

SATURDAY 21st NOVEMBER 2026

68th SECONDARY SCHOOLS' CHAMPIONSHIPS

SANDWELL AQUATICS CENTRE, BIRMINGHAM

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Introduction

Congratulations and Welcome to the English Schools' Swimming Association, Secondary Teams Championships for 2026 held in Birmingham at the Sandwell Aquatics Centre.

This handbook contains the information you need in the build-up, during and after the championships. We look forward to a fantastic competition and are glad that you will be able to be a part of the event.

Communication with schools

The e-mail address that schools provide us in your online form to agree to take part in the competition with the only e-mail we use to share information. While we try to limit the number of generic e-mails we send out there are key messages we must share in a timely manner so please ensure you check this e-mail address regularly. We will also post information about this competition on the ESSA website on the Secondary Championships page. Please ensure you also check the website regularly for updates.

https://www.essa-schoolswimming.com/events/secondary-team-championships

To communicate with the ESSA event management team please use the e-mail: secondary@essa-mail.uk

For all safeguarding and welfare concerns please use safeguarding@essa-mail.uk

The safeguarding lead for this event is Nicola Atherton.

Venue

We are thrilled to announce that the National Secondary Teams Championships Finals, will be hosted at the state-of-the-art Sandwell Aquatics Centre in Birmingham. Following its successful role as the venue for the 2022 Commonwealth Games. The centre has been proven to be a world-class facility and continues to hold high level events.

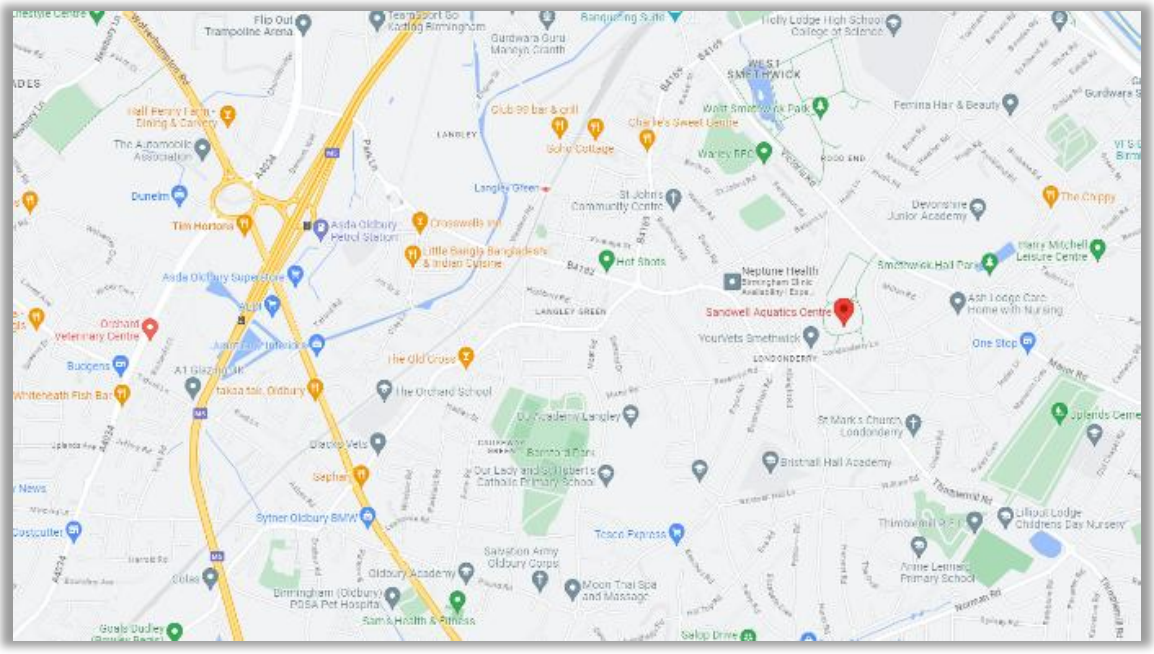








Address:
Sandwell Aquatics Centre, Londonderry Lane, Smethwick, West Midlands B67 7EW
What-Three-Words **(W3W):**///ocean.rise.tiger



