

Edge Swim School – Swimming stage level descriptors

How Our Classes Work

At Edge Swim School, our classes differ from traditional leisure centre lessons. Instead of separating each stage, we use **mixed-ability groups** that cover two or more stages (e.g. Stages 1 & 2). Swimmers move up when their teacher feels they are ready, not automatically by term. Children in the same group may be working towards different certificates or badges.

Class Groupings

- Duckling Group
- Stage 1/2 Mixed Ability
- Stage 2/3 Mixed Ability
- Stage 3/4a Mixed Ability
- Stage 4b Lane Group
- Stage 5 Lane Group
- Stage 6 Lane Group
- Stage 6/7+ Lane Group (45 mins)

How Progression Works

Children progress at different rates and may not move up a stage each term. Our focus is on ensuring swimmers **master each stage to a high standard** before moving on, particularly at higher levels. Meeting the minimum criteria is not enough — we push swimmers to achieve the best technique, stamina, and confidence they can.

Progress is not always shown by moving up a group. For example, some stages require stamina or technical consistency before advancing. Missing these foundations can hold swimmers back later on.

In the early stages, progress may look like:

- Becoming comfortable in the water and with splashing
- Standing and moving confidently in all directions
- Putting their face under water
- Floating on front/back with or without support

- Entering and exiting the pool safely

Supporting Progress

We encourage swimmers and parents to practice outside lessons too. Extra time in the water builds confidence and accelerates progress.

Before moving to the next group, swimmers should complete both their **stage/water skills awards** and, in some cases, achieve relevant **distance badges**.

Duckling Stage

(Teachers will be in the water with children at this level)

The Duckling stages help children between 30 months to 5 years old explore and enjoy the fun of learning to swim. Lessons are aimed to develop general confidence both in and out of the water through informal play, before joining the NTPS stages.

Stage 1

(Teachers will be in the water with children at this level)

Learners cover the initial process of introducing those with no or very little experience of swimming to the new water environment, developing confidence and being at ease in the water. Achieved to a great extent through informal play, the main outcomes involve moving around quite freely, submerging and opening the eyes, floating, and using the arms and legs to achieve a simple form of travelling through the water.

- Front: scooping arms in the water and legs action at the same time
- Back: sculling hands and legs action at the same time and breaststroke legs on the back (Frog legs)
- Able to travel on front / back with an aid
- Able to travel a small distance without any aids on either front/back

Stage 2

(Teachers will be in the water with children at this level)

Learners are able to travel around 5 metres on both front/back (with no aids) but not necessarily using recognised strokes. They are at home in the water and confident in the environment - without holding on to the side, and can submerge completely.

- Basic recognisable strokes on front crawl, backcrawl plus breaststroke legs
- Must be able/aiming to swim 10m on both front crawl and backcrawl
- Front crawl breathing will be introduced/developed
- Butterfly will be introduced

Stages 3

(Teachers will be in the water with children at this level)

As above, the emphasis moves from initial confidence to building a sound foundation in those aspects of watermanship, which later on will underpin the performance of sound swimming technique.

- Basic recognisable strokes on frontcrawl, backcrawl & breaststroke
- Must be able/aiming to swim 10m on both frontcrawl and backcrawl & breaststroke
- Frontcrawl breathing will be further developed
- Butterfly will be introduced

Stage 4

As above, and now developing control in the water through breathing, and beginning to experiment with the different methods of using the limbs for propulsion. The higher level of stage 4 will be swimming lengths of the pool.

- Must be able/aiming to swim between 15m-25m on front crawl, backcrawl & Breaststroke
- Is confident on top, and underneath the water
- Butterfly will continue to be developed
- Perform forward/backwards somersaults, handstands etc
- Water skill focus should be on excellent streamlining with push and glides (from and back), and introducing sculling

Stages 5

The focus is to further develop ability on all strokes with a continuing emphasis on the importance of good streamlining and breathing control. Stage 5 will be swimming lengths of the pool.

- Learners swim lengths of the pool using any of the 3 strokes and maintain an effective/efficient style, and butterfly is further developed over a length
- Introduction to starts, turns & diving
- Water skill focus is on swimming underwater, sculling, treading water, forward rolls and handstands
- Water safety introduced

Stage 6+

Consolidating the aquatic skills and further develop the kicking and pulling learned in the previous stages. Along with controlled breathing, so that swimmers are competent in using correct technique on 3 of the main strokes

- Must be aiming to swim 50m+ on both front crawl, backcrawl, and breaststroke with the development of stamina/strength
- Good developed stroke coordination in three of the strokes ensuring streamlined position is maintained
- Has a fair understanding/further development of the butterfly stroke, and technique
- Feels confident to try a wider range of other aquatic disciplines leading to the development of a greater awareness and expertise in general water safety and survival swimming
- Water safety further developed

Stage 7/8+ (45min class)

The aim is for those swimmers to step away from the learn to swim program and into a more fitness-focused / competitive swimming program. We aim to keep the sessions fun but challenging. Refining that technique to give them that “edge” in the swimming pool.

- All swimmers joining the 45-minute group will have achieved stage 6
- The group is aimed at those swimmers who might be considering joining a swim club, or for those who do not wish to go down the competitive route but want to stay involved in continuing to swim.
- The sessions and more coaching orientated
- Classes are based on sets/drills that work on techniques to improve stroke efficiency and speed work
- Competitive start, turns are taught
- Swimmers are coached rather than taught.
- At the class teacher's discretion - we can award stages 7, 8 and 9 or distance badges

