

Swimwear Policy Swimwear Policy

(Issue 01 - January 2026)

This Policy has been produced to provide clarity to swimmers, coaches, parents / guardians and technical officials around Swimwear.

Swim Ireland National and Regional Competitions Regulations follow the World Aquatics (WA) rules.

WA Rules are primarily designed for international competitions such as the Olympic Games and World Championships. In the absence of specific national federation rules, which WA permits, referees are expected to apply WA Competition Regulations, Part One, Rule 7.5.1 regarding swimwear. This rule states: *“For pool swimming competitions, swimsuits for men shall not extend above the navel or below the knee, and for women shall not cover the neck or extend past the shoulder or below the knee. The swimsuits shall be made from textile materials.”*

Swim Ireland Guidelines on Swimwear

Swimwear for all competitors shall be in good moral taste, suitable for the individual aquatic sports and not carry any symbol which may be considered offensive.

1. All swimsuits shall be non-transparent
2. It is not a requirement for swimmers to be wearing WA approved swimwear when competing at Swim Ireland competitions.
3. Swimwear **must not** provide any competitive advantage when compared to WA Approved Swimwear
 - a. Swimwear should be made of a textile material as per the current WA Rules
 - b. There is no limit to the number of pieces that the swimsuit is made up from
 - c. The tightness of the swimwear is not a factor that will be considered
 - d. All Tech Suits however must be on the WA approved list.
4. For licensed swim meets, swimmers wishing to compete in Tech Suits, that swimwear must be on the List linked here- [WA Approved Swimwear](#).
5. Swimmers who intend to claim any records at Swim Ireland National or International level competitions must wear WA Approved Swimwear as records require all WA rules to be met. A record application claim may be subject to a retrospective check.
6. In order to support point 5 with any retrospective checks (when applicable), referees are required to note the name of the swimmer and the event(s) being swum in the meet licence form and the Swimwear that the was worn.

Tech Suits and Young Athletes

WA allows national federations to implement their own Age Group swimwear rules. In line with this, Swim Ireland have adopted regulations specific to age-group.

Swim Ireland Ruling (Updated January 2026):

1. Athletes aged 12 years old and younger (age as that prescribed by each meet’s entry conditions) **will not** be permitted to compete in a tech suit in any swimming competition which falls under the jurisdiction of Swim Ireland – all Swim Ireland licensed/sanctioned meets on the island of Ireland
2. There are no tech suit restrictions for athletes aged 13 years old and over in any competition

The age of the swimmer shall be the age that the swimmer is swimming at, be that age on day or age at any other date e.g. 31 December as specified by meet entry Information/conditions.

If a swimmer aged 12 or under appears at marshalling or the start area wearing a technical swimsuit, they will not be allowed to swim and the race will proceed without them. They may also be disqualified directly after a race if a technical swimsuit is detected too late to stop them from swimming or after the race.

Swimwear Policy Swimwear Policy (Issue 01 - January 2026)

The following statement must be added to the meet conditions/information for all competitions on the island of Ireland:

“Athletes aged 12 years and younger (age as defined in the meet conditions) will not be permitted to compete at this meet in a tech suit. A tech suit is defined as a suit manufactured with the following 4 elements - water repellent fabric, compressive material, taped or bonded seams, and leg grippers. Athletes aged 12 years and under will be disqualified if officials observe such an athlete competing in a tech suit.”

The policy has been updated to reflect the change in technology and manufacturing of suits.

Swim Ireland Rationale

1. It is unclear how much of a performance advantage wearing a tech suit makes at a young age as the greatest performance advantage from such a suit comes from the compression that the suit provides in streamlining the body to reduce frontal resistance. For this to occur, the suit needs to be extremely tight fitting. A tech suit will deteriorate after only a few competitions, depending on how many times it is worn. The more times it is worn, the more it stretches, and the more the compression and water repellent properties degrade.
2. Effective stroke technique and high skill levels are a much more important component for swimming fast over and above that of the suit worn and athletes should be encouraged to improve their body position, streamlining, underwater kick speed and technique at a young age in order to continue their progression in later years.
3. The focus for young age group athletes should be less on results and more on developing a love for the sport
4. Children should feel and understand that it is their training, commitment and application to the sport that makes a difference when they compete, not the competition suit that they wear
5. Tech suits are very expensive. We want our sport to be inclusive and this rationale facilitates this.

The policy has been introduced to create a cultural shift in our sport to remove the focus on age group success. The policy should be included within all meet conditions, and it is the responsibility of Regions, Clubs and Coaches to educate athletes and parents on the spirit of the policy. We can avoid any embarrassment to young people at competitions if Regions, Clubs and Coaches enforce the policy at all levels.

Swimwear Policy Swimwear Policy (Issue 01 - January 2026)

Swim Ireland Definition of a 'Tech Suit'

A tech suit is defined as a suit manufactured with ALL 4 of the following elements - water repellent fabric, compressive material, taped or bonded seams, and leg grippers. A suit which is made up of multiple (between 1 and 3 of these elements) is not defined as a Tech Suit.

Traditional one-piece race suits for females as well as briefs and trunks for male swimmers are not defined as tech suits and will be permitted. Knee length suits and jammers will be permitted provided they are not manufactured using all of the four following properties (water repellent fabric, compressive material, taped or bonded seams, and leg grippers). The images below show examples of permitted and prohibited swimwear.

Permitted Suits for Athletes aged 12 years old and younger

<p>Permitted Chlorine resistant fabric OR compressive Raised seams OR Bonded / Taped Leg grippers OR no Leg Grippers Water Repellent Fabric *However, Suits CANNOT contain ALL 4 of the following elements – (water repellent fabric, compressive material, taped or bonded seams, and leg grippers)</p>			<p>Prohibited – Suits which contain ALL 4 elements of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water repellent fabric • Compressive material • Bonded or Taped Seams • Leg grippers

Swimwear Policy Swimwear Policy

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Period Pants & Suit

Swim Ireland is committed to protecting swimmers' modesty and wellbeing and has therefore introduced guidance on the use of period pants and swimsuits, due to queries regarding the World Aquatics (WA) regulations

WA Regulations state;

- *The swimmer can only wear one swimsuit and no taping is allowed.*
- Men's swimsuits are in one (1) piece.
- Subject to observance of the decency rule and limitations of the body surface covered, women's swimsuits may be in one (1) or two (2) pieces.
- Other items covering the body that are not part of the swimsuit are prohibited

It is permissible to wear period pants under swimwear within club training sessions and in competitions.

The wearing of period pants under swimwear will not be regarded as "two swimsuits".

For clarification a period **swimsuit** (full suit and not pants) is allowed but cannot be worn in conjunction with a standard secondary swimsuit, this would be regarded as two swimsuits.

What can be worn?

1. A standard swimsuit plus period pants
2. A specific period swimsuit
3. A specific period swimsuit plus period pants

The wearing of period pants under swimwear does not provide any competitive advantage.

A swimmer will not be disqualified for the use of period pants.

There is no requirement for the referee to record any information regarding a swimmer wearing period pants under swimwear in the meet licence.

Swimmers wearing period pants under swimwear will have times achieved recognised for entry to accredited meets.

Swimmers wearing period pants under swimwear will be able to claim Swim Ireland National records.

The wearing of period pants at meets internationally may not be possible due to the application of WA rules, swimmers competing at this level meet must ensure they check the Meet rules.