



Birchwood High School

your dreams, your future, our challenge

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**PARENT INFORMATION
HANDBOOK**



Welcome to Birchwood High School

We are a school where everyone is welcomed, supported and celebrated every step of the way. We are rightly proud of our inclusive and comprehensive ethos, where every student can thrive and succeed. Our inclusive ethos is the heartbeat of our community. We are a school where everyone is embraced with open arms and supported every step of the way. We are open to all and proud to celebrate individuality, making sure every student feels valued and empowered to succeed.

At Birchwood, we believe in unlocking personal potential. Whether your child is an aspiring scientist, artist, athlete, or entrepreneur, we're here to help them explore their passions, discover their strengths, and achieve their goals.

We expect every member of our community to share in our values by showing mutual respect and tolerance. Part of learning together is respecting and following rules that keep everyone safe and allow everyone to learn in a respectful, calm and happy environment. This booklet sets out the basics of life at Birchwood so that students, parents and carers can work together with a common aim and make their Birchwood journey a success.

As you continue to navigate through our Induction programme and learn more about Birchwood, I am sure you will agree that this school is incredibly special and offers something unique to every student who joins us.

your dreams, your future, our challenge.

Mr Sam Griffin,

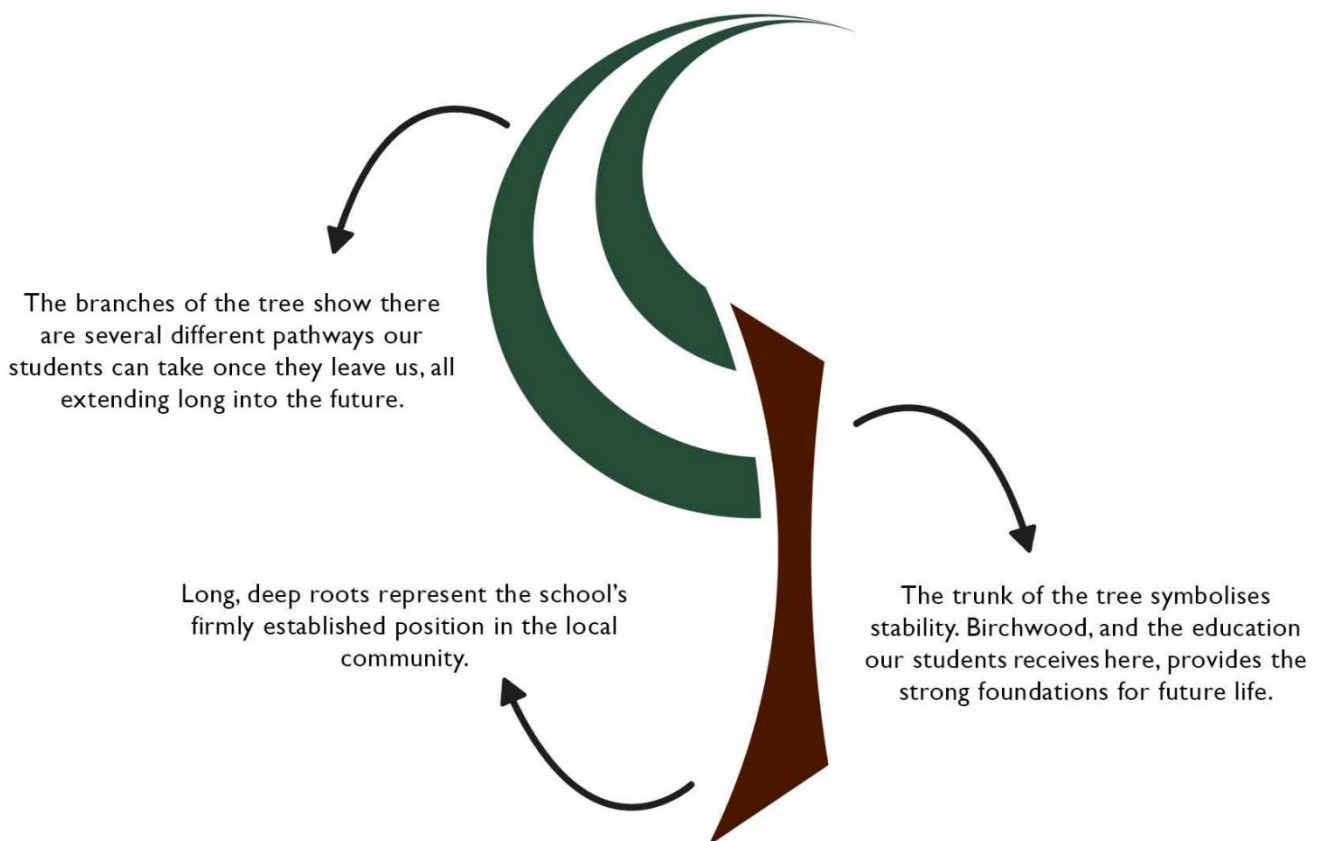
Principal

1. ABOUT BIRCHWOOD

We have great pride in being an inclusive school, with an all-ability ethos that respects and responds to our students and our local community. By ensuring that we “welcome all, support all and encourage all” we believe that we create a learning environment with high aspirations for students’ academic progress and their personal growth, so that they move on from Birchwood prepared for their next steps and their place in the world as happy and successful young adults.

