



Frequently Asked Questions

All parents of swimmers will have a host of questions when their child joins the club. Below are some of the most frequently asked questions and answers to them. If you have any other questions that you would like to see the answers to please contact a member of the committee.

Equipment - Training

What will I need?

The following are essential items of kit for **training**:

- Swimming costume - for training (not tech suits)
- CSC Swimming hat
- Goggles
- Drinks bottle - large
- Towel
- Short blade training fins (short flippers)
- Kick board
- Pull buoy

There are additional items, which may be required for more advanced training, your lane coach will advise if these would be of benefit:

- Hand/finger paddles
- Snorkels

A mesh bag to keep the equipment in is also a good investment as it allows it to dry after each session and stops it going mouldy.

Please note that it is expected that club kit, i.e. costumes, hats, tee-shirts and track suit tops is worn by ALL swimmers when competing at any swimming or other event where they are representing the club.

Where can I buy equipment?

Most of these items, plus club kit for competitions e.g. poolside t-shirts, hoodies etc. can be purchased from the club shop which is located at Leisure World just outside the double doors to the pool. It is open most evenings during training and run by parent volunteers.

Competition Questions

Entering a Gala

Where can I find out about galas I can enter?

Details of forthcoming galas and entry forms are sent out to all parents via emails from the Head Coach. They are also listed on the club website. In addition all events are published on a parent/swimmer calendar on the fixtures page on the website:

<http://www.colchesterswimming.com/calendar.shtml>

To make maximum use of the calendar, parents/swimmers can import it into other electronic calendars such as iCal and Outlook etc. if not using Google Calendar itself.

What do I do with Gala Entry Forms?

All the information requested on the entry form should be completed. This will include the swimmer's: name, DOB, age, ASA membership number (searchable on the British Swimming website if you've lost your child's ASA card) and PBs. Times used on entry forms should have been achieved at a licensed meet. If you don't have a time from a licensed meet for an event you wish to enter (perhaps because you've never done it before), your Head Coach can advise you on an entry time. Those entering have to wait and see whether their entries are accepted or rejected. Lists of accepted and rejected entries are sent out by email from the Head Coach

We ask you to add £2 to the total cost of the events entered at each meet. This money goes towards paying the coaching staff who will be attending the meet to support and encourage your child.

Ideally parents should keep a record of all the races entered in each meet as it is very easy to forget what events have been entered. **Tip: Use your mobile to take a photo of the form before you submit it.**

Once the entry form has been completed, please place it with a cheque made payable to Colchester Swimming Club, into the grey post box outside double doors to the pool at Leisure World. If your entry arrives after the internal closing date, without correct payment or incorrectly completed, the entry will NOT be processed. It is the responsibility of swimmers' parents to print off the appropriate forms, fill it out correctly and get it back in time with correct payment. If in doubt ask the Fixtures Secretary for advice.

Other Competitions

Club Champs

An event where you compete against other members of the Club! These are held annually, usually over a weekend in November. In the week that follows, additional events are held during regular training sessions. All members of the club are expected to enter Club Champs. As with other galas, information about the event is sent by email to parents via the Head Coach, swimmers must apply in the same way as they would do for any other gala. Club Champs are an ideal way for younger swimmers to experience competitive swimming. The event is usually licensed level 4 which means any times achieved can be used for entry to the County Championships.

County Championships

The Essex Age Group Championships is a competition held once a year over 3 weekends in January of February. Swimmers can only enter if they have achieved the qualifying times, which are published in the Autumn before the event. Swimmers who achieve county qualifying times are expected to represent the Club at this event.

League Competitions

The Club also enter various league competitions including the National Arena Swimming League, the Essex Mini League and the National Junior Swimming League.

Swimmers for these competitions are chosen by the Head Coach. Parents will be contacted by email if their child has been selected. Team selections are also posted on the notice board at LW and parents/swimmers are expected to use the form to indicate if they are available to swim. **It is important that this is done ASAP to allow adequate time for replacements to be found if necessary, delays in responding may mean your child is removed from selection without notice.** *Competition criteria to competitive leagues : All selection is at the discretion of the Chief Coach.*

Mini League: This is a development gala with double age bands and 'no faster than' cut off times. Age is at the day of the gala. Selection is coach lead. There is a single division and each club competes in 5 galas over the season.

Junior Swimming League (JSL) This is an A grade gala for younger swimmers, top swimmers from each stroke and age are selected. The age range is 9-12 yrs age as at 31st December. There are 3 rounds for this gala.

National Arena Swimming League: This is an A grade competition, the fastest swimmers from each double age group are selected and ages range from 9 - Open, subject to training levels and injuries. Age is at 31st December. There are 3 rounds for this gala and a National final.

For most of these events, a coach is arranged to take swimmers to these events at a cost of £5 per person (parents can also travel on the coach if they wish). The coach departs from St Mary's Secondary School on the Lexden Road.

