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## WHOLE SCHOOL NOTICES

### **1. End of Term Reminders**

As we approach the half-term break, please take note of the following:

- Friday 14th February is a non-student day – students should not attend school.
- Students will return on Monday 24th February.
- The first week back will follow the Week B timetable.

A huge thank you to all our students and staff for their hard work this half term! We hope everyone has a well-deserved break and returns refreshed and ready for the next half of the term.

### **2. Notice of Early Closure – Tuesday 4 March**

Please be aware that the school will close early for students at 1:25pm on Tuesday, 4 March, to accommodate Year 10 Parents' Evening. As Year 10 is a particularly large year group, the event will start earlier to allow more parents to book appointments with their child's subject teachers and to give staff time to prepare.

Details for students that use Anita's, ACME coaches and Louie's Transport will be confirmed after we return from half term.

### **3. Uniform Notice – Trainers**

We are seeing an increasing number of students arriving at school without the correct uniform, particularly white trainers, which are not in line with our uniform policy. Please support us in ensuring all students adhere to our expectations.

If a student is not wearing the correct uniform without a valid reason, the following steps will be taken:

- **1st occasion:** A member of staff will speak to the student and contact home will be made.
- **2nd occasion:** The student will receive a detention with their teacher and contact home will be made.
- **3rd occasion:** A Pastoral After-School Detention will be issued, and the Head of Year will decide on the next steps.

The vast majority of students follow the uniform policy correctly, and we appreciate their efforts. Our aim is simply to ensure consistency so that learning time is maximised, and unnecessary conflict is avoided.

If there is a genuine reason why your child cannot wear the correct uniform, please inform their form tutor, who can issue a uniform card where necessary.

#### **4. Library Reward Scheme – Encouraging a Love for Reading**

We are excited to introduce our Library Reward Cards, now available for students to collect from the library. This initiative encourages reading while offering great incentives:

- Students will receive a stamp for every book they read.
- 5 House Points will be awarded for each completed book.
- Once their card is full (6 books read), they will receive a special prize!

We encourage all students to take part and develop a lifelong love of reading.

#### **5. Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust Termly Newsletter**

Please see below the Winter Term newsletter from the school nursing team.

<https://www.birchwoodhighschool.co.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=179&type=pdf>

#### **6. BBC Reporters Club Are Supporting Mahinga Primary School in Kenya**

We're collecting pre-loved trainers and sportswear to support Mahinga Primary School in rural Kenya. Over the past few years, we've provided every child with a pair of trainers for school, and we hope to continue this effort.

Many of these children walk long distances to access education, so suitable footwear makes a big difference. We're looking for donations of small sizes up to adult sizes.

If you can help, please drop your donations at Students' Reception. Thank you for your support!

## **7. Valentine's Day Bake Off**

Valentine's Day Bake Off – Thursday 13 February

Our Valentine's Day Bake Off is taking place on Thursday 13 February. Students are invited to showcase their baking skills by bringing in their homemade creations.

Key Information:

- Drop off: All entries must be brought to the library before form time and clearly labelled with the student's name.
- No nuts: Please ensure that all bakes are nut-free.
- Containers: All Tupperware and containers must be collected by the end of the day.

[Poster can be seen here.](#)

## **8. Young Musicians Of The Year**

We are very excited to announce that the first round of Birchwood's Young Musician competition is coming up. The categories students can enter are Pop, Musical Theatre, Classical and Junior Piano (years 7,8 and 9) - with the overall winners being decided by judges in the live final.

To enter the competition students should send a video recording of themselves performing their favourite piece to Mr Grogan – [mgrogan@birchwoodhigh.org.uk](mailto:mgrogan@birchwoodhigh.org.uk). All styles and genres of music are welcome but please state which category you'd like to enter. Videos can be uploaded to the student's school Office 365 OneDrive and a link sent via email or Teams. Please note that recordings should be made in a communal space e.g. living room.

Please send entries to Mr Grogan, by email or Teams, by 5pm Tuesday 11 February. The finalists will be announced on Thursday 13 February for the live final taking place at 7pm in the School Hall on Thursday 27 February. There will be prizes up for grabs, and a guest judge to award the winners, we look forward to getting your entries.

## **9. Poetry Competition – "A Journey"**

We are excited to announce a poetry competition open to all year groups! The theme is "A Journey". This could be anything from a physical journey—like a trip to school or a journey to space—to a personal journey of growth or discovery.

How to Enter:

- Write your poem based on the theme "A Journey"
- Submit your entry to Miss Shackleton in the Library by Monday 24 February

## **10. Co-Curriculum Reminder**

Our Co-Curriculum (linked below) is filled with activities and ideas chosen by each of our subject departments to help you get inspired. These activities will give you lots of different ways to explore topics and learn more about the things you enjoy. You'll find suggestions for things to Watch, Listen, Read, Go, and Do—and they're designed to be interesting and challenging, so you'll always have something new to try!

