing the school, and
 - ii) a statement certifying conformity with these conditions.
- b) Substitution of reserves is permitted between heats and finals in the championship finals. The names and dates of birth must be included in the relevant form in 7)a) above.
- c) Changes of swimmers in a team is permitted between the Qualification round and the Championship finals.
- d) Competitors may swim in both the freestyle and medley relays.
- e) Competitors may swim in any order, provided the strokes of the medley relay are swum in the correct order

8) Conduct of the Championships

a) Notification

- i) Entries for the championship national finals shall be submitted by ESSA Divisions before the deadline set by the championships organiser, typically the end of the first weekend in October.
 - (1) Entries shall include a full set of results, including disqualifications, for qualification galas held by the ESSA Division.
 - (2) Times submitted should be recorded to one hundredth of a second on the official form for each school.
 - (3) Where Divisions organise heats and finals for their rounds, only the heat times are to be submitted.
 - (4) The School details including contact details (e.g. address, telephone number(s) and email address(es) must accompany divisional entries.

b) Pool Length

- i) Qualifying round galas shall be swum 25 metres/length, and with each swimmer completing 2 lengths.
- ii) National Finals' length of the course will vary according to the venue; the following distances will be swum:
 - (1) 50metres – each swimmer will swim 1 length;
 - (2) 25 metres – each swimmer will swim 2 lengths;.

c) National Finalists

- i) The National Organiser will select the fastest teams across the divisions, based only on entries submitted by the divisional representatives on the official form, to swim in the National Finals:
 - (1) For single gender events, not less than 12 teams.
 - (2) For mixed gender events, not less than the number of lanes available in the venue pool.
 - (3) For para events, up to a maximum of 16 teams (two teams per division).
- ii) The number of teams invited to swim in the National Finals may be limited to ensure the safety and efficiency of the championship competition.
- iii) Additional teams can be selected to fill vacant lanes at the discretion of the National Organiser.
- iv) The Divisional Representatives will notify all finalists direct. All other schools may obtain results from their Divisional Representative or the ESSA website.
- v) A requirement of qualifying to compete in the National Finals is the return of the acceptance form not later than the date specified on the ESSA website. After this date reserve teams may be invited.

- d) Protests and Appeals**
 - i) Protests and Appeals must follow the ESSA Protests and Appeals Protocol as published on the ESSA website (Events | Regulations and Rules)
 - ii) Should a school wish to appeal a disqualification they must lodge the protest on the correct form and with the fee of £100 within 30 minutes of the completion of the relevant event.
- e) Code of Conduct**
 - i) All participants (swimmers, parents, school/team staff, officials, organisers) are expected to abide by the code of conduct as published on the ESSA website (About Us | Welfare Policy)
- f) Parade**
 - i) Each Team should nominate a Team Captain who will take part in the Team Captains' parade at the commencement of the Championships
- 9) Awards**
 - a) National Final of the Championships:
 - i) Teams placed 1st, 2nd and 3rd :
 - (1) Each member of these teams will be awarded a Championship medal.
 - (2) Schools will be awarded a commemorative plaque to be held permanently.
 - ii) Challenge trophies will be awarded to the winning school in each event.
 - iii) The Presidents' Award will be given to the highest placed state-funded school in each event,
 - (1) Each member of these teams will be awarded a medal.
 - (2) The School will be awarded a commemorative plaque to be held permanently.
 - (3) ESSA use the definition of a state school being 'a school who receive the majority of its funding through their local authority or directly from the government'.
 - iv) At the conclusion of the National Finals the Lis Hartley Memorial Trophy will be presented at the discretion of the National Organiser
 - b) Qualifying stages:
 - i) Awards at galas during the qualifying stages is at the sole discretion of the organiser of that gala.
- 10) Expenses**
 - i) Each competing school will be responsible for its own expenses.
- 11) Responsibility**
 - a) At least one qualified school teacher, or suitable adult as approved by the Head of the School, must accompany each team at each stage of the competition.
 - i) The accompanying adult(s) shall act as Team Managers and be responsible for the welfare of their team
 - ii) Sufficient Team Managers shall be provided by the school to cover the welfare needs of the teams, bearing in mind that larger school entries (e.g. comprising six teams) may be located off-poolside.
 - iii) The number of Team Managers for each school may be limited; consideration for a safe ratio of Team Managers to swimmers will be accommodated, taking into account the venue layout.
 - b) Adults accompanying a team may be required to complete an accreditation process as directed by the organiser.
- 12) Photography/Video**
 - a) An official photographer may be used during Championship events; selected photographs will be made available for purchase from a password protected website and may be used for promotional purposes.
 - b) Championship events may be videoed; images will be streamed live to the internet and made available for later playback. Access is not password protected.
 - c) Schools must ensure that phones and other devices capable of photography/video are not used in the changing rooms AT ANY TIME.
 - d) Schools must make sure that parents of swimmers are made aware and any safeguarding or privacy issues raised with the organisers and/or the ESSA welfare officer as required on the entry details for each gala.
 - e) Any child welfare/protection issues that arise subsequent to the gala should be raised to the attention of the ESSA welfare officer at the earliest opportunity.