We have high expectations of the young people in our school and every student and family should have high expectations for their education. To this end our aim is to provide a carefully considered and expertly taught curriculum to support excellent academic progress, that works together with robust pastoral support and extracurricular opportunities to ensure students’ personal growth and wellbeing.

Do you know the meaning behind our logo?



Our values are incorporated in our ethos statement:

At Birchwood, we are part of something special, welcoming all, supporting all, and encouraging all. Together, we enjoy the exploration of ideas, the excitement of learning, and the celebration of our achievements in a school where we feel safe.

Your dreams, your future, our challenge

2. THE SCHOOL DAY

SCHOOL DAY	TIME	DETAIL
From	8:00am	Students are welcome on site and can make use of the facilities including the Café. Please do not drop students off before this time.
	8:35am	Warning bell to prompt students to move to their Form Room
Form Time	8:40-9:00am	Formal start of the School Day (Students will go to the Hall for AM registration on the day they have assembly)
Period 1	9:00-9:55am	
Movement time	9:55-10:00am	Warning bell to prompt students to begin to move to their lesson Period 2
Period 2	10:00-11:00am	
Break	11:00-11:25am	Morning break
Period 3	11:25-12:20pm	
Movement time	12:20-12:25pm	Warning bell to prompt students to begin to move to their lesson P4
Period 4	12:25-1:25pm	Lessons end at 1:20pm Year 7 / 1:25pm Year 8 – 13 (first half term only)
Lunch	1:25-2:05pm	All Café entrances 1 (Hot Food) / 2 (Pasta) / 3 (Sandwich Hut) to be used 1:00pm Year 12/13 if Free 1:20pm - Year 7 (first half term only) 1:25pm - Year 8 1:25pm - Year 9 1:30pm - Year 10 1:30pm - Year 11 1:35pm – Year 12/13 or before 1:20pm
Movement time	2:05-2:10pm	Warning bell to prompt students to begin to move to their lesson P5
Period 5	2:10-3:10pm	Afternoon registration will be taken in this lesson
	3:15pm	Formal end of the school day
After school	3:15-4:15pm	Extra-curricular Clubs

The school day starts at 8:40am with lessons finishing at 3:10pm. Afterschool clubs, rehearsals etc will take place until 4:15pm (unless stated by the member of staff who is running the club).

The School Library is open throughout the day and students are welcome to use it as a quiet space before school, at break and lunchtimes and after school until 4:15pm (Monday to Thursday) and 3:45pm on Friday. The Café and seating area are also available from 8:00am.

3. TERM DATES *Some dates may be subject to change.

Year 7 students will start school on **Tuesday 3 September** alongside Year 12.
The remainder of the school will return on Wednesday 4 September.

Autumn Term 2024

Monday 2 September – Friday 20 December

Half Term: Monday 28 October – Friday 1 November

PLEASE NOTE:

Monday 2 September: non-student day

Tuesday 3 September: Years 7 and 12 only

Wednesday 4 September: whole school attend

Friday 4 October: non-student day

Spring Term 2025

Monday 6 January – Friday 4 April

Half Term: Monday 17 February – Friday 21 February

PLEASE NOTE:

Monday 6 January: non-student day

Friday 14 February: non-student day

Summer Term 2025

Tuesday 22 April – Wednesday 23 July

Half Term: Monday 26 May – Friday 30 May

PLEASE NOTE:

Monday 21 July: non-student day

Tuesday 22 July: non-student day

Wednesday 23 July: non-student day

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

Year 7 Settling Evening

Tuesday 8 October 2024

Year 7 Parents' Evening

Tuesday 13 May 2025

4. ATTENDANCE

Parents/carers are responsible for making sure that their children come to school every day. Our school aims for every student to have a 100% attendance record and we know that this is also the aim of the vast majority of parents and carers. Under the Education Act 1996, parents/carers can be prosecuted if their children fail to attend.

The link between attendance and attainment is proven. It is important for all students to attend school every day if they are to gain the best possible results. For example, nationally, students whose attendance is between 97% and 100% achieve 1 grade higher at GCSE than those whose attendance is between 93% and 96%.

5. ABSENCE

If students are too unwell to come to school, it is important that their parents/carers call our absence line on 01279 655936, and press "Option 1" explaining the reason, or email the Attendance Officer dlegallienne@birchwoodhigh.org.uk. This must be done for every day of absence.

If medical or dental appointments are made during school hours, please provide a note in advance. Students should show the note to their tutor who will sign it and give it back. Students then show the note to the teacher who is teaching them at the time they have to leave. When they leave the school site, they must sign out at Reception, showing the note, and sign back in on their return.

Please try to book appointments out of school time as this does impact student learning.

Please do not arrange holidays during term times.

We are unable to authorise holidays during term time. If students must miss school, permission will only be given in exceptional circumstances, such as bereavement, in which case parents/carers must write a letter directly to the Head of Year.

If students are late for school, or for a lesson, they will initially be marked as 'absent'. They should report directly to their lesson and they will then be marked present.

If students feel ill during the school day, they should tell a teacher. The teacher will assess and if they feel the student requires medical attention they will send them with a note to the Medical Room. The school nurse will then assess the student and contact a parent/carer if necessary. The parent/carer will make the decision on whether the student goes home or remains in school and returns to the classroom.