Before The Event

Event web page

https://www.essa-schoolswimming.com/events/secondary-team-championships

Finalists/Qualifiers – Acceptance & Withdrawals:

Schools should have completed the registration form by Friday 6th November 2026 – after this, reserves will be invited, and your place may no longer be available. The finalists' pack is available for download from the Secondary Teams Webpage

There are a number of different forms that relate to the competition:

- The **Acceptance form** is an online form for acceptance or withdrawals .
  - As soon as you fill this in and click 'submit', the details are sent electronically to us confirming your decision to accept or reject your place.
- The **Accreditation form** is an online form for Team managers/Adults accompanying the team who will have access to the poolside– this needs to be filled in for each adult.
  - The form needs to be completed for permitted adults that form part of your team delegation i.e., that will be with the swimmers in the competition area.
  - Without completing the form adults **will not receive a pass and security will prevent them entering** the swimmer areas (balcony seating or poolside).
- The **Swimmer Nomination Form** is an online form which needs to be completed with swimmer details by Thursday 12th November at the latest. It can be updated at any time up to the start of the competition.

National Final Entry Fee

Please note that due to rising costs, an entry fee for each team has been introduced. This is £25 per team swim and can be paid online via Stripe or by BACS. An invoice will be sent to all participating schools to make this payment. Please contact invoice@essa-mail.uk if you have any queries on the invoice.

BACS information:
Name: English Schools Swimming Association
Bank : Barclays (Southwark)
Sort Code: 20-80-57
Account: 23491161
Ref: STE + school name.

Stripe payment link:

Please advise Tim Hartley (see contact details at the end of this handbook) if you know you are going to withdraw a team after completing the online registration.

Event Planning

A risk assessment created by our welfare team you will find on the Secondary Team Championships event page of the ESSA website. This has been created to aid you with your own school risk assessment procedures and does not cover the entirety of your risk assessment. All schools are responsible for their own risk assessment and should follow your own procedures for your local authority/academy group.

Please ensure you check the website regularly in the lead up to the national finals, including the morning of the championships before setting off, as details can change. You should ensure you look at the water familiarisation timetable. Please also follow our social media where last-minute updates may also be posted.

Hotels

(Click the map on the bottom of page two for hotel locations)

Holiday Inn Express Birmingham - Oldbury, an IHG Hotel
Birchley Park Ave, Birmingham, Oldbury B69 2BD

Ramada by Wyndham Oldbury Birmingham
963 Wolverhampton Rd, Oldbury B69 4RJ

Travelodge Birmingham Oldbury
Wolverhampton Rd, Oldbury B69 2BH

Mercure Birmingham West Hotel
Birmingham Rd, West Bromwich B70 6RS

Premier Inn West Bromwich Town Centre (New Square) hotel
Congregation Way, West Bromwich B70 7PU

ibis Styles Birmingham Oldbury
999 Wolverhampton Rd, Oldbury B69 4RJ

Travel to Birmingham

Schools are strongly advised to travel to and from Birmingham by public transport where possible. To aid travel, we recommend you use the Transport for West Midlands Journey Planner. The closest major train station is Birmingham New Street which has onward connections to local stations, these have connections via bus to the Aquatics Centre. Another station with direct trains to and from London as well as major cities in the north is Sandwell and Dudley. This station is quieter with a large car park outside the station suitable for coaches to wait to collect teams. A taxi rank is also available outside the main entrance. See also the details for parking on the day and plan accordingly.

Video/Photography

A live stream video of the championships will made available for general access via the internet and that an official photographer will be attending the event. See event webpage the links.
If any participant has any concerns, or does not wish to be shown please advise safeguarding@essa-mail.uk. Participating schools will be required to make a declaration as part of the entry process. If we do not receive any information we will assume that you are ok to be filmed and photographed.

Digital and physical photographs can be pre-ordered (Link to be provided in update of this handbook) via our professional photographer. Prints of their team picture will be shipped directly to the school's address, any school that places an order will receive the digital file of their team picture for free via email.