[Discover more.](#)

## **11. Weekly Safeguarding Tips: Emotional Wellbeing**

- Let your child know they can talk to you about their feelings and reassure them that they will be supported.
- Be alert to changes in behaviour, such as withdrawal, anger, or sadness, as these could be signs they need additional support.

## **12. Careers Notices - National Apprenticeship Week 10 - 14 February**

- ***Apprenticeship Awareness Session***  
***Tuesday 11 February 6 - 6:30 pm***

This virtual session is an exclusive for Birchwood Parents delivered by a representative from ASK. Join the session from the comfort of your own home - this is an ideal opportunity for you to find out the latest about apprenticeships and ask any questions that you may have.

Please see the link to join [here](#)

- ***Wednesday 12 February 4 - 6 pm - Unifrog Apprenticeship Fair***

Join Unifrog's virtual fair to learn all about the world of apprenticeships. Explore the latest apprenticeship opportunities, attend live sessions with top employers, and network one-on-one with professional experts to get top tips on how to find and apply for your dream apprenticeship. <https://unifrog.ivent-pro.com/events/apprenticeshipfair/login>

- ***Hertfordshire Parent/Carer Apprenticeships Survey***

This week marks National Apprenticeship Week 2025. In partnership with our local Careers Hub our school is participating in the annual Hertfordshire Parent/Carer Apprenticeships and Technical Education Pathways Survey.

It doesn't matter whether you have strong views or have little knowledge of apprenticeships to be able to complete this survey. Some of you may have completed previous years surveys – some questions have been added or slightly amended since last year.

All completed surveys are completely anonymous, and responses will be collated directly by Amazing Apprenticeships who have been commissioned to complete the survey across Hertfordshire. If we receive more than 50 responses our school will receive its own individual

report which will be incredibly helpful for us in planning future careers activity for both students and parent/carers.

Link to Survey - <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/birchwood-high-school-parents-25>

- **Accountancy Firm PwC Virtual Classroom Event**

PwC are hosting a Virtual Classroom session on Thursday 13 February specifically for parents and teachers, where you'll be able to ask questions to our recruitment team about our apprenticeships.

Find out more about our school and college leaver programmes and the career opportunities available for students at PwC.

During this session, one of our early careers recruiters will provide an overview of each of our programmes and share insights and top tips on the various stages of our application process.

[Register here.](#)

- **Success at school's top Apprenticeship picks:**

[ACA Chartered Accountancy Apprenticeship Training Scheme](#)

[Warner Bros Discovery](#)

[BP Apprenticeship](#)

## YEAR 7

### **PGL Trip Payment Reminder:**

The payment deadline for June's PGL trip to the Isle of Wight is Friday 28 February. If you have any questions, please contact [trips@birchwoodhigh.org.uk](mailto:trips@birchwoodhigh.org.uk).

### **Enrichment Week Expression of Interest**

Please complete your expression of interest form for Enrichment Week before Tuesday 11 February 2025. More details can be found on the email sent last week.

Please note this is for students not on the residential trip.

<https://forms.office.com/e/HMjanGsGsE>

## YEAR 8

### **Enrichment Week Expression of Interest**

Please complete your expression of interest form for Enrichment Week before Tuesday 11 February 2025. More details can be found on the email sent last week.

<https://forms.office.com/e/5P4bitGWPE>.

## YEAR 9

### **Enrichment Week Expression of Interest**

Please complete your expression of interest form for Enrichment Week before Tuesday 11 February 2025. More details can be found on the email sent last week.

Please note this is for students not on the residential trip.

<https://forms.office.com/e/aXhxj0BY13>

### **Vaccinations – 26 February 2025**

In line with the National Immunisation Programme, the Community School Aged Immunisation Service offers Diphtheria, Tetanus and Polio and Meningococcal ACWY vaccinations to all pupils in Year 9.

The immunisation session is due to take place on **Wednesday 26 February 2025**. Every child in Year 9 will have the opportunity for immunisation on the day and all students will see the nurse who will confirm consent, students without consent will be sent back to lessons.

**[Please read this letter for further details and ensure you complete the Immunisation Form linked within, as requested.](#)**

The electronic link to accept or decline this vaccination is open until 12pm on Wednesday 26 February 2025. If any parents have difficulty accessing the online consent form, please contact the Immunisation Team on 01727 732062. If you do not wish for your child to have the immunisation you need to sign in the 'No consent' box.

Please note 'No response' is not 'No consent'.

## YEAR 10

### **Year 10 Work Shadowing Day – Wednesday 25 June**

To help students gain insight into the world of work, we are running a Work Shadowing Day on Wednesday 25 June.

