

## YOUNG CHEF ROTARY WINNERS



In June, Birchwood High School proudly hosted the annual Rotary Young Chef of the Year competition. We are delighted to congratulate our talented intermediate team: Ali Bennett, Sophia Coles, and Isabelle Earley, who took home first place in this prestigious competition.

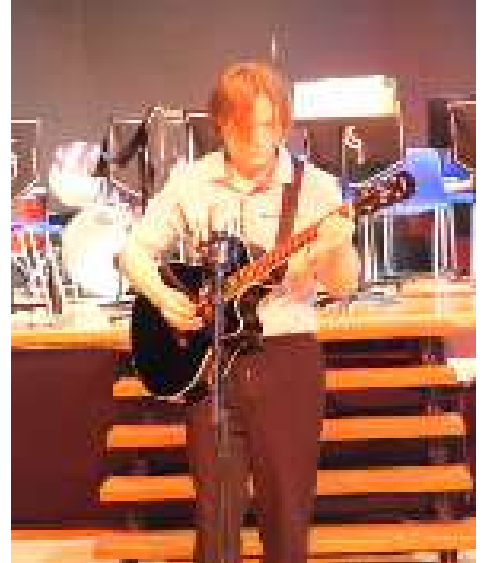
A special mention goes to Ali Bennett (pictured above), who was awarded the coveted Rotary Young Chef Award for outstanding individual performance. Ali will now progress to the District Finals next year.

This marks a remarkable achievement for the team, who also won first place last year in the Junior category.

*Mrs B McEwen-Smith, Technology*



# SUMMER MUSICAL PROM



Mr Grogan and Mr Stock would like to extend their heartfelt congratulations to all the students who took part in this year's Summer Prom Concert. Performances from our choirs, orchestra, and soloists filled the hall with music, creating a vibrant and uplifting atmosphere. During the interval, guests were treated to traditional scones with cream, adding a touch of summer charm to the occasion. Our audience also enjoyed a wonderful exhibition of artwork from Key Stage 3 students, thoughtfully curated by the Art Department.

This concert was especially poignant, as we also took the opportunity to bid farewell to our departing Year 11 and Year 13 students. Many of them have been dedicated members of the Music Department for several years, and their talent and commitment have left a lasting impact. We thank them sincerely for their contributions and wish them every success in the future.



# PRIMARY SCHOOL CONCERT



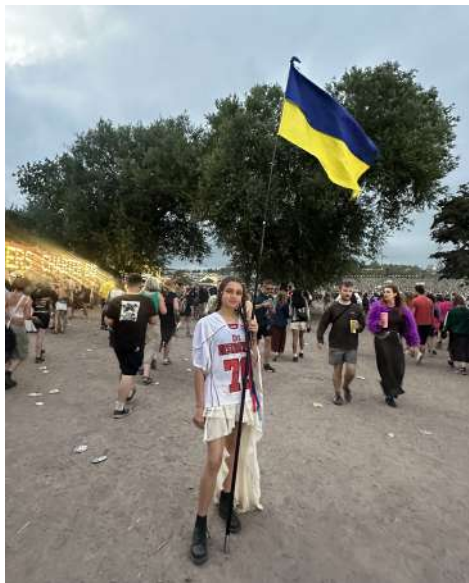
We were delighted to welcome over 40 primary school musicians to Birchwood for our annual Primary Music Workshop. Students from Summercroft, Hillmead, Northgate, and St Joseph's joined forces with the Birchwood Orchestra to create a fantastic massed band.

All the students worked incredibly hard throughout the hot summer afternoon and gave a brilliant performance of *C Jam Blues* and *Funkytown* to an appreciative audience of parents.

We would like to thank Herts Music Service for their valuable support in making this event possible.

## STUDENT NEWS

At Birchwood, we love celebrating the successes of our students, both in and outside of school.