Galas

When will I know if my child has been accepted for a gala?

A list of accepted and rejected entries for galas is sent out in advance of the gala. **Parents should check that their swimmer's list of accepted entries is correct.** This is when it is very useful to have a copy of the entry form so you can confirm what was entered. If the swimmer's name does not appear, you should contact the Fixtures Secretary immediately. **If you do not check that the correct events have been entered in good time before the event, the organisers of the meet will normally not make changes to the programme if they are notified on the day. Championship events are particularly strict with regard to this.**

The meet programme will normally be available to purchase at the event, listing all swimmers in each race in order of time, and it usually provides information about the event.

What is 'Signing in'?

Most galas require the swimmer to sign in upon arrival at the pool. On arriving the swimmer should ask where the signing in desk is, check their name against the lists on the desk and sign. If your name is not on the list you should see your coach immediately. **If a swimmer does not sign in they will NOT be able to compete.**

Can I take photos at the gala?

Some galas allow spectators to take photographs and videos (though some don't) but you will first have to register with the meet organisers (usually upon entry to the event) and provide details such as address and phone contact details. This is to satisfy child protection policy. Some organisers do not allow mobile devices to be used poolside and if they do, photography is usually not allowed.

What does Heat declared winner (HDW) mean?

Only heats are swum, not heats and finals. Several events are swum together, usually different ages of the same stroke and distance. Swimmers are graded by entry time. The winner is the swimmer in the relevant category, usually age, with the fastest time, not the winner of a particular heat.

My name is on a results list but has DQ by the side, what does this mean?

DQ means 'Disqualified' and it's something that virtually all competitive swimmers will have to face sometimes. At the gala (usually wearing white shirts) there will be a starter, a referee, time keepers on each lane and several judges looking at starts, turns and stroke technique. If you breach one of the rules surrounding starts, turns or stroke you may be Disqualified or DQ'd. It is of course disappointing but is still part of the learning process. What you need to do is to find out why you were DQ'd and then work with your coach in training to try to make sure it doesn't happen again.

What will I need to take to a competition:

The following are essential items of kit for **COMPETITION**:

- Swimming costume/suit/trunks - consider two so you can change between sessions if it is a full day event
- CSC Swimming hat and a spare
- Goggles and a spare pair
- LOTS to drink
- Plenty of the RIGHT foods (see log book for ideas)
- 2 towels
- Plenty of warm clothing
- Flip flops for poolside to keep the heat in your body
- Warm clothing for poolside
- A book or something to do poolside - there can be a lot of waiting
- Club kit for poolside - Tbag

NOTE: When attending team events such as JSls and Mini Leagues etc, it is expected that your swimmer will STAY until the end of the event to support the team even if they are travelling with you and not on the coach. When attending an open meet or other individual event, it is perfectly acceptable to leave as soon as you have swum your events and checked the results.

Swimming Terms

What is a PB?

PB is short for Personal Best. It is the best time a swimmer has achieved for a particular stroke at a given distance. Times swum at all licensed meets are entered on the British Swimming Rankings, which can be found on the British Swimming website <https://swimmingresults.org/individualbest/>

What does 'Licensed Meet' mean?

For an event to be licensed by the ASA it must meet certain criteria (for example, numbers of qualified officials and time keepers etc) which are assessed when the meet organisers make their application. From a swimmer's perspective the most important points to note are that to qualify for the:

- **National Championships** a qualifying time must have been achieved between set dates at an ASA Licensed **Level 1** or **Level 2** meet
- **Regional Championships** a qualifying time must have been achieved between set dates at an ASA Licensed **Level 1, Level 2** or **Level 3**
- **County Championships** a qualifying time must have been achieved between set dates at an ASA Licensed **Level 1, Level 2, Level 3** or **Level 4**

What are qualifying times?

If qualifying times are set, only swimmers who have achieved those times (or faster) are able to enter that event. Even then, they are not guaranteed entry. If the meet is oversubscribed,

swimmers with the slower entry times may be rejected from that event. This is particularly true for level 1 events.

Level 3 and 4 meets can have qualifying times, and often have lower and upper limit times i.e , entrants' PBs must not be faster than the lower limit, and not slower than the upper.

What are the different competition types?

Competitions are generally classified as "open" or "closed". An open competition, as the name implies, is open to all (although there are usually qualifying times – see below). Closed competitions are for selected groups of swimmers, usually from certain geographical areas

Open meets are targeted at different standards of swimmer and are designated a level (and the qualifying times reflect these different standards). Level 1 and 2 are often for national standard competitors and only times achieved at these events are eligible for entry to national competitions. Level 3 and 4 meets are for those who have not met level 1 standard, to help qualify for Level 1 and 2 meets, and for younger swimmers.

What is an Individual Medley (IM)?

A race in which all 4 strokes are combined in the order - Fly, Back, Breast, Freestyle. (When swum in a relay, the order is Back, Breast, Fly, Free - so as to avoid a takeover to backstroke)

What does 'Short Course' mean?