6. TRANSPORT

As an accredited 'Healthy School' Birchwood is committed to improving the health, and monitoring the safety, of all students. To this end, we would wish to encourage students, where possible, to walk, cycle or use public transport in order to reduce the congestion outside the school at peak times. The school car park operates a one-way system with an entrance and an exit gate. The school gates do not open until 3:00pm. Parents should not attempt to drive onto the school site early and wait.

If you have a problem with public transport, you can:

- Contact Hertfordshire County Council at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk and select school admissions which takes you to school admissions and transport. Select transport to school.
- For public transport buses on school routes select 'bus travel' which will take you through to the Intalink Travel Line.
- Apply for a SaverCard to enable your child to get discounted travel on public buses in Hertfordshire (except Transport for London services). The SaverCard costs £20.00 a year for an online application and £25.00 if you apply by post.

If your child receives free school meals, they may be entitled to free transport. Please contact Hertfordshire County Council: <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/schools-and-education/school-admissions/home-to-school-transport/home-to-school-transport.aspx>

7. SCHOOL UNIFORM

The wearing of the Birchwood uniform is expected of students in Years 7-11. If there is any reason why a student cannot wear the correct school uniform, then the student should bring a letter from home explaining why and for how long the situation is expected to last.

Students with a medical condition that prevents them from abiding by our uniform expectations must have a letter from a medical professional explaining as such. Otherwise, students should expect an internal sanction for breach of uniform. A uniform card will be issued by the relevant Head of Year to any student who is not in full uniform for an “acceptable” reason. The card can then be shown to any member of staff who questions the deficiency.

Uniform Items:

- **Blazer:** A maroon fitted blazer with silver braiding and embroidered Birchwood logo.
- **Blouse:** (no tie) or **Shirt:** (with tie): plain white.
- **Jumper:** Maroon.
- **Skirt:** Knee length tartan skirt.
- **Trousers:** Smart black ‘business suit style’ not to include leggings, jeans, jeggings or other skinny tight fitting fashion trousers.
- **Tie:** Silver with burgundy stripe.
- **Socks/Tights:** Plain black, grey or white ankle or knee length socks or plain black opaque tights.
- **Shoes:** Classic black waterproof school shoes without logo (trainers, plimsolls, sling-backs, high heels, platform shoes and boots are not permitted. Trainers may only be worn for PE).

General Points

- Blazers must be worn at all times unless a teacher gives a student permission to remove it.
- One plain gold/silver stud may be worn in each earlobe only. Rings, necklaces and bracelets/charity bands must not be worn. Nose studs and any other types of facial or body piercing are not permitted.
- Coats/Jackets may only be worn to and from school and outside at lunchtime if it is cold. They should not be worn at any time in the school building. Coats and jackets must be plain and dark. Denim, leather and track-suit type jackets are not acceptable. Jackets with any visible logos, as well as hooded tops, are also not allowed. These and other jackets regarded as unsuitable for school will be confiscated.
- Shirts/Blouses must be tucked in at all times (front and back).
- Trousers smart black ‘business suit style’ not to include leggings, jeans, jeggings or other skinny tight fitting fashion trousers. Trousers which the school deems as fashionable extremes or which pose health and safety issues are also unacceptable.
- Skirts should be worn properly on the waist and should be on the knee. Students are not permitted to roll up their skirts.
- Students are not permitted to adapt their jumpers by, for example, tying them at the back.
- Hair colouring which the school deems as unnatural or a fashionable extreme or shape or style is not permitted. Hair bands are only permitted in black or maroon, they should be plain and be no wider than 3cm.

- Make-up is not allowed in Year 9. In Years 10 and 11 it may be worn discreetly including clear nail varnish. False nails and eyelashes are not acceptable.
- Bags should be plain and dark with no logos or writing on them. They should be large enough to accommodate A4 ring binders and to carry all of each day's books comfortably.
- Students may wear a plain black scarf to and from school and outside at lunchtime if it is cold. Students should not wear scarves in the school buildings.

PE Kit

Students basic kit requirements for all lessons are as follows:

- White polo top
- Skort or shorts
- Hooped Birchwood socks for outdoor activities such as rugby, football and hockey or white ankle socks (indoor activities)
- Rugby shirt – where appropriate
- Students are also required to wear shin pads for all football and hockey lessons. They will also require a mouth guard for certain lessons.

During the colder months, we would expect / encourage students to also wear extra layers, as most lessons will be timetabled outdoors. Therefore, it is the students' responsibility to ensure that they are appropriately prepared for their lesson, taking into account the weather.

Students may also wear:

- Birchwood ¼ zip up jumper
- Plain black leggings or joggers
- Plain black jumper
- Plain black or white base layer, long sleeved under shirt
- Dark-coloured gloves can also be worn, but if playing netball, they must have a rubber-type grip on the fingers/palms

Hooded tops are not permitted.

Naming Kit

It is essential that all items of kit are named in some way.

Jewellery - Earrings are not permitted. Using tape to cover earrings is not acceptable. Watches, rings and necklaces must not be worn. Nose studs and any other types of facial or body piercing are not permitted.

In the event that a student is unable to take part in physical activity for any reason, communication from home is required. It is also expected that the student still brings in their PE kit and participates in the lesson as fully as is possible.

School Uniform Suppliers

Birchwood High School has two uniform suppliers. Both our uniform suppliers will be hosting pop up shops on Thursday 11 July from 4.30pm onwards

1. Esquared Clothing - <https://myesquared.co.uk/collections/birchwood-high-school>

Birchwood High School uniform can be purchased from Esquared Clothing. Our online store offers a fast and efficient shopping experience for parents. We offer all compulsory uniform as well as uniform bundles, saving up to 15% on your order.