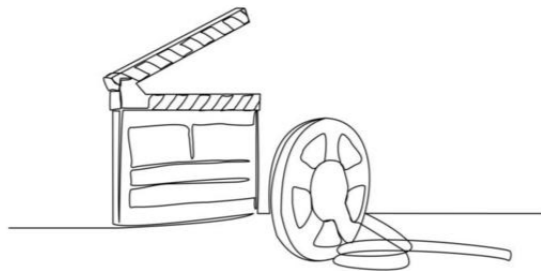
Congratulations to Kvitoslava Vorobei who represented Ukraine by singing at Glastonbury Festival 2025.



Congratulations to Lou Hayes, who was recently shortlisted as a finalist in the prestigious Media Magazine Film Competition—a national contest celebrating young filmmakers across the UK.



Congratulations to Cameron Winter, who was selected to be in the Hertfordshire County A Basketball Team. He was then made captain of the team for the East Regional Tournament.



Lou submitted the opening two minutes of a zombie film, a creative and technically accomplished piece she produced as part of her GCSE coursework. To be recognised at this level is a fantastic achievement and a testament to her talent, originality, and dedication.

# PROM!



This year's Year 11 and Year 13 Proms were truly unforgettable occasions, filled with elegance, joy, and celebration as our students marked the end of their Birchwood journeys in style.

The Year 11 Prom took place at the beautiful Parklands, Quendon, where the historic venue and stunning gardens provided the perfect backdrop for a magical evening. Meanwhile, our Year 13 students celebrated at the elegant Mulberry House.

Both events were a resounding success, with music, laughter, and plenty of dancing. Our students looked absolutely amazing in their finest attire, and it was wonderful to see their confidence and personality shine as they enjoyed this special milestone together.



## DONATION FROM THERMO FISHER

The Science department would like to say a huge thank you to Thermo Fisher Scientific for their donation of science equipment.

This fantastic support will help bring even more hands-on learning to our classrooms.

Mr Briscoe, *Head of Science*







# PRIDE MONTH

June is LGBT+ Pride month in the UK - a month-long celebration of LGBT+ lives and progress, whilst commemorating the contributions of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer community throughout history.

All students received a Powerpoint presentation at the start of the month in morning form times. The Powerpoint detailed the story of the Stonewall riots which were a series of spontaneous demonstrations against a violent police raid that took place in the early morning hours of June 28th 1969 at the Stonewall Inn - a famous gay bar - in New York City. There was global outrage at the treatment of LGBT+ people as a result of these raids and subsequently the LGBT+ Pride

movement was born. Students also watched an interview with Keegan Hirst, the first British Rugby League player to come out. Keegan has since done a huge amount of work to raise the profile of LGBT+ people within sport, campaigning for an attitude of respect and kindness without exception, whatever your sexuality or gender identity.

On Thursday 12 June, students in year 7, 8 & 9 received a virtual live talk from James Child - the first openly gay referee in the rugby league, who officiated at four consecutive world cups. James spoke of the homophobia he experienced post-coming out as gay whilst also highlighting the wealth of support received from the professional rugby community and wider sporting world. James said that acting with respect and empathy regardless of someone's sexuality is vital to ensure we can all live in a world where everyone can thrive as who they authentically are.

Mr Harlow

## CADBURY WORLD



Year 10 Business students recently enjoyed an exciting and educational trip to Cadbury World in Birmingham. As part of their visit, they took part in an engaging marketing workshop, gaining valuable insights into how one of the world's most iconic chocolate brands promotes its products. Students also had the chance to explore the factory on a behind-the-scenes tour to see how Cadbury chocolate is made, experience a thrilling ride, indulge in deliciously gooey melted chocolate, and enjoy an immersive 4D Cadbury movie. The trip was both fun and informative, bringing classroom learning to life in the sweetest way possible!

Mrs Dervish, Business



## YEAR 13 MFL STUDENTS CELEBRATE

Miss Defay and Mrs Mangin-Griffith took our lovely Year 13 to Cambridge to say farewell and celebrate their last exam.

We went to Al Casbah, as we learnt about the positive impact of immigration in France and discussed Algerian cuisine this year.

A very lovely evening but we are going to miss them!



