



CHELMSFORD CITY SWIMMING CLUB

PARENTS AND SWIMMERS GUIDE TO COMPETITIVE SWIMMING

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Introduction

Being involved in competitive swimming will be an unfamiliar process for many families with younger swimmers just starting out.

There are things you need to understand about what is expected; what sort of competitions you should be entering and at what stage; how to enter; the leagues the Club enters, and what you should make sure you have with you on the day of a competition.

Don't worry if you don't pick up all of this straight away, some of it will only become more relevant to you as your child progresses through the squads and achieves faster times.

Much of this information is already on the Swim England or the Club website and is also explained by coaches on poolside or in one of the many emails that we send. This guide will try and pull together a lot of that information together in one place.

The most important thing for swimmers and their families to grasp is that it is vital to meet your training attendance targets and also to compete and get times in a variety of events. Hopefully the following will explain why.



CHELMSFORD CITY SWIMMING CLUB

STARTING OUT

Chelmsford City Swimming Club is first and foremost a competitive swimming club. We are proud of our competitive success in swimming, at county, regional and national level.

The Club and its coaches will help guide you and your swimmer about what you should be aiming to compete in and achieve as they develop – **it is essential that you understand that swimmers are expected to both regularly meet their minimum training targets and also compete for the Club.**

Once you are in the Junior and City Squads you are training to achieve competitive success, not just for fitness. If a swimmer does not regularly meet their minimum training targets or compete regularly, then they will jeopardise their place in the squad and be offered a place in Just Swim.

It's important that swimmers make every effort to enter competitions for several reasons:

- It gives swimmers an idea of what it's like to compete
- It gives swimmers their times, and is a clear marker of how they are progressing
- It gives swimmers a goal towards which they can work
- It gives swimmers a sense of achievement
- It shows the coaches how the swimmers cope with a competitive environment
- Gaining new improved times are one of the many factors that help the coaches to decide whether a swimmer is ready to move up to the next squad

Each season the Club enters teams in several league competitions. **If your swimmer is selected for a league fixture then they are expected to turn out and represent the Club.**

The leagues should not be seen as optional “add-on’s” to individual competition. The league fixtures are regarded by the Club as being just as important as competing in Open Meets. If your swimmer is regularly unable to compete in league fixtures the Head Coach reserves the right to remove your swimmer’s place in the competitive squads.



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THE CLUB'S SQUADS

Each of the squads or sections has different aims and mainly targets swimmers at different stages of their development.

Development Squad

This squad is for swimmers who are progressing from swimming lessons and who wish to develop their swimming technique further and also try out competitive swimming.

Swimmers who have finished swimming lessons may want to consider trying out the Clubs Water Polo or Artistic Swimming teams.

To be considered for the Competitive Swimming Development squad children must be at least 7 years old and be able to swim at least 250 meters continuously.

Ideally swimmers will have progressed to at least Level 7 of the Swim England Learn to Swim Programme, or an equivalent, and already have a good stroke technique and also have a strong desire to swim competitively (race).

Junior Competitive Squad – Lanes 1 to 11

These squads are for swimmers who are aiming to develop further as competitive swimmers and also looking to progress eventually to the City Squad.

The emphasis for all the Junior Squads is on development of stamina and stroke technique and swimmers are required to regularly meet their weekly training targets.

Those regularly not attending the minimum number of training sessions per week, or not regularly competing, will jeopardise their place in their squad and may be offered Just Swim.

City Squad – Youth Competitive & Performance Squads

The City Squads are for our older swimmers, although some talented younger swimmers who achieving a high level of competitive success may be offered a place.

Swimmers are required to train regularly and will have a minimum number of sessions per week given to them by their coaches', dependent on squads, age / school year, and range from 3 to 6 sessions per week.

All targets for City squad swimmers include an early weekday morning swim every week.

Those regularly not meeting their minimum targets, or regularly competing, will jeopardise their place in their squad and may be offered Just Swim.