Delivery: As standard, Esquared Clothing will aim to deliver all orders within 1-3 working days.

Exchanges: Too big or too small? As an online retailer, we understand that some items may need to be exchanged. All orders can be exchanged within 1-2 working days.

Sizing: We offer a simple sizing guide on our website that you can use to guide your sizing choices.

2. Khalsa Schoolwear: <https://khalsaschoolwear.co.uk/school/birchwood-high-school/>

Birchwood High School uniform can also be purchased from Khalsa Schoolwear. We believe purchasing school uniform should be quick and easy. Shop via our website or visit our pop up on 11 July.

Delivery: We aim to process and dispatch all orders within 2 working days. We recommend for the summer months you allow 3-5 working days for orders to be dispatched.

Exchanges and Refunds: We will accept any returns as long as you notify us within 14 working days from receipt and as long as the item is unworn, in its original packaging and in a saleable condition. You can return any item within 28 days of receipt to exchange it for a different size or colour.

Sizing: A comprehensive "How to Measure" guide can be found on our website.

3. Preloved Uniform

Please reach out to our PSFA (psfapreloved@gmail.com) for more information and pricing for preloved uniform items.



8. FREE SCHOOL MEAL ELIGIBILITY

If you receive certain benefits, your child may be entitled to free school meals. Please see Free School Meals eligibility below:

- Income Support
- Income based Jobseekers allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The Guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (as long as you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and you don't get more than £16,190 a year).
- Working Tax Credit run-on (paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit (with annual earned income of no more than £7,400 a year after tax and not including any benefits you get). This includes those who had free school meals whilst on Universal Credit before April 1st 2018 even if earnings are above that £7400 figure.
- If your child is eligible for free school meals, they'll remain eligible until March 2023, or until they finish their current phase of schooling (primary or secondary), if that's after March 2023.

To find out if you are eligible search for 'FSM' on the Hertfordshire County Council website:

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/home.aspx>

In order to apply simply register with Herts County Council using the following

link: <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/schools-and-education/at-school/free-school-meals/free-school-meals.aspx> or by phone 0300 123 4043, or email contact@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Parents should contact the FSM Team at Hertfordshire County Council to advise them of the change from primary school to secondary school. If your child is **not** a Hertfordshire resident, you will need to register with Hertfordshire County Council to ensure their FSM entitlement continues. If you are an Essex resident, it is essential that you apply for FSM via Hertfordshire County Council.

9. SCHOOL MEALS

We are proud to announce Birchwood High School was awarded 'Healthy School' status and gained five stars in the latest Environmental Health inspection. Our aim is to provide fresh, high-quality food, delivered and prepared on a daily basis, using local suppliers.

We recognise the importance of implementing the Government's School Food Plan for school lunches in order to provide vital steps in fighting child obesity. Together with lessons in Science, Food Technology and PE, we aim to encourage our students to lead healthy lifestyles.

The Catering Department provides a wide choice of meals, including vegetarian options. Visit the Birchwood School website for further information, menus and price lists.

Cashless Catering

At Birchwood we have a biometric recognition system to allow students to purchase food in our Café. Parental consent must be obtained before a student's biometric data can be used for this purpose. An image of a student's biometric (a thumb or finger scan) is turned into a digital signature that can then be recognised by our systems. When the student places their biometric input on the scanner, the software matches their biometric image with the unique digital signature held in the database. Students will then be able to purchase food and check account balances by simply placing a finger on a digital scanner (please note: an image of the finger or thumb print is not stored and the digital signature cannot be used to recreate a finger or thumb print).

A four-digit PIN number will be issued to those students whose parents have opted them out of the biometric system or who have chosen not to participate themselves. Any student entitled to FSM (Free School Meals) has the same access as everyone else (biometric or PIN) and a daily allowance will automatically be credited to their account. Student's accounts can be topped up by using ParentPay.

Food Allergies & Intolerances

Parents should discuss special dietary requirements or allergies with their child's Form Tutor and the Catering Manager. All menus will have food allergens printed on them or students can go to the Café Help Desk where advice is available.

Please note that we produce food in a kitchen where allergens are handled and while we try to keep food separate, we cannot guarantee that any item is allergy free.

Price List

Main meal of the day (1 course): £2.75
Jacket potato plus two toppings (1 course): £2.75
Pasta King (1 course): £2.75
Sandwiches & wraps: £2.50 / £2.60
Hot panini: £2.25
Cold pasta pots: £2.25
Houmous pots: £2.25
Cheese & crackers pots: £2.25
Bacon rolls: £1.00
Fresh fruit: 50p
Cheesecake pot: £1.00
Yoghurt with granola: £1.50
Grape pot: £1.00
Homemade cake / cookies: £1.00

Special Meal Deal

A choice of main meal, jacket potato or Pasta King, plus one of the following: dessert / cake / cookie / jelly / cheesecake or fresh fruit: £3.25

Packed Lunches

Parents are politely reminded of Birchwood's emphasis on healthy eating. Students should not bring crisps, fizzy drinks and sweets into school.

No chewing gum is permitted on site.

10. PARENT PAY

At Birchwood High School, we use an online payment system called ParentPay.

