

**2025 (V2)**

# **SECONDARY TEAMS CHAMPIONSHIP HANDBOOK**

**SANDWELL AQUATICS CENTRE**

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## Introduction

Congratulations and Welcome to the English Schools' Swimming Association, Secondary Teams Championships for 2025 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.

## Welcome



Dear Athletes, Team Managers & Volunteers,

This is the 67<sup>th</sup> year of this incredible event, a true highlight in the calendar for secondary school sport across the nation. Whether you're a returning participant or here for the first time, you're part of a proud tradition of teamwork, determination, and school spirit. Sandwell Aquatic Centre has been used many times for English Schools Swimming Association events and we're all incredibly grateful for the support of the Council of Sandwell for continuing to support ESSA with these events. I know the Secondary Schools Team Championships competition will be an incredible success and I'd like to wish each swimmer the very best of luck for their races.

To the ESSA Council, our dedicated officials, hardworking volunteers, teachers and supportive parents – thank you. Your commitment to nurturing young athletes and building positive sporting experiences is what makes events like this possible. Thank you to all our officials, teachers and coaches but, if I may, an enormous thank you to the Divisional Representatives for organising all the regional competitions ahead of today's Finals as well as the ESSA Championship organising committee for their incredible dedication with making the Finals such a special event for every swimmer to compete in.

To the competitors: this is to be your day. Swim with heart, support your teammates, and enjoy every moment of it. You are the reason we are all here.

May this event ignite lifelong memories and inspire futures filled with possibility.

**Shaun Camden**

President English Schools' Swimming Association

## Venue

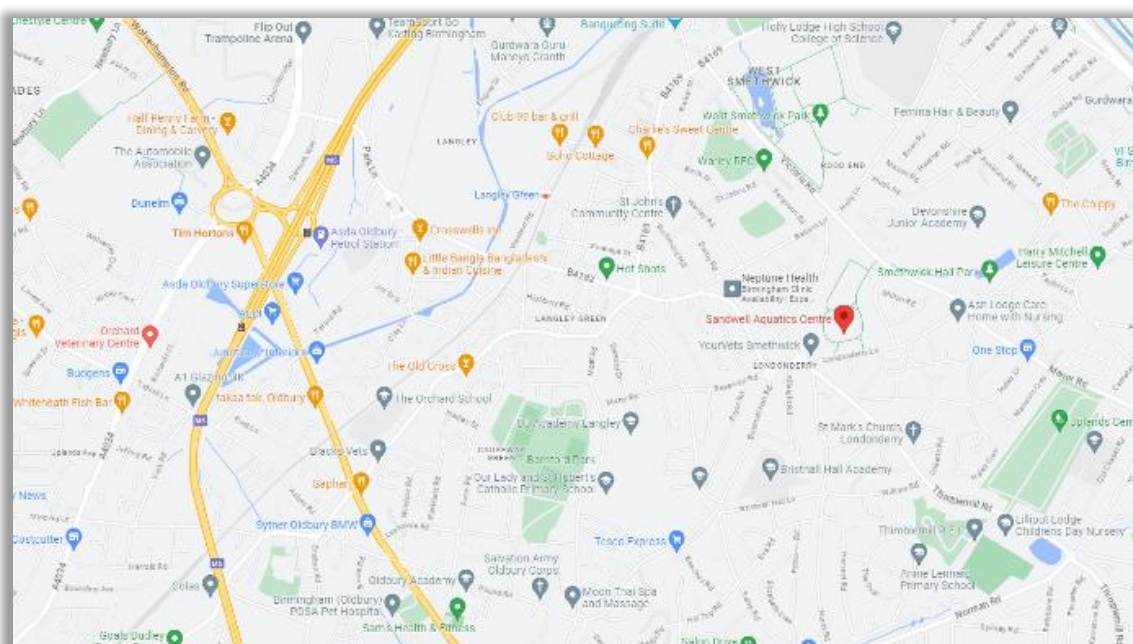
We are thrilled to announce that the National Secondary Teams Championships Finals, will be hosted at the state-of-the-art Sandwell Aquatics Centre in Birmingham. Following its successful role as the venue for the 2022 Commonwealth Games. The centre has been proven to be a world-class facility, providing top-notch amenities and cutting-edge infrastructure for athletes and spectators alike.