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Training Kit for all Competitive Swimming Squads

- Please ensure all items are clearly **NAMED** and brought to all sessions in a pool mesh bag
- Development Squad – Kickboard & pullbuoy only
- All other squads – Kickboard, pullbuoy and training fins
- If you require any additional kit for training such as hand paddles or swim snorkels then your coaches will advise you
- Plenty of water to drink (**plastic bottles only poolside**)
- Swim hat and goggles (always bring a spare hat and goggles with you as they do break)
- Any medication required, such as inhalers etc.

The club will provide development and junior competitive squad swimmers with one squad training hat either upon joining the club or squad promotion.

Rinsing your hat in fresh water after training and air drying it thoroughly inside and out will help prolong the life of your hat. Replacement or spare squad hats can be purchased via club organiser should you lose or damage these.

We would appreciate it if any squad hats in good condition could be returned to us when you move up a squad for swimmers to use as in case of emergency spares, which the coaches will keep at the pool.

Competition hats in the clubs colours can also be purchased from via Club Organiser www.cluborganiser.co.uk.



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THE CLUB'S COACHING TEAMS

The club is run by volunteers who all give their time freely and this includes our coaching team and they deserve to be treated at all times with respect and courtesy.

The Head Coach oversees all of the swimming coaching and decides on the coaching teams.

Parents / Guardians should not come onto poolside, or otherwise interrupt a training session, unless invited to do so by the coach otherwise you may find yourself banned from training sessions.

The Head Coach also decides the structure of the squads and training schedules; this also includes progression of swimmers from the Junior Squad to the City Squad; and the leagues and other Swimming Meets that the Club enters.

The Head Coach can be emailed at headcoach@chelmsfordcityswimmingclub.org.uk

The Assistant Head Coach oversees the junior squads and liaises closely with the Head Coach and can be emailed at jnrheadcoach@chelmsfordcityswimmingclub.org.uk.

The Academy Lead Coach oversees the academy and development squads and liaises closely with the Head Coach and the Assistant Head Coach and can be emailed at academy@chelmsfordcityswimmingclub.org.uk.

Please see the club codes of conduct for expected standards of behaviors from all members, parents and volunteers

<https://chelmsfordcityswimmingclub.org.uk/about/club-documents-policies/>

If you have any concerns or other matters you wish to discuss you may also contact the club welfare officer childprotectfemale@chelmsfordcityswimmingclub.org.uk

Please make every effort to arrive 10 minutes before your training sessions starts so that you can be poolside ready to start on time – arriving late is disruptive and interrupts the session for others, and also means your swimmer may not be able to complete the warm up and therefore coaches may refuse you entry to the session.

Arriving on time is also a good habit to form for swimming – arrive late for a swimming competition and miss the sign-in and they will not let you compete. More on that later.



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THE BASIC STRUCTURE OF THE SWIMMING SEASON

For very young swimmers, aged 9 and under, the wider structure of the swimming season may not be very relevant, as you are not yet old enough to compete, but for all other competitive swimmers it is.

The competitive season is divided for championship purposes into a Short Course (25-metre pools) phase from September to late December and a Long Course (50-metre pool) phase from January to August.

Short course competitions continue from January onwards but in the second half of the season will tend to be for younger swimmers or those not aiming to qualify for regional and national championships.

In competitive terms the season is structured approximately as in the table below:

September to December	Club Championships Qualifying for County Age Group Championships Regional Winter Short Course Championships British Winter Short Course Championships
January to February	County Age Group Championships
January to April	Qualifying for Regional Age Group Championships British Championships
April to June	Regional Age Group Championships Qualifying for British & English Summer Age Group Championships
July / August	British & English Summer Age Group Championships

As well as giving general competitive experience, Club Championships and Open Meets are an opportunity to improve Personal Bests (PB's) or achieve the Qualifying Times (QTs) for County, Regional or National Championships, depending upon the level of the event.

Registering Official Times

Once you are a Swim England registered swimmer and have competed in a licensed event you will have times for each swimming event recorded.

As your swimmer competes in more meets and events and improves their times the record of their Personal Best times will be automatically updated on the Swim England database.

You can check the times and progress of your swimmer on the Swim England website at <https://www.swimmingresults.org/individualbest/>



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Qualifying times and cut-off times

A qualifying time (QT) is a time that is required in order to enter an event.