ParentPay is an online service that allows parents to make secure and convenient payments by credit/debit card. For more information see www.parentpay.com.

What does ParentPay do?

- offers a highly secure payment site
- gives you a history of all the payments you have made
- allows you to create a single account login across all your children that attend a ParentPay school
- shows you all items available for payment relevant to each of your children
- emails a receipt of your payment to the email address you register
- offers you the ability to set automated email/SMS payment reminders

How does ParentPay help you?

- gives you the freedom to make payments to school whenever and wherever you like
- stops you having to write cheques or search for cash to send to school
- helps with budgeting; payments can be made at the beginning of the month and held in 'my account' for allocation to the relevant payment item during the month
- allows you to give consent for a trip, as well as allowing you to give contact information when and where required
- payments for the larger value trips can be made by instalments up to the due date
- you will never miss a payment, or have insufficient credit, with automated email/SMS alerts
- ParentPay is quick and easy to use

How does ParentPay help our school?

- reduces the administrative time spent on banking procedures
- keeps accurate records of payments made to every service for every student
- allows for easy refunds to be made back to your ParentPay account
- improves communication between the school and parents concerning payments
- offers a more efficient payment collection process, eliminating money being held on school premises
- our only method of payment is by ParentPay for all items, however, should this cause an issue, please contact Mrs Niki Fletcher on 01279 756483

How do I get started?

- We will give you an activation letter containing your activation details to enable you to set up your ParentPay account
- If you have more than one child at a ParentPay school/s you can add them to a single account, providing one login for all children at ParentPay schools
- Payment items will stay 'live' until they are fully reconciled. Once payment is made we ask that you ignore the item until it is cleared off your payment list

More Information

More information can be found on the ParentPay website, or alternatively contact Mrs Young, Finance Assistant at jyoung@birchwoodhigh.org.uk

11. BIRCHWOOD'S THREE Rs

At Birchwood High School, we believe that when all members of our school community work together to create an outstanding learning environment, student success will flourish.

Staff committees and student leadership teams looked at what they felt created the ideal learning environment. This led us to Birchwood's Three Rs, where students invest in the process of every learning experience and are rewarded for doing so. Every student who lives by our Three Rs contributes to the wellbeing of the school and gives themselves every opportunity to not just be successful academically, but also a decent and kind member of society moving into adulthood.

BIRCHWOOD'S THREE Rs OF THE CLASSROOM



12. CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

At the start of the lesson:

- Students must enter the classroom in an orderly manner and will be checked for correct uniform.
- Students must sit where their teacher's seating plan indicates.
- Students should place books and equipment on the desk. Bags should then be placed on the floor.
- Students should be quiet, attentive and face the teacher before they commence the lesson.

During the lesson:

- Students should not call out during lessons – they should either raise their hands or will be asked to respond individually.
- Students should not leave their desks unless it is a practical lesson or permission has been given.
- Disruptive or uncooperative students will be warned and, where necessary, removed by the teacher.
- Students must not eat and may only drink during lessons when there is a medical reason, or they have been given special permission to do so.

At the end of the lesson:

- There will be a formal dismissal organised by the teacher. Students should look smart ready for the next lesson.
- Chairs should be under the desks and the room left tidy.

12. REWARDS AND CONSEQUENCES

We want our students to do well at everything, from attending regularly and gaining good qualifications to showing exceptional effort and performing acts of kindness. To encourage this we have a system of rewards and points. For more details on how students gain points, please see the House System section of this booklet.

Letters of praise are sent home throughout the year when a student makes exceptional effort or progress. Each month, every subject faculty nominates a Student of The Month to recognise a student that they feel has embodied the principals of the Birchwood 3Rs. At the end of each term, students are also awarded certificates for effort and achievement in their Celebration Assembly.

At Birchwood, we do everything we can to promote the positive. However, there are occasions when we need to sanction students for behaviour that goes against Birchwood's Three Rs student expectations and our behaviour policy. Poor behaviour choices impact negatively not only on other students and adults who work here but also on the student who has made the wrong choice in the first place.

Where students fail to meet the expectations outlined, we follow the following process:

- 1st Warning: Verbal warning from the teacher.
- 2nd Warning: Teacher Conversation before re-entering the lesson.
- On-Call: On-Call teacher called to either reintegrate the student or remove if necessary.

Students who break the school rules and disrupt lessons will be given warnings followed by a 'cooling off' period outside the classroom. If the teacher decides the student should not be allowed back into the lesson because they are disrupting the learning of others, they will be removed by an 'on call' teacher. In extreme situations, warnings will not be used, and a student may be removed instantly.

We use the Arbor app to notify you for both achievement and behaviour incidences, including notification of the same day detention. Students who do not complete their home learning should expect to receive a sanction.

If a student is frequently getting into trouble, we use a monitoring and reporting system to try to help them make better choices. Each teacher has to complete this at the end of the lesson and at the end of the day the report has to be taken to the Tutor or Head of Year to be signed; parents are also asked to sign it. The report will end when behaviour improves.

Persistent failure to abide by school rules may result in a student being placed on a 16-week Pastoral Support Programme (PSP) during which time they will be supported to improve their behaviour. PSPs are initiated when a student's continued status as a Birchwood student is at risk if there is no improvement in the situation.

13. BULLYING

Every student has the right to feel safe at school. It is important that students understand what bullying is and, if it affects them or any other student, how to deal with it. Bullying is: *'the consistent and deliberate actions of a person, or a group of people, designed to hurt the person at whom they are directed. Bullying can be verbal, cyber or physical.'*

What should students do if they feel they are being bullied?