## MATHS CHALLENGE



For the second year in a row, our Year 8 Maths Challenge Team won their heat and qualified for the Final in Stevenage.

The team of Evie Bateman, Matthew Graves, Sam Spencer and Brandon Tam finished in 13th position overall, out of over 100 teams that competed. Well done to them, and let's see if Year 7 can make it three in a row next year!

Mr Summers, *Head of Maths*

## CROCODILES ROCK

Our Year 12 Environmental Science students recently enjoyed an inspiring and educational visit to Crocodiles of the World, the UK's only crocodile zoo. The trip provided a fantastic opportunity to explore real-world examples of wildlife conservation and deepen their understanding of biodiversity, species protection, and the challenges facing ecosystems around the globe.



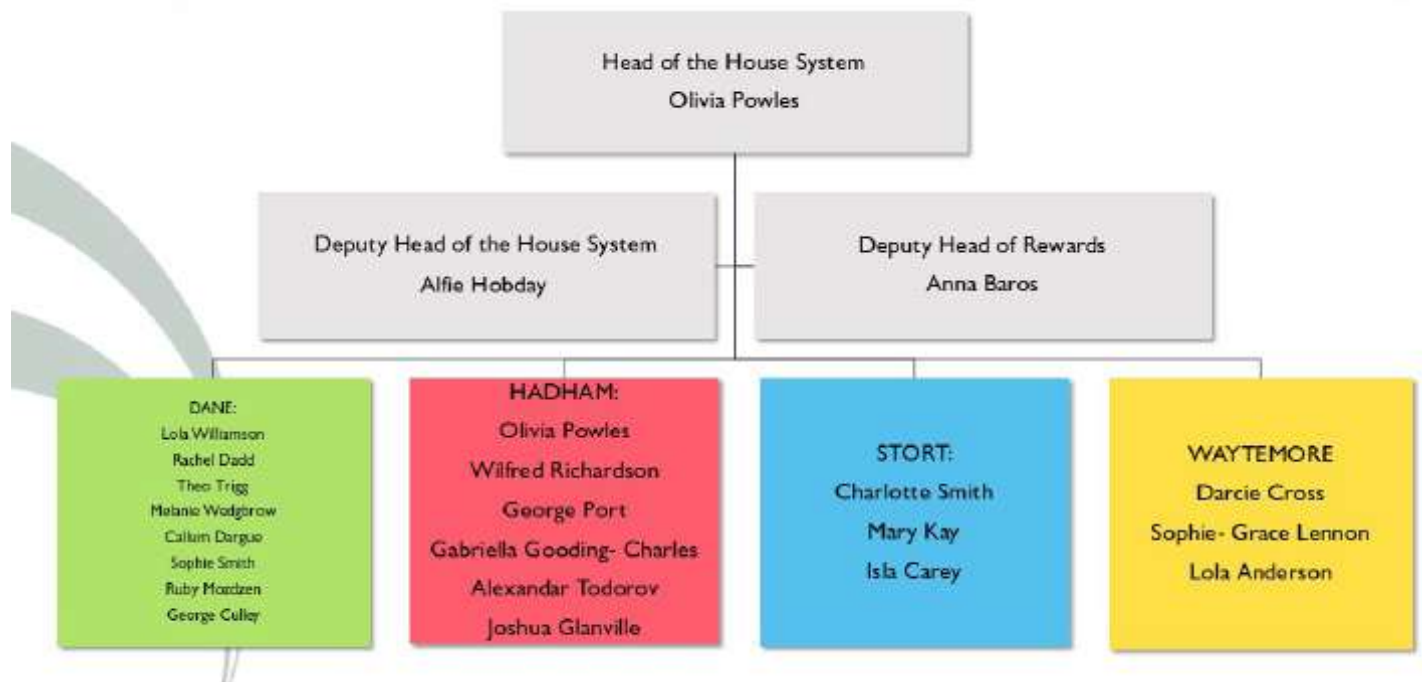
Mrs Pressland, *Science*



# HOUSE



## MEET THE NEW TEAM - 2025/2026



## ARC FUNDRAISING



We are thrilled to share that Birchwood High School has raised £3,600 this year for ARC (Animal Rescue Charity).