A cut-off time is a time that is the fastest a swimmer can be in order to enter an event

The age group/time for your swimmer will be set for each Meet.

For championships the age will be as at the 31st December in the year of competition.

For championships there will also be a qualifying window that the time has to be achieved in, and also the type of event that the time was recorded at.

Use the information on QTs and the eligibility report as a guide to the Meets you should think about entering your child for.

If in doubt consult with your child's coach or Competition Secretary.



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ENTERING COMPETITIONS

The Head Coach decides the season competition plan in conjunction with the other coaches that will be most appropriate for the swimmers and will be organised so it fits in with the training cycles.

Swimmers and their families are expected to adhere to the Head Coach's season plan as part of their commitment to the training programme and Chelmsford City Swimming Club – they are expected to compete at as many events as they are eligible for as possible.

Individual entry into meets/competitions that the Head Coach has not authorised is prohibited

Doing so could jeopardise a swimmer's place on the squad and also result in exclusion from the club. If you wish to enter a meet / competition that the Club is not, then you will need send an email starting your reasons for wishing to do and obtain the Head Coaches prior agreement. If this exception is agreed then please note that you will also need to make your own arrangements that a qualified Coach from another club, who are attending the event, take responsibility for your swimmer whilst they are poolside – this is per Swim England Wavepower requirements.

All competitions that have been approved by the club coaches will be on the Fixtures page of the Competitive Swimming section of the Club website, along with information on qualifying times and eligibility of individual swimmers. [Fixtures | Chelmsford City Swimming Club](#)

Some entries for galas are done as group entries by the Club's Competition Secretary as this is the method preferred by competition organisers – others will be individual entries; you will be advised how to enter each meet in the terms and conditions.

It is up to you and your swimmer to make sure you complete the entries for Open Meets and Championships. The Head Coach and Competition Secretary may send out general reminders but **ultimately the responsibility to enter by the closing date is yours.**

If you are serious about competing it is a good idea to spot the dates of competitions as early as possible and put those dates in your family calendar so that you make sure you do not get double booked. Of course, there will occasionally be weekends when family commitments mean your child cannot compete but **if you are serious about your child progressing in competitive swimming then you need to prioritise swimming competitions as much as possible.**



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THE DIFFERENT COMPETITIONS (What you should be aiming to compete in)

Time Trials/Stroke Galas

For our Development, Academy, Seals & Dolphins squads we hold regular time trials and stroke galas. These are informal events, usually held during a training session. These events are not licensed so any times achieved are not recorded for official purposes.

Swimmers should make every effort to attend these events as they enable both swimmers and coaches to have an idea of what times they could achieve in competition and also to get experience of how events are run.

Club Championships

Our annual Club Championships are usually held between June and November and all fully paid-up members of the Club can usually compete.

They are ideal for less experienced swimmers to get used to competing and also registering official times.

Medals are awarded in each age group and Club Championship trophies are presented at the annual club awards evening.

Club Championships is a level licensed 4 meet and swimmers should aim compete in all the races that they are able to swim in to get times in a wide variety of strokes and distances.

If you are in any doubt as to what races to enter seek advice from your swimmers' coach.

Licensed Open Meets

Each Open Meet the Club enters will be posted on the Competitive Swimming Fixtures page of the Club website.

Details of the programme that the organisers have put together will be published; including Qualifying times (QTs) and Upper Qualifying or Cut Off times by event, age group and gender; and an eligibility report may also be provided which tells you what events at that Meet your child has the times to compete in.

There are four different levels of open meet.

- Level 1 - long course only to achieve qualifying times for entry into National Championships. Only the top swimmers in the Club will qualify.
- Level 2 - short course only to achieve qualifying times for entry into National short course Championships. Only the top swimmers in the Club will qualify.
- Level 3 - long and short course events to achieve times for entry into Regional and County Championships and other Meets at Level 1 or Level 2.
- Level 4 - entry level events in pools 25 meters or greater.