- Talk to their Form Tutor or Head of Year as soon as possible.
- Tell a 'buddy' or a peer mentor.

Birchwood will not accept bullying of any kind. If students are being bullied, they need to tell someone as soon as possible.

If students report bullying, we will:

- Listen carefully and always take them seriously.
- Investigate.
- Talk to the people involved.
- Work with them to help sort out the problem.
- Punish anyone found guilty of bullying and, in the case of cyber bullying, inform the police.

By ignoring or tolerating bullying the situation will not change. The same applies to internet and cyber bullying.

Birchwood proactively promotes e-Safety and the prevention of cyber bullying. Below are some great websites to help you and your child get the most out of technology and how to use the internet.

- www.thinkuknow.co.uk
- www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/
- www.internetmatters.org

Think u Know is the website of the Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Centre which features useful online resources. CEOP helps young people stay safe online. The site focuses on how to have fun online, how to stay in control online and how to report online.

When should I report to CEOP?

Has someone acted inappropriately towards your child online, or to a child or young person you know? It may be sexual chat, being asked to do something that makes them feel uncomfortable or someone being insistent on meeting up. Students and parents can report it online by clicking the "Report to CEOP" button on the Think u Know website or anywhere you see the button.

14. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES STATEMENT

Birchwood is a comprehensive school, which means it is for everybody. We believe everyone has the right to equal chances, regardless of gender, race or ability.

We live in a multicultural society, and we learn from many different cultures and beliefs. We will not tolerate discrimination against anyone because of their race, gender, colour, beliefs, or nationality.

Everyone follows the same curriculum and girls and boys are entitled to the same opportunities in all aspects of school life.

All students at Birchwood are equally important. Remember, everyone has strengths and weaknesses.

Please report any negative comment about race, gender, colour, belief, or nationality to a teacher.

- If students feel unfairly excluded from an activity, they need to please tell an adult they trust.
- If students are criticised because of their gender, they need to please tell an adult they trust.
- If students are criticised because of their ability, they need to please tell an adult they trust.
- If students are criticised because of their appearance, they need to please tell an adult they trust.

15. FORM TUTORS

At Birchwood High School, students are organised in form groups, with a tutor who stays with them during their five years. Tutors are the first point of contact for students and parents and carers. They see the form every day at morning registration and are able to monitor progress, achievement and behaviour. Tutors get to know students as individuals and are there to support them in times of difficulty and intervene to support students when necessary.

Tutors have overall responsibility for the academic progress and pastoral care of those students in their tutor groups. If you wish to contact the school, please do so in the first instance by emailing your child's Form Tutor who will, if necessary, arrange contact with other members of staff. You can email teachers direct through the school website.

Whilst tutors will deal with minor issues to do with achievement and behaviour, Heads of Year will deal with more serious or prolonged concerns. Your child's Head of Year will be Mr Edwards.

OTHER CONTACTS

If you have a general enquiry, please contact our Admin Office: admin@birchwoodhigh.org.uk

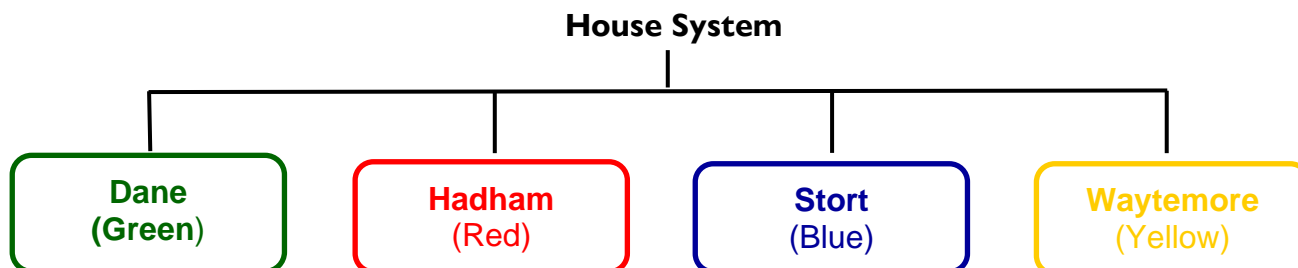
If you visit the school, please go to Reception where there is always someone available to help you. If you are dropping off forgotten items such as lunch, PE kit or books or collecting your child because of illness or an appointment please go directly to Reception.

You will not be able to speak to a member of teaching staff without an appointment.

16. HOUSE SYSTEM

Birchwood's House System is an important part of school life built upon the key principles of *welcoming all, supporting all and encouraging all*. During the year students will have the chance to participate in a range of competitions and events that will allow them to contribute to the success of their House.

Each tutor group is placed in one of the four houses. There are two forms per house in each year. Each house is led by a team of Sixth Formers, the House Captains.



Each House is led by a team of Sixth Formers; including two Head House Captains and two Deputy House Captains who organise the House activities and events.

The House Points System

The House Points System recognises all the contributions you make to school life via the different points categories, ensuring everyone has an opportunity to earn points for their House. The annual 'House Cup' winner is announced at the end of the summer term.