A representative from ARC visited earlier this week to collect the cheque from our House Captains and expressed heartfelt thanks on behalf of the charity.

ARC, which rehomed over 250 animals last year and more than 10,000 since 1991, said the donation will help cover vet bills for the 53 cats (including 22 kittens) and 16 dogs currently in their care. It will also go toward vital supplies like kitten food and litter—with the centre using up to 48 pouches of food a day.

A huge thank you to all our students and staff for your generosity and commitment to supporting this fantastic cause!



# TALES FROM THE LIBRARY

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## SPEED CHESS COMPETITION

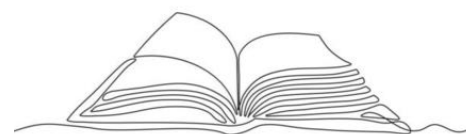
This term saw the launch of Birchwood's first-ever Speed Chess Competition, and it proved to be a fantastic success! We had a brilliant turnout, with students from across the year groups taking part and showcasing their strategic thinking, focus, and competitive spirit. A huge thank you to the PSFA for making this event possible through their generous donation of speed chess clocks and boards—equipment that allowed us to run a fast-paced and exciting tournament. After a series of intense and closely fought matches, we're delighted to announce our first Speed Chess Champions: Toby Bromage – 1st place, Matthew Graves – 2nd place, Aiden Paul – 3rd place

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## COSY CORNER

We now have a lovely, cosy corner in our Library, complete with bean bags, throws and even LED candles for extra ambience! It is wonderful to see so many of our students reading for pleasure in a little nook that is warm, comforting and inviting. Once again, a huge thank you to the PSFA who made this possible.



## MURDER MYSTERY



Last week, we held a Murder Mystery event in the Library, based on the novel *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. Everyone had great fun, solving riddles and cracking codes. Not only was this an entertaining afternoon, but it also introduced our students to a superb classic novel. A huge thank you to the sixth formers and staff who helped with the event, especially Mr Kadlec and Dr Allen, our very own Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson!





# PE TEAMS



Our Year 7 rounders team were absolutely incredible at the recent tournament! After wins against Avanti and Herts & Essex, they powered through the semi-final with a win over Hockerill. The final against SWCHS was a nail-biter, ending in a 6.5–6.5 draw. The result came down to one extra out, meaning SWCHS just edged the win – but our girls played with amazing skill, spirit, and teamwork throughout.

There was a great win for our Year 9 cricket team against Joyce Franklin!

JFAN scored 77 runs, but Birchwood chased it down with 5 overs to spare – a brilliant performance all round.

Well done, team!



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Thank you from the PSFA and Cadnet for funding our new artificial cricket pitch. We have made full use of the pitch this season - even if rain has stopped play a few times...

Mr D Jones, PE

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## PE KIT DONATIONS

We would be very grateful for any donations of spare or no longer-needed PE kit. All items will be put to good use by the PE department for future students. If you have anything to donate please hand it in to Miss Perrett in PE office.



# SPORTS DAY 2025

Congratulations to our best performers and record breakers from Sport day 2025.



Ava Higgs, Year 7  
Javelin (School Record)  
Long Jump, 100m and 200m



Luca Groom, Year 8  
800m and 1500m  
(School Record)



Jess Lane, Year 10  
800m  
(School Record)



Jack Evans, Year 10  
800m and 400m  
(School Records)



Scarlett Campbell, Year 10  
100m, 200m and 300m  
(School Records)



George Amott, Year 7  
Long Jump (School Record)



Max Caswell-Lay, Year 8  
200m  
(School Record)



Alfie Thomas, Year 8  
Long Jump  
(School Record)



Alex Hummel, Year 10  
200m  
(School Record)





Best performers in whole school Scarlett Campbell and Jack Evans.



