



YEAR 7	YEAR 11
YEAR 8	SIXTH FORM
YEAR 9	VACANCIES
YEAR 10	

WHOLE SCHOOL NOTICES

Appointment of Acting Co-Principals – A Message from Gill Turner

The Trustees have appointed Mr Gilbank and Mrs Jacobson as Acting Co-Principals during Mr Griffin's short-term absence. They are experienced leaders who know the school well, and I appreciate their dedication in taking on this role. Please be assured that school operations will continue as normal during this period.

You can read the full letter from Gill on our [website](#).

Walkie-Talkie App Disruptions

We want to make parents aware of an app called TenTen, which a small number of students have been using in school. This walkie-talkie app allows users to broadcast messages through another person's phone speaker, causing disruptions to lessons.

We kindly ask parents to check their child's phone for this app and delete it if found. You can find more details about the app [here](#).

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.

Careers Notice - National Apprenticeship Week 10 - 14 February

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

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.

- **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>

- **Choices - a monthly parent and carer guide to apprenticeships**

January edition - <https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/media/uvengwqi/january-2025-choices-magazine.pdf>

- **Discover Apprenticeships in Engineering and Construction**

Join this [one-hour webinar](#) on apprenticeships in the engineering construction industry hosted by the ECITB (Engineering and Construction Industry Training Board). Hear from top employers and current apprentices as they share their experiences, insights, and tips to help you take your first steps into this dynamic industry and a career full of exciting possibilities.

Or, read more on the ECITB website here: <https://www.ecitb.org.uk/career-pathways/ecitb-engineering-construction-%20apprenticeships/>

- **The Sixth Formers Guide to Apprenticeship**

The first TV programme from The Sixth Formers' Guide to Degree Apprenticeships is now available to watch [here](#).

Weekly Safeguarding Tips: Healthy Relationships

1. Encourage your child to talk to you or another trusted adult if they feel unsafe or are being bullied, whether in person or online.
2. Help your child understand what healthy friendships and relationships look like by discussing respect, boundaries, and consent.

Hertfordshire County Council – Supporting Families

Please see the [following poster](#) from the Supporting Families Team at HCC. Please direct any questions directly to familiesfirst.support@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Family Lives – Parent Workshops

Family Lives are delivering 3 parenting groups and 6 workshops, funded by Herts County Council, in the Spring term for parents/carers who live in Hertfordshire.

All our programmes provide support, information and resources to parents/carers and adult family members so they can help their child reach their full potential as well as access to the wraparound support provided by our helpline, live chat and website.

- Sorting Out Family Arguments (6 weeks) Online group
 - Wednesday 26 February to 2 April 9.30am - 11.30am Via MS Teams
- Dads Together (6 weeks) Online group
 - Wednesday 26 February to 2 April 7pm - 9pm Via MS Teams
- Getting on with Your Pre-Teen/Teenager (6 weeks) Online group
 - Thursday 27 February 3 April 9.30am – 11.30am Via MS Teams

Workshops - Online via MS Teams

- Anxiety around ADHD
 - Monday 10 February 7pm – 9pm
- Sibling Rivalry
 - Thursday 14 February 9.30am – 11.30am
- Empowering Parenting
 - Tuesday 11 March 9.30 am– 11.30am
- Reducing Conflict
 - Tuesday 18 March 7pm – 9pm
- It's a Dads Life
 - Thursday 20 March 7pm – 9pm
- Navigating the Storm – Teens
 - Tuesday 25 March 9.30am – 11.30am

To book a place please click here [Referral Form for Family Lives Herts Parenting Groups and Workshops](#) for our online referral form. You can also email services@familylives.org.uk or call us on 0204 522 8700 for more information.

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.](#)

LGBT+ History Month – February Events

February is LGBT+ History Month, and to celebrate, the school is hosting a series of events aimed at raising awareness and promoting inclusivity.

Upcoming Events:

- Tuesday 11 February – Guest Speaker: Sarah Cosgriff from SchoolsOUT
- Tuesday 18 February – Film Event: Green Book
- Wednesday 26 February – Guest Speaker: Peter Tatchell, Human Rights Activist and LGBT+ Campaigner
- Wednesday 19 March – Fusion Trip to Bletchley Park

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. 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.

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. [The theme is completely open to interpretation, so let your creativity flow!](#)

How to Enter:

- Write your poem based on the theme "A Journey"
- Submit your entry to Miss Shackleton in the Library by Monday, 10th February

A winner will be selected in the last week of the half term, with prizes awarded for both lower school and upper school categories.

Photography Competition

Enter our Winter Scenic Photography competition. All entries should be sent to Mrs Collyer by Friday 7 February. [Full details can be found here.](#)

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.](#)

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.

YEAR 8

Update from Mrs Hinski

As we near the Year 8 Parents' Evening I would like to think that everyone is on their best behaviour. However, I still have groups of boys bundling and crushing in corridors before lesson time. Please speak to your sons about this in terms of safety and appropriate conduct.