Merchandise

Pre-event personalised event hoodies and T-Shirts. are available to pre order. T-shirts can be personalised with swimmers' names and even a school logo and hoodies can be personalised with swimmers' names. Please see the merchandise page for more details including a size guide. https://www.essa-schoolswimming.com/about/merchandise

Please note there is a deadline for personalised good this is 5.00.pm Monday 9th November 2026.
Standard event t-shirts, hoodies, towels, and Swimming hats may be available for purchase at the event subject to availability (limited supply – 1st-come, 1st-served). Payment can be made in cash or by card (credit or debit).

















Pre-Order Merchandise only





This colour hoody is only available pre-order you will not be able to purchase this on the day.

Accreditation

All volunteers, team managers, coaches and officials need to register for accreditation.

Click HERE for the link for Accreditation

ALL ADULTS accompanying the team poolside need to complete this process. A maximum of 2 passes per school will be awarded. However, if your school have more than 4 teams qualify this can increased so please do get in touch.
Accreditation will require you to:

- Provide a passport style photo.
- Provide your DBS number and date of issue.
- Provide a photo of your school photo ID or an authorisation letter from the head teacher:
  - stating you are a teacher at the school or
  - stating they have authorisation to supervise the swimmers on the school's behalf [in the case of a non-staff member (e.g., a parent/club coach)]
- provide evidence to confirm that safeguarding training has been undertaken within the last 3 years.
- Acceptable evidence includes a photocopy/screenshot of a suitable training certificate or an email from the school confirming the adult has conducted such training.

If you have any problems, please contact accreditation@essa-mail.uk stating your role and school.

Once you have successfully completed your application you will receive an e-mail shortly after stating if it had been successful. Please note this is not immediate and needs to be released by one of our volunteers once you have passed the checked. If you do not receive this e-mail, please get in touch as this does mean there is a problem with your application

Without completing the form adults will not receive a pass and security will prevent them entering the swimmer areas (changing rooms / swimmer balcony seating / poolside).

Spectators

To help with an efficient entry into the venue, spectator tickets will need to be booked and paid for in advance online. The cost for entry is £12.50 (including service charge and all fees).

Tickets are sold on a first come first served basis, any tickets not sold will be available to purchase on the door at £15.00.

Spectators will be required to show their tickets to be scanned which will be sent to their email upon entry to the spectator balcony.

You can either print off the ticket or show the QR code on the e-mail on your device as you enter. To ensure an efficient entry process please have the QR codes ready.

When you arrive at the venue please follow the spectator signs to the balcony doors.

Please note bag searches may be made to enter the venue by the security staff. These are contracted by the venue for everyone's security.

The link to purchase spectator tickets is below:

https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/secondary-teams-championships-2026-tickets-2000814059713

Day Of The Event

ARRIVAL

Travel By Public Transport

Schools are strongly advised to travel to and from the pool by public transport where possible.

Car, Coach & Minibus Parking

Due to new venue rules, parking is unavailable at the Sandwell Aquatics Centre for schools or spectators. Parking is available a 20-minute walk away at the Harry Mitchell Sandwell site (Harry Mitchell Park, Coopers Ln, Smethwick B67 6AW) as well as surrounding roads.

Schools will be able to drop off teams in the drop off area before moving on to find parking.

Designated disabled parking bays are located at the front of the building alongside the drop of area. Please ensure you have a valid disabled badge on display when parking in one of our designated disabled and accessible parking spaces.

Accessing the Sandwell Aquatics Centre

Entrance to the competition for competitors and spectators is via the main entrance at the front of the building (see the site plan at the end of this handbook).
Spectator tickets will be checked at the entrance to the balcony which is situated on the left side as you walk into the entrance foyer.

Security

Please expect security to perform bags searches at the entrance. This applies to everyone including Competitors, Spectators and Officials/helpers.

Registration

The team manager should register at the desk in the sports hall on the 1st floor of the aquatics centre. They should collect their athlete passes as well as staff accreditation at this point. Event accreditation must always be visible.