Elouise Denyer, Year 8  
Best Performer 200m and 100m



Lloyd Marfo, Year 9  
Best Performer 100m and 1st in relay



Start win the Sports Day House Cup!



Staff fancy dress relay race.



# YEAR 7 PGL TRIP - ISLE OF WIGHT





# YEAR 10 STUDENTS VISIT MADRID



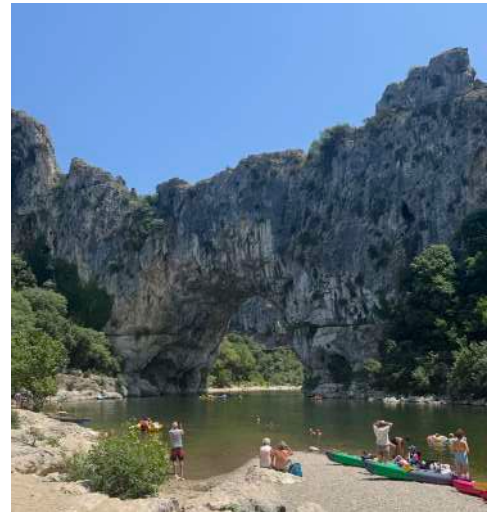


# MFL STUDENTS VISIT COLOGNE





# ARDECHE



On the 20 June, Year 9 students visited the Ardeche region in France. We arrived ready for a week packed with fun, adventure and laughter. It was a great opportunity to spend some time with friends while making unforgettable memories. We participated in a range of activities including high ropes in the treetops, paddling in kayaks down a picturesque river, team building, experiencing a French town, and sleeping among nature in a bivouac under the stars.

One of the highlights, which also happens to be my favourite activity, was the kayaking because the surroundings were stunning. It felt like something from a film. It was an experience that I will never forget. We all had a brilliant time and would love to do it all again, despite the heat, sweat, bugs and the occasional sunburn.

Daniel Anderson, BBC reporter.



*What have our budding Birchwood journalists been researching this term?*

A group of our Year 7 Reporters have written about their recent residential trip to the Isle of Wight.

## ISLE OF WIGHT

The Isle of Wight was amazing! We did activities such as zip lining, canoeing and even laser tag. They were all so much fun and everybody there enjoyed it.

The rooms were little log cabins in rows, all named after different countries. They had bunk beds and your own toilet and shower and even a little balcony to hang out your wet clothes after your water activities.

The activities were really fun and even included water sports. For example, one day we walked down to the beach and canoed in the sea for about one hour. Once we were done, we pulled our canoes ashore and made are way back to the camp.

Aside from the water activities there were lots of team work and climbing challenges like Jacob's ladder, a vertical climbing and rock wall. There was also lazer tag, a silent disco and a giant swing where you got hoisted up about twenty feet and dropped whilst swinging on a giant frame.

The Isle of Wight trip was very exciting to experience and really fun to participate in and we would all like to say thank you to all the PGL staff and Birchwood teachers who were there to make it happen.

### OUR FAVOURITE ACTIVITIES

#### **Canoeing**

My Favourite activity on the Year 7 Isle of Wight trip was canoeing. I liked canoeing because I think it's a life skill everyone should learn. I also got to share the experience with my friends which made it even better! The PGL staff were really nice (and fun)! If I had to rate the canoeing out of 5 stars I would give it 5 out of 5.

#### **Climbing**

On of my favourite activities at the Isle of Wight was the climbing. There was a 10 metre tall wooden wall with plastic hand and feet placements. It was incredibly difficult and fun. We had a an extremely kind instructor who let us pick our partners. I felt very safe since they checked our harness multiple times. We did a practice going a quarter of the way at first. Then two turns each doing either races, or just climbing at our own pace. We got 5 points for going halfway and 10 for going all the way up. We ended up climbing higher than the Eiffel Tower!





# ENRICHMENT WEEK IN SCHOOL

Last month, Birchwood was buzzing with excitement as students took part in our annual Enrichment Week. Throughout the week, students enjoyed a wide variety of off-site trips, ranging from cultural visits to outdoor adventures. Meanwhile, those based at school participated in a range of faculty-themed activities, offering hands-on learning beyond the classroom.