### Address:

Sandwell Aquatics Centre, Londonderry Lane, Smethwick, West Midlands B67 7EW

What-Three-Words (W3W): [///ocean.rise.tiger](https://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 8<sup>th</sup> November 2025**– 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 – 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 balcony seating area or poolside.
  - 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 13th November at the latest. It can be updated at any time up to the start of the competition.

Additionally, there is a [merchandise order form](#) that can be downloaded from the ESSA website for personalised t-shirts, personalised hoodies swimming hats and other accessories that include your school logo should you wish.

Please note that due to rising costs, an entry fee for each team has been introduced. This is £25 per event (heat) and can be paid online via Stripe or by BACS.

#### **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 be made available for general access via the internet and that an official photographer will be attending the event. See event webpage the links.

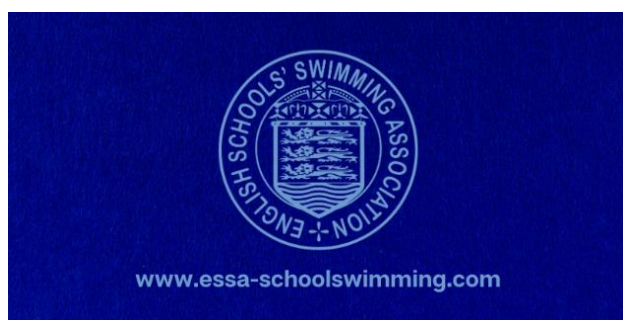
If any participant has any concerns, or does not wish to be shown please advise [welfare@essa-mail.uk](mailto:welfare@essa-mail.uk). Participating schools will be required to make a declaration as part of the entry process. If we do not receive any information we will assume that you are ok to be filmed 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**

Personalised event hoodies and T-Shirts. are available to pre order please check the web site for details. <https://www.essa-schoolswimming.com/about/merchandise>

Standard event t-shirts, hoodies, towels, and Swimming hats may be available for purchase at the event subject to availability (limited supply – 1<sup>st</sup>-come, 1<sup>st</sup>-served). Payment can be made in cash or by card (credit or debit).







## Accreditation

All volunteers, team managers, coaches and officials need to register for accreditation. If you have not been provided with a link to register, please contact [accreditation@essa-mail.uk](mailto:accreditation@essa-mail.uk) stating your role and affiliation.

**ALL ADULTS** accompanying the team poolside need to complete the [online form](#). i.e., any adult that will be with the swimmers in the swimmer seating area or poolside – it is not required for adults in the spectator balcony. A maximum of 2 passes per school will be awarded. However, if your school have more than 1 team 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.

**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 which will be sent to their email upon entry to the spectator balcony



## TICKET Sales

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

Please ensure you have either printed off your tickets or have the QR codes on your phones/devices ready to show at the door to ensure a smooth and easy entry process.

Please note bag searches may be made to enter the venue by the security staff. These are contracted by the venue and not ESSA.

## 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 off 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 bag 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 1<sup>st</sup> floor of the aquatics centre. They should collect their athlete passes and hand in their team nomination form. Team managers/Coaches can also collect their event accreditation here. This must be visible at all times.

#### 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 hand 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 [welfare@essa-mail.uk](mailto:welfare@essa-mail.uk) after seeking appropriate 1st aid.