Accreditation

Upon arrival at the venue, all volunteers and officials will be issued with accreditation that must be visible at all times when at the event.

Changing Facilities

Changing rooms are situated on the pool level of the building. To access the changing room, you will go through the open barriers at the side of the reception desk, down the stairs and turn left.

Due to the Aquatics Centres learn to swim programme, the changing village will be open to members of the public therefore we advise no schools to use this mixed area as it is outside the security controlled secure area. Changing for schools attending the event is a secure area of the changing village, this is situated at the back right had corner (Red area on the map). **Only the swimmers with passes and adults with accreditation will be able to gain access to this area.**

There are lockable lockers within these changing facilities. The lockers operate on insertion of a returnable £1 coin. Please note that as in many public buildings absolute security of the lockers cannot be guaranteed. **NO LARGE BAGS ARE ALLOWED ON POOLSIDE**.

Access to Poolside

Access to the field of play will be via the secure changing area. Everyone will be required to show their photo accreditation in order to gain access onto the poolside.

Volunteers/Officials

See separate officials' handbook for reporting details. Please report poolside at the desk near the start end.

Teams

Teams may sit around the side of the competition pool, diving pool deck and also in the upstairs sports halls. There is no allocated area and we ask that schools are courteous towards each other.

Schools that have teams in more than one age group will be asked to use the sports hall area as this will allow us more room poolside. All teams in the sports hall will be able to both see and hear what is happening with live stream displays and speaker systems. All teams in the sports hall must wear footwear when using the stairs to access poolside/sports hall. A section of the sports hall will also be left for land warm up. The staircase is inside the secure area, but accreditation must still be visible.

Teams who have qualified for the mixed team straight finals, must sit in the sports hall (on the 1st floor) and not around the side of the pool. Schools who have multiple teams qualified will also be asked to sit in the sports hall area and will be offered extra passes to ensure safeguarding of the teams.

At no time are swimmers allowed in the open public balconies for their safety.

General H&S

Volunteers, spectators, competitors and team staff are asked to be extra vigilant and take care not to leave the belongings unattended. Any concerns should be reported to event, venue or security staff. We are committed to working in a safe environment where everyone has a duty to look after themselves and each other. If you see something you consider to be a risk, don't ignore it but report it.

Wellbeing & First Aid

If you find that you become unwell during the event, please ensure you report it immediately to a member of the event staff. First aiders will be on hand to deal with any situation if it were to arise. All concerns and incidents should be reported to safeguarding@essa-mail.uk after seeking appropriate 1st aid.

Hospital

Accident & Emergency Department (2.3m)
City Hospital Dudley Road Dudley Road Birmingham West Midlands B18 7QH - 0121 554 3801

Food

There is café located at the Sandwell Aquatics Centre which will provide a range of refreshments. Swimmers and Coaches may bring food in their bags but should not be eat on poolside.

Event Timings

09:30 – 12:40 Pool Familiarisation

We have a water familiarisation session rather than a conventional warm up. This gives all teams the opportunity of a time to work with space in the pool to use as they wish this does include relay take overs. We will arrange the timetable for this when you have notified us of your anticipated arrival time at Sandwell; it is not possible to give everyone late times so these will be allocated to teams travelling from a distance on the Saturday.

12:55 Opening Ceremony

13:00 – 17:00 Competition Events (Start - Estimated Finish)

Program

The competition is 50m long and all races will be 4x50m [4x1 lengths].

