

# 11 & UNDER TECHNICAL/PERFORMANCE SUIT POLICY



Swimming Victoria, alongside Swimming Australia, is committed to creating a welcoming and inclusive swimming environment for all competitive members. In 2021, Swimming Australia introduced an [Inclusive Swimming Policy](#) with the aim to ensure:

- All Australians feel welcome safe, valued, and celebrated in swimming.
- All Australians can participate in the role and at the level of their choice in swimming.
- Australia's diversity is reflected in swimming.

Swimming Victoria have adopted this framework for all competitions run under the Swimming Victoria rules.

In addition to this framework, the Swimming Victoria Competitions & Events By-Law states that:

***'Competitors 11 years and under are not permitted (or allowed) to wear a technical/performance suit in SV hosted competitions'.***

This also extends to all competitions run under the Swimming Victoria rules.

Swimming Victoria believe that in order to keep young swimmers in our sport, we need to be providing an environment that encourages them and keeps the level of competition and pressure appropriate for their age. Further rationale for this policy is outlined below.

## **What is a Technical/Performance Suit?**

Technical/Performance racing suits are typically manufactured using scientifically advanced materials. Materials of this type are normally comprised of spandex and nylon composite fabrics with features to reduce 'drag' against the water, reduce absorption of water and are highly compressive to increase the athlete's glide through the water.

The design of these suits also typically includes features like special seams and tape to optimise performance. Traditional one-piece race suits for girls as well as briefs and trunks for boys are not technical/performance suits and are permitted under this policy. Knee length suits and 'jammers' (suits that end closer to the knee than the hip) will be permitted provided they do not feature the key components of a technical/performance swimsuit.

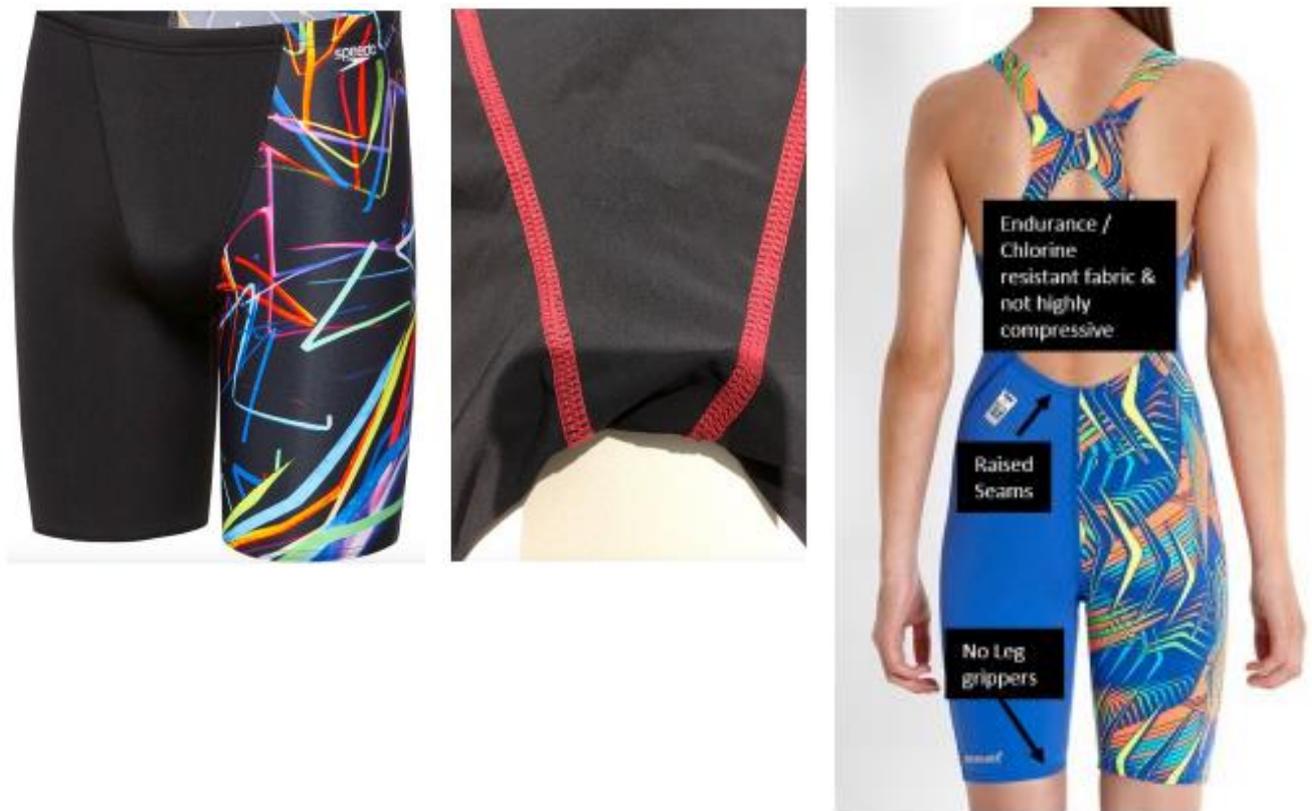
The key, easily- identifiable component/s of a technical/performance suit that should be used when differentiating what is, and is not, permitted are the following:

- Bonded/Sealed seams
- Meshed seams
- Kinetic tape.

The below photographs are examples of swimsuit seaming which is **not permitted** for swimmers aged 11 and under.



The below images are examples of swimwear which **are permitted** for athletes aged 11 and under, noting the stitching is raised on the outside of the fabric.



It should be noted that some permitted swimwear is FINA approved and will have a FINA barcode attached to the back of the suit. FINA approved swimwear can be worn permitted it is not classed as a technical/performance suit. The differentiation between these suits is the fabric and stitching, as described above.

The rationale behind this decision by Swimming Victoria is outlined below.

1. There is no documented evidence that supports any benefits of performance/technical suits for athletes 11 years and under.
2. Personal best times should not be the only evaluation or measure of success for younger swimmers. Technique and skill development is essential for long-term swimmer development. It is crucial that as swimmers progress through the sport, they have developed a strong foundation in technique and stroke development to enable them to achieve higher results in the latter years of their career.
3. The cost of technical suits makes them unattainable for many families. Swimming Victoria does not want to add any extra financial pressure on parents with unnecessary purchases. We understand that for various reasons, cost of suits may not be an issue for all swimmers however, in order to effectively police this change, we must restrict all suits of this style.
4. These suits aren't designed for young swimmers. The manufacturers design these suits for older athletes. One of the main benefits of wearing a technical suit is for muscle compression. Swimmers, who are not yet developed, are not impacted by this benefit. Swimmers cannot 'grow into' these suits.
5. A common misconception amongst younger swimmers is that without a technical suit, a swimmer cannot swim fast. An age group swimmer does not need a performance suit to swim fast. Swimmers will improve and attain personal bests regardless of the suit they are wearing due to gradual increases in training and skill development.
6. The aim should be to build mentally strong swimmers, confident in their own ability and training ethic rather than an athlete depending on a technical suit to get an improved result.

For more information on Swimming Australia's Inclusive Swimming Framework and the swimsuits permitted under the Inclusive Swimwear Policy, please [click here](#).