Activity	Points
Academic achievement	2
Contribution in class	2
Excellent home learning	2
Excellent progress	2
Excellent effort	2
Helping at a school event	5
Random Act of Kindness (RAK)	3
Regular participation in a school club	5
1 st place school competition	5
2 nd place school competition	4
3 rd place school competition	3
Literacy per book read	5
Student of the month faculty badge	5
Helpful Duty student	3

17. LETTERS, REPORTS, INTERIM REPORTS and PARENTS' EVENING

Letters

All school letters and communications are sent home via email. These will also be added to the school's website, under the header 'News, Letters & Social Media'.

Reports

Subject teachers' report on the students' progress a minimum of twice a year. This is viewable online via the Arbor app.

Tutor's Report

The Tutor's Report summarises the students' overall behaviour and achievements at the end of the school year. If you have any concerns during the year, please don't hesitate to contact either your child's Form Tutor or the subject teacher in the first instance.

Parents' Evening

During the Spring term there will be a Year 7 Parents' Evening. This has provisionally been set for Tuesday 13 May 2025, but you'll receive communication closer to the time to confirm.

18. ARBOR

At Birchwood, we use a school management information system called Arbor. The Parent Portal of the Arbor App allows parents and carers to receive communications and update their child's records (for example, a change of address, new medical condition or changes to parents' contact details). The Arbor app is free to download but it is essential that your email address and mobile matches the records we hold for your child.

Parents using the app will be able to view their child's timetable to help save any last-minute PE kit or cooking ingredient issues, plus view attendance information, House and Behaviour points. All detentions are also logged on Arbor.

If you have any difficulties using Arbor, please contact Ms Hewlett, jhewlett@birchwoodhigh.org.uk.

19. GETTING ORGANISED- School Equipment

We aim to ensure that students become independent and responsible for themselves. They will need to bring all of the following equipment to school with them, every day:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A pen with black or blue ink• Green Biro pen for responding to teacher marking• Pencils• Coloured pencils• Highlighter pen• Dry-wipe pen• Glue stick	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eraser• Pair of compasses• Pencil sharpener• 15cm or 30cm ruler• Calculator• Protractor
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Students must write with a pen, not a pencil.

Textbooks and specialised equipment may be issued on loan, but students will be required to pay for any loss or damage to school property. For Food Preparation & Nutrition lessons, students are expected to bring a white apron. This can be purchased from any retailer and does not need to be branded.

Students should pack their bag every evening, checking against their timetable that they have everything required for the following day. Parents or carers can be a great help in reminding their children of this!

Items which are found around the school are taken to Reception where they may be claimed. Any clothing or equipment brought to school must be named, preferably with sewn on name tapes as this enables the Receptionists to return the lost property directly to the student.

20. HOME LEARNING

The amount of home learning students receive will depend on their year and the subjects they are studying. Home learning should be accessed through Satchel One, an online platform where teachers set all of their homework tasks. This platform allows students to manage their home learning effectively as they are able to see deadlines, attachments and contact their teachers through the platform. To use Satchel One most effectively, we recommend that students and parents download the app. Login details will be given to your child on their Induction Day in September.

Home learning is an important part of school life, it enables students to practise working on their own and to help develop the skills needed at Birchwood and later in life.

Parents and carers should help by:

- Taking an interest in the work your child is set.
- Helping where appropriate.
- Making sure home learning is done on time.

If you are worried about the amount of home learning your child is doing or about any other aspect of school life please communicate through the Satchel One app or email your child's Form Tutor.

21. MOBILE PHONES & ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Students are advised **not** to bring mobile phones or electronic devices to school as we can take no responsibility if they are lost, stolen, or broken. If students do bring them they must remain completely out of sight and switched off. They should not be used at all between registration and the end of period 5. If these items are seen they will be confiscated and if a student's phone rings, or they are seen using a phone during a lesson, they can expect to receive an 'on call', as well as having the phone confiscated.

22. EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES:

At Birchwood High we offer a diverse range of extracurricular clubs that aim to enhance your child's overall learning experience. Opportunities for students to explore their interests, develop new skills, and foster meaningful connections with peers is a hugely important part of what it means to be a Birchwood student. Our engaging extracurricular clubs aim to boost self-confidence, improve time management skills, and instil a lifelong love for learning.

We understand that choosing the right club can be a tough decision. To assist you in this process, we have meticulously designed a variety of clubs that cater to diverse interests and aptitudes. The extracurricular timetable is posted on the school website in the first week of each term. Your child will be asked to complete a survey confirming which clubs they would like to take part in.

Our dedicated team is committed to creating a supportive and enriching environment for all participants. We believe that the skills and values acquired through extracurricular activities will not only benefit them academically but will also prepare them for the challenges and opportunities they may encounter in the future.

23. MUSIC LESSONS

Here at Birchwood, we are keen to support and nurture young musicians. If your child would like to learn an instrument, or continue with lessons they started at Primary School, we can provide tuition from Herts Music Service's visiting peripatetic teachers during the school day.

Currently we have many students enjoying music lessons learning flute, piano, saxophone, clarinet, guitar, drums, trumpet, trombone and singing. Learning an instrument is a great way to gain confidence and take part in the many concerts and extra-curricular activities that we can offer at Birchwood. It's also great fun!