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Essex County Age Group Championships

Once your swimmer is at least 10 years old they will be able to aim to achieve qualifying times to compete at the Essex Age Group Championships, usually held over several weekends in January / February each year.

Each year the Club sends a large group of swimmers who have achieved at least one QT in their age group for the Essex Age Group Championships.

This is the first main competitive goal your child should have once they have got used to competing at Club Championships and a few Open Meets.

NB the age group/time for your swimmer is always as at the 31st December for the following year, not the year the time is achieved in.

Essex also holds a winter championship in October each year for swimmers aged 12 and over. The entry times are the same for all age groups.

East Region Age Group Championships

Held in late April and May, the East Region Age Group Championships are for swimmers aged 11 upwards.

Usually, your child will be in the City Squad before they will achieve regional QTs.

Times need to be achieved Short Course and this is normally between September and the closing date. *NB the age group/time for your swimmer is always as at the 31st December for the year of competition, and not necessarily the year the time is achieved in.*

Each year swimmers from the Club achieve regional times and compete in the championships.

East Region also hold a winter championship in November each year for swimmers age 12 and over. The entry times are the same for all age groups.

National Championships

These are held 3 times a year, Winter, Spring and Summer and are at an even higher standard than regionals and a swimmer will need to be ranked in the top 44 or so in the country in any event to qualify for National events.

Each year Chelmsford has swimmers who qualify for various National events.



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Disqualifications

Inevitably, sooner or later, all swimmers will come across disqualifications (DQ).

Like all sports, competitive swimming is governed by strict technical rules which are there to make sure that races are run fairly. Our Club Championships are governed by the same set of rules used in the Olympic Games!

All of these rules are included within the Swim England Handbook, a copy of which can be found on the Swim England Website. <https://www.swimming.org/swimengland/swim-england-handbook/>

All officials at a Meet, such as referees and judges, have passed examinations (both theoretical and practical) and would prefer not to disqualify, however they have to maintain standards without which some swimmers could gain an unfair advantage.

When this happens neither you or your swimmer should not approach any official and interrupt the event, instead your swimmer should find out from their coach why they were disqualified.

Any concerns or complaints should be directed to the referee only by the coach, and only after the gala has finished. The referee's decision is always final.

Please remember that like our volunteers who run the club all of these officials are also there as volunteers, so remember to be polite and respectful at all times otherwise you will be asked to leave the event.

When a disqualification occurs, this is normally announced along with the reason when the result of the race is announced. Some of the main reasons for disqualifications are:

- A false start – there are no 2nd chances on the start and can be the swimmer moving on the blocks once the starter has called "Take your marks"
- Incorrect stroke technique
- Incorrect touch at the turn or finish
- Incorrect turn
- Taking a 'flyer' in a relay race i.e., diving in before the incoming swimmer has touched.

We do understand it is upsetting when DQs happen, but swimmers do have to get used to the concept from the start and being disqualified should be looked on as a learning experience; it is not the end of the world and is something to work on in training. It happens to everyone and even experienced swimmers are disqualified occasionally.

It is much better to be disqualified early at a club event and learn from that disqualification, than to be disqualified at a County Championship or National League event, later in a swimmer's career when it really matters.



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LEAGUES

The Club usually enters the following leagues each year:

National Arena League: for swimmers 11 and under up to Open (over 16). This is the premier league competition for swimmers over the age of 11 so the Club aims to put out its strongest / fastest swimmers in this league.

There are 3 rounds held between October and December each year. Ages are as at 31 December in the year of the competition.

Junior National Arena League: for swimmers aged from 9 to 12, age as at a set date each year. This league is for the strongest swimmers in the Club in those younger age groups and fixtures are normally in spring and early summer.

Essex Mini League: is for swimmers aged 9 to Open (over 16). The main feature of this league is that swimmers are penalised if they swim events faster than a designated time, so the aim is always to select swimmers who are able to swim very close to but not over the times specified. This means that this league also creates opportunities for those swimmers not selected for the other League teams.