Junior Girls 4x50m Freestyle	Heats	Junior Girls 4x50m Medley	Heats
Junior Boys 4x50m Medley	Heats	Junior Boys 4x50m Freestyle	Heats
Senior Girls 4x50m Freestyle	Heats	Senior Girls 4x50m Medley	Heats
Senior Boys 4x50m Medley	Heats	Senior Boys 4x50m Freestyle	Heats
Inter. Girls 4x50m Freestyle	Heats	Inter. Girls 4x50m Medley	Heats
Inter. Boys 4x50m Medley	Heats	Inter. Boys 4x50m Freestyle	Heats
Para Girls 4x50m Freestyle	Heats	Para Girls 4x50m Medley	Heats
Para Boys 4x50m Medley	Heats	Para Boys 4x50m Freestyle	Heats
Junior Girls 4x50m Freestyle	**Final**	Junior Girls 4x50m Medley	**Final**
Junior Boys 4x50m Medley	**Final**	Junior Boys 4x50m Freestyle	**Final**
Junior Mixed 4x50m Freestyle	**Final**	Junior Mixed 4x50m Medley	**Final**
Senior Girls 4x50m Freestyle	**Final**	Senior Girls 4x50m Medley	**Final**
Senior Boys 4x50m Medley	**Final**	Senior Boys 4x50m Freestyle	**Final**
Senior Mixed 4x50m Medley	**Final**	Senior Mixed 4x50m Freestyle	**Final**
Inter. Girls 4x50m Freestyle	**Final**	Inter. Girls 4x50m Medley	**Final**
Inter. Boys 4x50m Medley	**Final**	Inter. Boys 4x50m Freestyle	**Final**
Inter. Mixed 4x50m Freestyle	**Final**	Inter. Mixed 4x50m Medley	**Final**

Marshalling

The location of Marshalling of teams for each race will be the large room below the spectator balcony. There is a one-way system in operation. They enter by the diving pool and exit onto the competition pool and walk directly to the blocks. . Schools will need to ensure that their swimmers are available ‘race ready’ for marshalling in good time, but not so early as to cause congestion.

Start Lists and Live Results

These are expected to be available from 11am on Saturday 21st November on the following link https://www.essa-schoolswimming.com/events/live-event-information.

LIVE EVENT INFORMATION

– Including Start Lists & Live Results, Streaming and Photography

After The Gala

Rubbish

Please tidy up the area around where your team have been based.

Feedback

We try hard to run this event efficiently and fairly, but there are always lessons to be learned. Please keep an eye out for a feedback form which will be circulated via email in the coming days after the event.

Volunteers/Officials

We rely heavily on volunteers to make this event run, many of these have no direct association with a school and give up their own time to help. Please take a little time to let them know you appreciate it.

Contacts

Role	Name	E-mail	Phone
Event Organiser	Tim Hartley	secondary@essa-mail.uk	+356 7903 0390 best via WhatsApp
Event Director	Stewart Nicklin	s.nicklin@essa-mail.uk	
Merchandise	Paul Simpson	orders@essa-mail.uk	
Safeguarding	Nicola Atherton	safeguarding@essa-mail.uk	
Technical Director	Andy Rigg	a.rigg@essa-mail.uk	
Website/results	Phil Williams	webmaster@essa-mail.uk	

DO YOU HAVE A WELFARE CONCERN? PLEASE CONTACT OUR WELFARE OFFICER

welfare@essa-mail.uk

999

Call 999 for the emergency services, if a child or adult is in immediate danger.

If you have any concerns for the safety of an adult or child please go direct to your welfare officer in the first instance.
If you have a concern that an adult or child may be at risk of harm, or being harmed, you should refer this to the Swim England Safeguarding Team on **01509 640 700**, **safeguarding@swimming.org** or by using the **online referral forms.**

ACCREDIT Solutions

SOS GROUP

Delfina

Swim England Affiliated Organisation


EXIT
Dive Showers
Diving Pool
21m x 25m
CALL ROOM
Balustrade
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
START END
TURN END
Pool Pod
Corridor
Private
Chaning
Area
Pool Change
NO
ENTRY
Studio Pool
20m x 10m
OFFICIALS
BRIEFING ROOM
SPECTATORS
MERCHANDISE
REGISTRATION
Fast Track Kiosks
Queuing Barrier
< ENTRANCE >
FOOD
VENDOR
Post Turnstile
Circulation
Reception
KEY:
Poolside Access
Spectators Access

Swim England
Affiliated Organisation

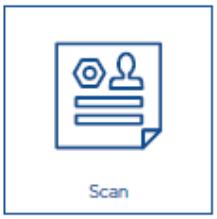
Office problems?

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