## Hospital

### Accident & Emergency Department (2.3m)

City Hospital 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	<b>Final</b>	Junior Girls 4x50m Medley	<b>Final</b>
Junior Boys 4x50m Medley	<b>Final</b>	Junior Boys 4x50m Freestyle	<b>Final</b>
Junior Mixed 4x50m Freestyle	<b>Final</b>	Junior Mixed 4x50m Medley	<b>Final</b>
Senior Girls 4x50m Freestyle	<b>Final</b>	Senior Girls 4x50m Medley	<b>Final</b>
Senior Boys 4x50m Medley	<b>Final</b>	Senior Boys 4x50m Freestyle	<b>Final</b>
Senior Mixed 4x50m Medley	<b>Final</b>	Senior Mixed 4x50m Freestyle	<b>Final</b>
Inter. Girls 4x50m Freestyle	<b>Final</b>	Inter. Girls 4x50m Medley	<b>Final</b>
Inter. Boys 4x50m Medley	<b>Final</b>	Inter. Boys 4x50m Freestyle	<b>Final</b>
Inter. Mixed 4x50m Freestyle	<b>Final</b>	Inter. Mixed 4x50m Medley	<b>Final</b>

### 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 Sat 15<sup>th</sup> Nov at <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	<a href="mailto:secondary@essa-mail.uk">secondary@essa-mail.uk</a>	07932 717641
Event Manager	Stewart Nicklin	<a href="mailto:s.nicklin@essa-mail.uk">s.nicklin@essa-mail.uk</a>	
Merchandise	Paul Simpson	<a href="mailto:orders@essa-mail.uk">orders@essa-mail.uk</a>	
Welfare		<a href="mailto:welfare@essa-mail.uk">welfare@essa-mail.uk</a>	
Technical Director	Andy Rigg	<a href="mailto:a.rigg@essa-mail.uk">a.rigg@essa-mail.uk</a>	
Website/results	Phil Williams	<a href="mailto:webmaster@essa-mail.uk">webmaster@essa-mail.uk</a>	



**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](mailto:safeguarding@swimming.org) or by using the **online referral forms**.

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**KEY:**  
 Poolside Access → (Blue arrow)  
 Spectators Access → (Red arrow)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

START END

TURN END

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Private Changing Area

NO ENTRY

Studio Pool 29m x 10m

MERCHANDISE REGISTRATION

FOOD VENDOR

< ENTRANCE >



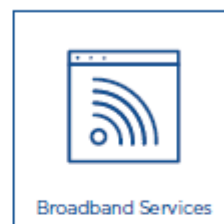
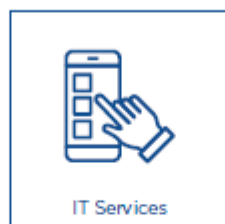
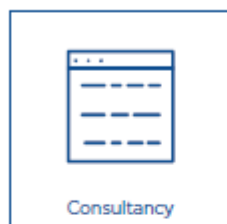
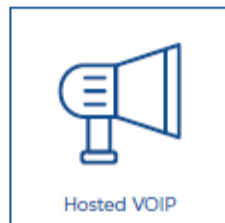
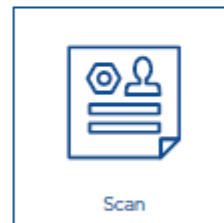
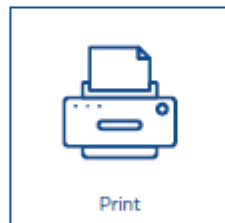
# Swim England

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## Office problems?

At SOS Group we have the knowledge to iron out the niggles and help make you and your business as productive as it can be.

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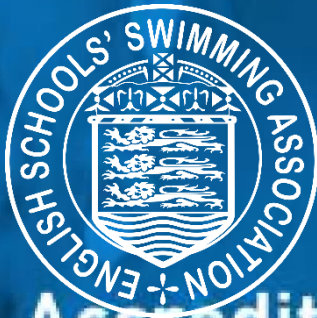


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**IS YOUR OFFICE A SMART OFFICE?**

**E** [info@sosgroup-ltd.co.uk](mailto:info@sosgroup-ltd.co.uk) | **T** 0345 230 8080 | **W** [www.sosgroup-ltd.co.uk](http://www.sosgroup-ltd.co.uk)

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