Rules for Team Galas (League events)

- If selected you should make every effort to attend – if you cannot make it please give plenty of notice so an alternative swimmer can be found
- All swimmers must wear their Chelmsford City Swimming Club kit & hats
- All selected swimmers must travel by the team bus (if one is being used) to the venue
- Please register with the Team Manager either at the bus before departure or on poolside before the warm-up starts
- No swimmer leaves poolside until the end of the gala & the final result is given
- At the end of the gala and before leaving the team bus (if being used) all swimmers must sign out with the allotted Team Manager
- There may be a few spaces on the team bus for parents after swimmers (32), & support volunteers (6). To book on first come first served basis for a small fee – please email the competition secretary to reserve a seat

Volunteers - Officials

The club is run by volunteers and all club entries to galas/meets/events require that we send officials and other volunteers to assist poolside and also help behind the scenes.

If we do not have enough volunteers put themselves forward for an event then the Club cannot enter so it is important that you as parents get involved from the start and volunteer your time generously. Full training will be given.

<https://chelmsfordcityswimmingclub.org.uk/volunteers/>



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Swim England recommend that all parents of swimmers under the age of 16 be a club and Swim England member in their own right as well as your child to ensure that you have a say in how the club is run – volunteering for the club will give you membership of both the club and Swim England.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):

Who deals with entries for the Club / who do I liaise with?

We have a Competition Secretary for the Competitive Swimming section of the club who will send the Club's entries in to the Meet Organiser and will also deal with entries for our Club Championships.

They can be contacted at competition@chelmsfordcityswimmingclub.org.uk

The Head Coach, in liaison with the coaching team, will oversee the selection for league fixtures.

How will I know if my child is selected for a league team?

You will receive an email with details of the venue, times, places to meet etc.

You will be asked to confirm by email ASAP that your child can attend.

It is vital that if your child cannot compete you let the relevant person know ASAP.

Other than illness/injury no other reasons for withdrawing on the day are acceptable as it can mean the team and the Club are let down and will forfeit one or more races.

How do I know what competitions are coming up for me to enter my child for?

It is always on the Club website under the Competitive Swimming Section is a Fixtures page so check regularly for updates.

Put dates in your diary / on your calendar, including league fixtures.

Remember you should make every effort to swim for the Club in leagues if selected.

How do I know if an Open Meet is a good one to enter my child for?

Look at the QTs and Eligibility Report for the Meet – a copy can be found on the Fixtures page. Club Organiser will also have entry times and whether your swimmer is eligible if it is being used for entry.

Think about whether your child has a chance of achieving QTs for County and Regional Championships and if the Meet offers them the opportunity to get those times.



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What specific events should I enter my child for at a Meet?

This is one of the most difficult questions to answer.

For Club Championships we encourage all swimmers to enter everything they can so that they can experience all the different types of races.

Discuss with your child what they are aiming for and again consult coaches if unsure. You will quickly pick this all up and can learn from more experienced parents as well as coaches.

Parents almost have to become their child's Swimming Manager, thinking about how and what to race and it will be affected by what your child is aiming to achieve. Swimmers might only want to enter their strongest events if they are aiming for QTs for Counties. Equally they might use some Open Meets to swim some of the events they are weaker at to get more experience or bring down their Personal Bests.

We also recommend that you take a close look at what events are running in the meet order and when and try and plan your swimmer's day(s) at events accordingly.

If in doubt ask your swimmer's coach.

Do I have to pay to enter?

For the league events, no – the Club pays but you may be asked to contribute towards any group travel costs.

For all other events yes, you do.

All Open Meets and Championships have an entry fee per event which will be detailed on the Fixtures page on the Club website.

How do I pay to Enter?

Payment is by debit/credit card only via Club Organiser OR direct with the Meet organiser via a link that they will provide for the event.

Once logged onto your Club Organiser account go to the Fixtures and on the drop-down menu select the relevant fixture. You will then have a pre-prepared list of all the events at that meet that your child is eligible to enter. Select those you wish to enter and then click pay now. You will then be able to make the payment using your debit/credit card to complete the transaction.

Once you have paid you will receive an email from Club Organiser confirming your entry – keep this email in case of any problems.



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Going to a Gala / Competition

Here are some tips to help you prepare and have what you need for an event.