We can offer tuition on all the main musical instruments and singing as well as a 25% subsidy for students playing an *orchestral* instrument who start Birchwood with Grade 2 and a 50% subsidy for Grade 5 (in order to take advantage of these subsidies, please send or email Mr Grogan a copy of the relevant Grade Certificate). Furthermore, all GCSE and A Level students receive a 25% subsidy. If you are eligible for FSM, you may also benefit from a subsidy – please contact Mr Grogan for details, or visit <https://www.hertsmusicservice.org.uk/music-lessons-in-hertfordshire/help-with-music-fees.aspx>

How to apply:

Any instrument or singing, please visit the Herts Music Service website and complete their application process <http://www.hertsmusicservice.org.uk/registeronline>.

Please be aware of the following important points regarding music lessons:

- Invoicing is termly with one term's notice to stop.
- Lesson times are displayed on the notice board in the Music Department corridor. Times are rotated each week and it is the student's responsibility to attend lessons on time and to inform teachers if they are going to be away.
- Teachers do try to make up lessons missed due to trips, exams and illness but this is not always possible.

We hope your child enjoys learning an instrument at Birchwood and hope to see them taking part in our extra-curricular clubs e.g. orchestra and numerous choirs. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact mgrogan@birchwoodhigh.org.uk.

24. PSFA

Our aim is to bring together members of our school community who are keen to support with organised events, develop business links and raise money for the school.

Over the last few years, PSFA funded initiatives include:

- A permanent canopy outside the Café
- New saucepans for the Food Technology Faculty
- New fieldwork equipment for Geography, including meter rulers, measuring tapes and quadrats
- An external motivational speaker to support whole school mental health and wellbeing
- A trip to the Big Bang Science Fair at the NEC in Birmingham for Science Club students

Being involved with the PSFA is a great opportunity to get to know the school and other parents.

New faces are more than welcome at our meetings, which normally take place every six weeks. There is no commitment to attend every meeting or to hold an elected role. We run fundraising events throughout the year which sometimes need extra volunteers to help on the day. If you would like to join our volunteer

mailing list, please let us know by emailing birchwoodpsfa@gmail.com.

Similarly, if you have any ideas for fundraising events or would like to organise an event yourself, please let us know.

Please follow us on our Facebook Page Birchwood Parents Staff and Friends Association (PSFA) and stay up to date with upcoming events and meetings.

PSFA initiatives:

Birchwood Futures Foundation

The purpose of the Birchwood Futures Foundation is to help raise additional financial resources to enhance students' educational experience whilst at Birchwood High School. We are hoping to expand assistance to support resources the school does not currently receive dedicated government funding for, such as mental health provision and the school minibus. Voluntary donations can be made via your ParentPay account.

Birchwood Bonus Ball

The Birchwood Bonus Ball is a raffle style club, with up to five numbers available to purchase per person, per subscription period. The subscription fee is £3 a month per number, payable in advance for the academic year. 50% of subscriptions shall be allocated as prize money and 50% to PSFA funds, with prize money depending on the membership uptake. Draws shall be held on the last day of each month. If you would like to take part from September by purchasing one or more numbers, please email confirming your name and contact details: treasurerbwpsfa@gmail.com

Preloved Uniform

We have limited stock of preloved school uniform and PE kit. To make a purchase please email psfapreloved@gmail.com

If they are still in good condition, please consider donating blazers, jumpers, skirts and PE kit as stock for our preloved stall. Clean items of preloved uniform can be dropped in at the School Reception.

The Giving Machine

You can generate free donations to our school at no extra cost to you every time you shop via TheGivingMachine. Please have a look online www.thegivingmachine.co.uk and search for Birchwood High School.



CONTACT DETAIL OVERVIEW:

General enquiries: admin@birchwoodhigh.org.uk

Absence:

- Tel: 01279 655936, choose option 1 explaining the reason for the absence. This must be done for every day of absence.
- Attendance Officer dlegallienne@birchwoodhigh.org.uk

Food Menus & Price Lists: <https://www.birchwoodhighschool.co.uk/page/?title=Birchwood+Cafe&pid=31>

Contact Form Tutors (in the first instance for any personal issues):

<https://www.birchwoodhighschool.co.uk/page/?title=Year+Group+Information&pid=72>

Contact Subject Teachers (in the first instance for subject queries):

<https://www.birchwoodhighschool.co.uk/page/?title=Faculty+Information&pid=35>

FSM (Free School Meals):

- Herts County Council using the web link: www.hertsdirect.org/services/edlearn/canhelp
- Tel: 0300 123 4043
- Email: contact@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Music Lessons: mgrogan@birchwoodhigh.org.uk

ParentPay: queries or login details contact: Mrs Young, Finance Dept, jyoung@birchwoodhigh.co.uk

Arbor: Ms Hewlett, jhewlett@birchwoodhigh.org.uk

PSFA (Parents, Staff & Friends Association):

- Preloved Uniform – psfapreloved@gmail.com
- General email – birchwoodpsfa@gmail.com

School Uniform suppliers:

Esquared Clothing

- <https://myesquared.co.uk/collections/birchwood-high-school>

Khasla Clothing

- <https://khaslaschoolwear.co.uk/school/birchwood-high-school/>

Transport: If you have a problem with public transport, you can:

- Contact Hertfordshire County Council at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk and select school admissions which takes you to school admissions and transport. Select transport to school.
- For public transport buses on school routes, select “Bus Travel” which will take you through to the Intalink Travel Line.



Principal: Mr S Griffin

Birchwood High School, Parsonage Lane
Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire, CM23 5BD

Telephone: 01279 655936

Email: admin@birchwoodhgh.org.uk