Students must log their placement details on Unifrog by Friday 23 May, which will trigger an employer approval process. Those without a placement will be expected in school on the day.

For more information, please refer to the FAQ sheet emailed on Friday, or contact [crimesj@birchwoodhigh.org.uk](mailto:crimesj@birchwoodhigh.org.uk).

### **Year 10 Provisional Mock Dates**

Year 10 Mocks are set for the week beginning 16th June. Students will sit 1 exam per core subject. This is scheduled at the end of the public exam period. We will confirm which exam is on which days closer to the time.

### **Enrichment Week Expression of Interest**

Please complete your expression of interest form for Enrichment Week before Tuesday 11 February 2025. More details can be found on the email sent last week.

<https://forms.office.com/e/Nrcb2fzw9K>

### **Year 10 Parents Evening – Tuesday 4 March**

Year 10 Parents' Evening will take place on **Tuesday 4 March** from 3.00pm to 7.00pm. These meetings will be booked online and held in-person at the school. More details on how to book appointments will be sent via email when we return from half term.

## YEAR 11

### **Year 11 Leavers' Book – Photo Submissions**

We are currently in the process of designing this year's Year 11 Leavers' Book and would love to include as many student memories as possible!

Students have been invited to submit any photographs they have for inclusion via Teams. If they have any questions, they can contact Mrs I Barnard for more information.

### **Tesco Stronger Starts Retail Apprenticeship – An Opportunity for Year 11 Leavers**

Do you know students who are leaving Year 11 and unsure about their next steps? The Tesco Stronger Starts Retail Apprenticeship offers a fantastic opportunity to earn while they learn, gaining valuable skills and qualifications for a long-term career.

What's in it for them?

- Earn £22,500 while they learn
- Gain a Level 2 National Standard in Retail, equivalent to 5 GCSE passes
- Secure a permanent position after the apprenticeship
- Access long-term career opportunities
- Develop practical, transferable skills for life

What does the apprenticeship involve?

This 12-month, in-store apprenticeship provides hands-on experience in areas such as marketing, business, and technology, alongside key retail tasks like picking orders, restocking, and supporting customers. Apprentices will join a supportive and inclusive team while developing the confidence and skills needed for future success.

[Apply here](#)

## SIXTH FORM

### **Year 12 Parents' Evening – Tuesday 11 February**

Year 12 Parents' Evening will take place on Tuesday 11 February from 4.00pm to 7.00pm. These meetings will be booked online and held in-person at the school. Thank you to all those who have already booked appointments. Please contact [ekimberley@birchwoodhigh.org.uk](mailto:ekimberley@birchwoodhigh.org.uk) if you have any questions.

### **Year 13 - Parents and caregivers session: supporting the next steps of university applications**

Not sure what your child's next steps should be after submitting their university application? Join this webinar to find out about the different university offers your child will receive, things to consider when choosing between these, and how to support your child if they don't receive any offers.



Wed 26 Feb - 17:30 - [sign up](#)

### **In2MedSchool GP Virtual Work Experience Day**

16th February 2025 from 9am - 12pm

In2MedSchool are running a virtual GP work experience day for prospective applicants to gain insights into the daily life of a GP and a GP trainee, explore pathways into general practice training, and engage in a simulated consultation of common conditions in a GP setting.

To sign up, please fill out this form: <https://forms.office.com/e/ARy9U9ayCJ>

### **City Careers Insight Programme – Free Opportunity for Year 12 Students**

Causeway Education, in partnership with Watson Farley & Williams LLP, is offering a free three-day in-person City Careers Insight Programme from 22nd–24th July 2025.

This programme will allow students to:

- Explore careers in Law and gain valuable industry insights
- Build professional networks and develop key career skills
- Receive personal statement mentoring from trained legal professionals in the autumn term

Eligibility Criteria:

- Year 12 student
- Within daily travelling distance to Watson Farley & Williams LLP (15 Appold Street, London, EC2A 2HB) (travel costs reimbursed)
- Available to attend all three days of the programme

Register your interest here: <https://forms.office.com/e/rRnZtyHWNY>

Application deadline: 28th February 2025

This is a fantastic opportunity for students considering a career in Law or related fields.

# Journeys

## POETRY COMPETITION

DEADLINE EXTENDED: MONDAY 24 FEBRUARY

Write about a physical journey (to school, to space, etc.)  
or a personal journey. Be creative and interpret the theme  
in your way! All entries should be handed to  
Miss Shackleton in the library.





# Valentine's Day Bake Off

Cakes Cookies  
Chocolates Pies  
Cupcakes

*Must bring the  
item in on  
Thursday 13th  
February to the  
library.*

- *Items must not  
include nuts*
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