Always read the event terms and conditions beforehand to know what is expected of you and your swimmer as different events and pools will have their own terms and conditions.

Travelling and arrival

Ensure your swimmer gets an early night the night before and arrives at the gala on time.

Plan your journey/parking to ensure you arrive with plenty of time to sign in for your races. Late arrivals will not be permitted to swim if sign in has closed.

Swimmers will be expected to do some stretching exercises on poolside before the warm up so it is advisable to be changed and be on poolside around 20 minutes before the scheduled start of warm up.

Sign In / Registration / Withdrawal

On arrival some galas have a signing in or registration process for swimmers, others have a withdrawal process – it is important that you check the events terms and conditions so that you are aware of these.

It is a swimmer's responsibility to sign in / highlight their names on arrival to ensure that they are entered in the events on the day.

If you are late and/or miss sign in you will not be able to compete. The organisers will assume that those who do not sign in for a competition are not competing and they will not allocate them a heat

If your child is unable to attend a competition they have entered please email the competition secretary ASAP. This ensures that the coaches know who is turning up at events and they can also let the competition organisers know, if you have not already withdrawn them.

Competition organisers have the right to fine a club if a swimmer is not withdrawn from an event – please remember that this fine will then be passed back to you if you have not informed the Club in plenty of time that you will not be competing.

Medication: Please ensure that you have with you any medication you may require through the day.

Clothing for poolside – Remember to name everything!

No Jewellery, watches, racing aids or adhesive tape may be worn whilst competing as it will earn you a DQ.



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Competitive Swimming Costumes

Both boys and girls need to take separate warm up and racing costumes. It is also advisable to have a spare costume in case one rips .

Racing Costumes

Racing costumes should fit like a second skin.

- Girls should not be able to pull up the straps more than two/three inches above the shoulders
- Boys should be tight fitting (baggy bottoms will slow you down).

A rave costume must be compliant with the rules of the competition you are entering otherwise a swimmer will not be allowed to compete. If in doubt check the current FINA rules before you purchase.

Swim England also provide some guidance which can be found on their website.

Technical Racing suits

Sooner or later your swimmer will inevitably ask you to buy one of the very expensive technical racing suits!

These suits are made with advanced materials to reduce drag in the water and provide compression helping swimmers glide, as well as reducing water absorption.

There are no proven performance benefits for young swimmers and those who have not yet reached puberty.

It is also worth noting that they only benefit the elite swimmers by fractions of a second and this benefit only lasts for very few races (possibly not even one competition) so please consider carefully before purchasing them.

Club Hoodies and polo shirts

Details of club kit and where to purchase it from can be found on the club website [Club Kit | Chelmsford City Swimming Club](#)

Club kit must be worn poolside, together with plain black/blue shorts or tracksuit bottoms or leggings.

Please bring a couple of Club tops as they will get wet and it is important to stay warm when at a gala all day.

Fashion shorts, trousers or jeans are not allowed on poolside.



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Chelmsford City Swimming Club hats

Royal Blue club competition swimming hats should be worn at all galas, by both boys and girls. Remember these hats show that you are representing Chelmsford City Swimming Club and it tells everyone you are proud to be part of the same team.

It is useful to have a several spares as well as they do rip.

Details on where and how to order these hats can be found on the club website [Club Kit | Chelmsford City Swimming Club](#)

Poolside shoes

Most poolside floors can be very cold and you lose valuable heat through your feet, therefore it is sensible to wear poolside shoes... always make sure they are clean and have not been worn outdoors!

Goggles

A minimum of two pairs of goggles must be with you on poolside.

Ensure your goggles fit properly during warm up and do not be tempted to fiddle with them between races – or during a race (you could be DQ'd).

Poolside

We would advise against any electronic items being brought onto poolside. You run the risk of these being damaged or unfortunately stolen.

Some pools permit the use of mobile phones and other image capturing devices and some do not – please check the terms and conditions of each event for more information. This also applies to spectators.

No image capturing device is permitted to be used in any changing room at any venue.