It was great to watch the boy's football team in action against Avanti. I was particularly impressed with Noah's goal and Harry's one-handed punch saves. I hope we win the next match. Congratulations to the girls at the top of the House Points leader board - Evie and Laura - great accomplishments across all subjects and for a range of reasons.

Year 8 Parents Evening

Year 8 Parents' Evening will take place on Tuesday, 4 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. The online booking system went live on Tuesday, 28 January, and closes at 10.00am on tomorrow. To access the system, visit <https://parents-booking.co.uk/birchwood>.

To book appointments, you will need details that match our school records exactly, including:

- Your first name and surname
- Your child's first name, surname, and date of birth

For further guidance, please refer to the [Parent Booking Guide](#).

If you need to confirm your details or require assistance, please contact ekimberley@birchwoodhigh.org.uk.

YEAR 9

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 9 School Photographs

Please be aware that Year 9 students will have their updated school photographs taken on Tuesday 4 February. These photographs are to ensure our school records are up to date and are available for parents to purchase.

Please see our previous email for instructions on how to register to purchase your child's photograph.

Year 9 Careers Talk – Sky Studios, Elstree – Thursday

On Thursday, Year 9 students will attend a careers talk by Sky Studios, Elstree during Period 2. The talk will cover various career opportunities within the film and television industry, giving students valuable insights into potential future careers.

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. This is an opportunity for students to observe a parent, relative, or family friend at work, giving them valuable exposure to different careers.

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.

YEAR 11

Prom Payment and Information

Each year, Prom is kindly organised by parents of current Year 11 students and this year Alice Kidd is organising the Birchwood Prom 2025 with Gemma Hughes.

It will be held on **Wednesday 25th June 2025, from 7pm until 11:30pm** at Parklands, Quendon Hall, which has previously been used for Birchwood Proms.

Please note: Students will need to make their own way to and from the venue.

The date has been decided by considering the school & exam calendars; while we hope this date suits all, we know we may not be able to please everyone.

Tickets cost £60 per person and are **strictly for Birchwood students only**. The prom is an inclusive event so there are no other costs involved on the evening.

Included in the price of the ticket is:

- Food (burgers, hotdogs, chips etc)
- Soft drinks, candy floss, popcorn & sweets
- A Photo Booth, of course a DJ and a few other surprises

Please make payment as soon as possible – and no later than **Saturday 1st February**.

Account Name: Alice Kidd (use full name – do not shorten or use initials)

Sort Code: 20-36-98

Account number: 53423395

Please use your child's name as reference

We hope that all students feel comfortable in attending. Please let us know if we can do anything to help accommodate everyone. If you would like to contact me (Alice) please call on 07800 510232 or message directly for any questions. Alternatively, you can email Mrs Julie Gair at school jgair@birchwoodhigh.org.uk who will contact Alice and Gemma on your behalf.

Kind Regards,

Alice and Gemma

On behalf of Birchwood High School

Making Choices at Level 3 Event

The University of Hertfordshire will be running our Making Choices at Level 3 online event for Year 11 this week, which is free to attend. Students can sign up to attend [here](#).

The session is aimed at Year 11 and will share top tips on how to make the best Level 3 qualification choices for them and their potential pathways to HE.

Topic: Year 11: Making the right choices for you Post-16.

- Date: Thursday 6 February
- Time: 16:30-17:15

- Join us for helpful tips when choosing which sixth form/college courses are right for you and your future. You'll also hear from current students about their experience and how they made their choices.

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.

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.

The online booking system will open at 7.00pm on Tuesday 4 February and close at 10:00am on Tuesday 11 February. A link to the booking system and a reminder of how to log in will be emailed to you tomorrow ahead of the booking system going live.

Year 12 – Extended Project Qualification

Year 12 students are encouraged to sign up for the Extended Project Qualification. Although it will be time consuming, requiring at 2-3 hours work each week, the skills gained by completing the project over the next year will be highly beneficial and will provide concrete evidence of independence, decision-making and academic rigour.

Students were introduced to this independent project in an assembly last week. The content of this and additional information regarding the qualification is available on the Year 12 Teams channel.

The deadline for applications to Mr Levey is Friday 7 February.

Students are reminded that signing up includes a commitment to see the project through to the end

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>

VACANCIES

Caretaker

We are seeking to appoint, for February 2025, an experienced Caretaker to join our site team and be responsible for ensuring the school grounds and buildings are clean and well maintained as a safe and healthy environment for all users of the school premises. You will make a significant contribution to the maintenance of the buildings, fixtures and fittings.

More details can be found on [My New Term](#).

Journeys

POETRY COMPETITION

DEADLINE: MONDAY 10 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.



Get the right help at the right time



early help, brighter futures

Need advice and support for your family?

-  Relationship support
-  Money advice
-  Parenting Advice & Courses
-  Services for Young People
-  Emotional & Mental Health
-  SEND Local Offer
-  Staying healthy
-  Search local services
-  School attendance/anxiety
-  and much more



Visit Hertfordshire's Families First website:-
www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/familiesfirst



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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-  and much more



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WINTER SCENIC PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

Please send entries to 
acollyer@birchwoodhigh.org.uk
or on Teams.

Deadline to enter is Friday 7th
February