Events held in a 25m length pool.

What does 'Long Course' mean?

Events held in a 50m length pool.

What is a time conversion and when will I need it?

As turns are faster than swimming, if a swimmer only has a short course time and wants to enter a long course event, a time conversion will be required. Similarly, if a swimmer only has a long course time and wants to enter a short course event, a conversion will also be required. There are online tools available to convert between the two. E.g. <http://www2.sportsys.co.uk/time.asp>

What is age group swimming?

Most competitions organise swimmers into age groups for awards/medals. Sometimes these are single year age groups, sometimes double, with medals and other awards presented to the top swimmers in each event in each age group. Heats are usually swum according to entry time, irrespective of age. Higher level events will also swim finals.

Most UK competitions run on a system called “age on day”, which means that the age group a swimmer enters is their age on the final day of competition. In addition to individual age groups, competitions may also be split into Age, Youth and Senior groups.

Age is up to 14 for girls and boys.

Youth is from these ages to 17 for females and 18 for males.

Senior is all ages above these.

What does ‘age on 31st December’ mean?

If a gala is run on an ‘age on 31st December’ basis (e.g., the Essex County Age Group Championships) it refers to how old the swimmer will be on the 31st December in the year of competition. It does not mean the age of the swimmer on the day of the competition, which may be different.

What are national rankings?

All the results from licensed Level 1-4 meets are forwarded to British Swimming which maintains the ASA National Rankings Database. As described earlier, this can be accessed on the British Swimming website or by following this link: <http://www.swimmingresults.org/12months/>

It ranks each swimmer in all of the age groups, for each stroke and distance, for long course and short course.

Officials

For any competition, the officials provide guidance and regulation; they ensure the rules of the sport are enforced fairly and impartially and that the event is conducted safely. They ensure that fairness is achieved in the competition by adhering to and enforcing the ASA laws and Technical Rules of swimming. Although the promoter of a swimming event has the overall responsibility for Health & Safety, all the poolside officials must also be vigilant to try to prevent any accidents.

What types of Officials are there?

There are five types of technical swimming official, each described below.

- **Timekeeper** This is an introduction into the world of the swimming official. It covers the practical aspects of what is required of a timekeeper by means of a short theory session followed by a practical assessment. The minimum recommended age for candidates to undertake this training is 14 years, and all need to be registered members of a British Swimming affiliated club or a member of the Institute of Swimming (IoS).
- **Judge Level 1**
This is the first level of British qualification. It encompasses the role and duties of a Timekeeper, Chief Timekeeper and Inspector of Turns. The minimum age to start training

is 15 years. Candidates will be required to undertake some formal theory instruction and gain practical experience working on the poolside with a mentor.

- **Judge Level 2.** This is the second level of qualification. It encompasses the role and duties in relation to all aspects of judging and the theoretical role and duties of Starter. The minimum age to start training is 16 years and candidates must have already qualified as Judge Level 1.
- **Judge Level 2S – Starter.** Candidates wishing to qualify as a Starter will be required hold the Judge Level 2 qualification and have completed a minimum of 20 hours post qualification experience as Judge Level 2. Training will consist of a prescribed number of practical experiences as a Starter before undertaking a formal practical assessment. Successful candidates will be attributed with the Starter qualification: Judge Level 2S

How do I become an Official?

The Club is only able to function and **succeed** as a result of people kindly volunteering and giving up their time freely so that swimmers can enjoy their competition. If you are interested and want to find out more then please speak to a committee member. Or why not ask one of the club members who already officiates about their experiences.

Each level of technical official consists of some training, a short examination and a practical evaluation of the skills required. Further details of the examinations and other helpful material can be found on swimming.org.

Swim 21

Swim21 is the ASA's Accreditation and Development tool that allows swimmers, teachers, coaches and those responsible for developing programmes to continually improve. Colchester Swimming Club's **accreditation** is your guarantee of quality provision for your child. It's about putting the swimmers first and ensuring young learners follow the pathway the ASA recognises for training and competition.

Swimmer's Progression

When do swimmers move between squads?

The coaching staff continually assesses the progress of swimmers. The assessment factors include performance, consistency, attitude and attendance. When the time is right to move to the next squad you will be contacted to discuss the move or sent a invitation for a trial for the new squad. Please note that as a swimmer progresses through the squad structure, the required level of commitment to training and competition increases.

Can I discuss my child's progress with the coach?

Yes, of course. Our coaches are always happy to answer your questions but please don't expect to have the discussions during the training sessions as the coaches will be very busy with ALL of the children training. It's better to ask before or after the session if it's a quick question, or for longer discussions arrange a suitable time via email.

What's a logbook?

Swimmers may find it useful to keep individual logbooks to maintain a record of their progress. Your swimmer will be provided with a Colchester Swimming Club logbook when they join the club.