Chelmsford swimmers sit together with coaches/team managers/whips on poolside. Swimmers must remain poolside at all times and not wander off.

If a swimmer needs to leave poolside for any reason, they should report first to the person in charge from Chelmsford City Swimming Club.

If you do not intend to stay at the gala whilst your swimmer is competing that's fine but please ensure that your swimmer is happy with your decision and also please let the clubs Team Manager on the day know.

You will need to ensure that you have your phone with you at all times in case of emergencies and will also need to arrange for your swimmer to have the break times away



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from the pool with another suitable adult as our volunteers need a break from poolside too and there will be nobody available to supervise your child.

Please note that some galas will not permit swimmers on the balcony, and those that do will require your swimmer to be dry first.

Swimmers and Parents need to behave appropriately at all times, respecting coaches and volunteers, all Swim England officials, gala rules i.e., remaining silent at the start of the races and also be respectful of other clubs and your team members at all times.

Swimmers are responsible for their own belongings' poolside at events – naming everything will help them – but they need to look after everything. The poolside team have enough to do without having to help find mislaid goggles, hats, tops, lunch boxes, drinks etc.

We also strongly recommend that you check your swimmer has everything before you leave an event. We know that swimming kit is expensive so the Clubs poolside team will pick up any named items left at the end of the event and try to reunite it with their owner.

Alternatively, you can phone the pool you were at, although please note that many will not keep lost property and your items may well have been disposed of at the end of the event.

Suggestions for supporting your child at swimming events

1. Ask your child where they want you to sit and how they want you to behave. They may want you in the front row of the balcony cheering them on, on the other hand, they may find that off-putting, and would rather you be calm and quiet. So, ask them first.
2. You will be sat within a crowd so your actions and words will be noticed, most of all by your child. Think before you shout, keep all body language, actions and words positive.
3. If you're starting to feel any frustration, take deep breaths and always remain calm.
4. Don't get sucked in to competing with other parents. Everyone wants their child to be the best however, it's your child's sport, so enjoy watching and be supportive. Leave the competitiveness to the swimmers.
5. If you're feeling particularly annoyed with your child's performance, or are struggling to keep calm on the balcony, try adopting relaxation skills, or take a break from the action.

This short video about The Magic Sports Kit, which Swim England help produce, is also worth a watch <https://youtu.be/Hqi1ole4BBQ>



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WHAT TO EAT

Swimmers get hungry, very hungry, especially during heavy training weeks and competition, so it's vital that they replenish all the calories and fluids lost during this time.

Swimmers also sweat just like any other athlete.

It is up to each individual to choose wisely, both in the lead up to and also at an event. For other suggestions try <https://www.eastswimming.org/swimming/parent-information/>.

Some pools do not permit any food poolside so it is important to ensure that you check the rules of the event before the competition

NOT PERMITTED POOLSIDE AT ANYTIME: Sweets / Chocolate / Fizzy drinks

These can have an adverse effect on a swimmer's performance in their races.

Take plenty of water and fruit squashes **(plastic bottles only – no glass ones)**.

The night before competition

Stick to high carbohydrate; low fat meals with plenty of liquids (fruit juice, cordial, water – not fizzy high sugar content drinks or drinks containing caffeine as they need good night's sleep).

Do not try to stock up and over eat to the point of discomfort. Just stick to a normal size meal, avoid any spicy foods or anything unfamiliar that may cause bloating or aggravate the stomach.

Some suggestions are:

- Noodles with low fat/lean meats or vegetables
- Rice (especially brown) with a lean mince chili (avoid the salty tortilla chips)
- Pasta (low fat sauce) or pasta bakes – go light on the cheese though
- Beans on Toast
- Potatoes in any form – avoid chips though

Bring enough food to last all day at a competition and keep in a small cool bag poolside.

Any food containing high levels of fat should not be eaten.

Do not eat a large meal too close to the start of the gala or heavily in between races.

Suggested Snacks for during competition (and after training):

- Sandwiches (try thickly cut bread with banana / jam / honey / lean meats)
- Baguettes / rolls / pitta bread
- Muesli bars and dried fruit bars
- Popcorn / Cereals (not the ones with a high sugar content)
- Fresh / dried / canned fruit
- Pasta



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- Currant buns / tea cakes / malt loaf / raisin bread / scones / muffins / crumpets / fruit cake
- Sesame snacks / sticks
- Plain type biscuits e.g., Rich Tea, Digestive, Garibaldi, Fig Rolls, Jaffa cakes
- Low fat rice pudding or fruit yoghurts
- Crisp breads / rice cakes / crackers / toast

Some suggestions for post-competition meals:

- Chinese meals with lots of noodles
- Pizza or pasta dishes with tomato-based sauce
- Chicken kebab with pitta bread and salad
- Jacket potato and salad fillings
- Indian food with rice and breads

Check List (Name Everything!):

- Small Poolside Bag (large bags have to remain off poolside due to space limitations)
- Money/Cards for entry to the gallery plus change for a locker and car park
- Enough warm up AND racing costumes/trunks
- Plain Black/Blue Shorts or Tracksuit bottoms
- Club Polo shirt and/or Hoodie
- Towels - At least 2 as they get every wet. Microfibre ones are ideal as they dry quicker.
- Clean poolside shoes
- Chelmsford City Swimming Club Hat - At least 2 in case one rips
- Goggles - At least two pairs
- Food and drink (plastic bottles only poolside) to last the whole day
- Leave home early to get to the pool on time (you should be on poolside 10 minutes before the warm-up starts)
- Medication
- Positive attitude



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COMMON TERMS

Age Group – Swimmer or competition for under 16's

Blocks – The starting platforms behind each lane

Consideration or Qualification time (QT) - the slowest entry time that will be considered

Converted Time – if a swimmer does not have a Long Course time for certain events it is acceptable to convert a swimmers Short Course time

DQ'd and disq. – disqualified

DNC – Did not compete

DNF – Did not finish

DNS – Did not start

Entry time - The time submitted for a swimmer being entered in a gala. If entries are made well in advance of the day, the entry time may not be the swimmers current PB

Heat Declared Winner (HDW) – used when only heats are swum and there is no final to decide the overall winner. The swimmer with the fastest time in the Age Group will be declared, regardless of heat swum in

Individual Medley (IM) - The competitor swims all four strokes in the following order: - butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke and freestyle

Licensed Meets - These are the only meets at which you can qualify for County, Regional and National competitions (see section on Licensed Meets)

Long Course (LC) - Events held in a 50-metre pool

Lower Qualification Time (LQT) - The slowest entry time for a particular event that the organisers of a gala will consider

Marshalling Area – the area of the pool where swimmers are held just before their race

Medley Relay - Four swimmers each swim one leg of a different stroke. The order is always backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly and freestyle

Personal Best (PB) - A swimmer's personal best time for a given event

Relay – when 4 swimmers compete as a team

Upper Qualification Time (UQT). The fastest entry time for a particular event that the organisers of a gala will consider



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Short Course (SC) - Events held in a 25-metre pool

Skins – an exciting event whereby the swimmers are involved in a knockout style race, over a series of races

Splits – The times from each race broken down into 25 metre or 50 metre segments

Squadron Relay – Usually the last race of a gala. A freestyle relay consisting of one swimmer from each age group or one swimmer of each sex from each age group

Swim Down – period at the end of training or after an event to allow swimmers to relax and stretch their muscles

Swim England – the governing body of swimming in England (formerly known as the ASA)

Team Manager – responsible for ensuring the smooth running of aquatic activities away from the Clubs home pool, such as galas and open meets

Warm Up – period of swimming at the start of a session or competition designed to loosen up the swimmer's body and prepare for intense work out or race

CLUB RECORDS

The club maintains records of the fastest short course and long course swims, in all events, in various age groups for swimmers representing the Club at an event.

<https://chelmsfordcityswimmingclub.org.uk/club-records/>

Please see the club website (as above) for all the details, latest record and also how to apply for a new record if you believe that your swimmer has broken one at a competition.

Club records have to be applied for within 6 months of achieving the time.

Any queries please email clubrecords@chelmsfordcityswimmingclub.org.uk