In PE students were able to try out a selection of new sports including curling, mountain biking, paddle tennis and golf.



Konnichiwa! MFL Year 7 students learnt about Japanese culture, language and traditions. Students learned some basic phrases such as 'Ohay' (good morning) and 'Genkidesu ka?' (How are you?). They tried their hand at making some origami creations (jumping frogs among others) and even learned how to draw in the manga style! We were really impressed by what they were able to produce in such a short time.



Meanwhile in Science students were building bridges to hold the most amount of weight and in Technology, students were creating marble runs.





# ENRICHMENT WEEK

## AIRHOP



## ARMY - Team Building



## TRING NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM





# COLCHESTER ZOO



# HARRY POTTER STUDIOS



# LONDON DUNGEONS



# HARLOW OUTDOORS



# SILVERSTONE





H<sub>2</sub>O



ESSEX WATER PARK



NUCLEAR FOREST





# DofE Gold

## Report from Rosie Pressland

This week, I am so proud to share that I have officially completed my Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award, a journey that's been as challenging as it's been rewarding. Taking part in the DofE has genuinely been one of the most unforgettable and life-shaping experiences and I would encourage every student especially those in Years 10 and 12, to go for it!

Over the past two years, I have been pushed way out of my comfort zone and grown in ways I never expected. I have developed skills I will carry for life, from learning new things in the Skills section, braving the wild on our Expedition, and stepping up to support others through Volunteering.

Two standout moments were my week-long residential at Phasels Wood Activity Centre, where I learned to adapt quickly and bond with people from all walks of life, and camping out for a week in the Brecon Beacons National Park, cooking on stoves, carrying everything on our backs, and facing the weather head-on together.

I have made friends who have been with me through mud, midges, and midnight snacks under the stars. We survived awkward, hilarious, slightly gross, and totally brilliant moments. Being without our phones helped us connect more, tell stories, play games, get soaked in the rain, and laugh until our stomachs hurt. It wasn't glamorous but it was real, and honestly, I wouldn't change a thing.

None of this would have been possible without the incredible support of Miss LaLonge and Mr Loveday. Their energy, organisation, and encouragement kept us going, and they gave up so much time to make sure we were safe, supported, and fully prepared. We owe you both a massive thank you!

So if you are starting Year 10 or Year 12, now is the perfect time to start your own DofE adventure. You will challenge yourself, learn loads, make amazing memories, and come out stronger, wiser, and prouder than you ever thought possible.

Thanks to everyone who's supported me along the way, including instructors and assessors. I will carry these memories with me for life.





# 2025/26 TERM DATES

Birchwood High School Calendar

2025 - 2026

Sep 2025						
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Jun 2026						
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Jul 2026						
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CPD Days – school closed to students
Student holidays & occasional days
Bank & public holidays
School Open to Yr 7 & 12 only
Open Evening
Year 6 Transition Day



# ALUMNI NEWS

Welcome to our Alumni Spotlight – a space to celebrate and share the exciting journeys our former students have taken since leaving Birchwood. From university achievements to career milestones and creative pursuits, we're proud to highlight the many paths our alumni are following.



Recently we were delighted to welcome back alumni from Margaret Dane School for a special reunion at Birchwood. Guests enjoyed touring the school, sharing photos, and reminiscing about old memories - a wonderful evening filled with laughter, stories, and nostalgia.

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Congratulations to Daniel Fielding for his First Class Degree in English and History from the University of York.

## PSFA

We have a Facebook page where you can keep up to date with events and meetings.

### PRELOVED UNIFORM

If you are replacing items of branded school uniform and the old items are still in good condition, please consider donating good condition items of preloved uniform to the PSFA. Please drop off washed clean items of uniform to Reception.

### HELP NEEDED!

Do you have an hour a week to help with our pre-loved uniform?

This could be during the day (DBS check needed) or after school, helping with sorting and hanging up donations and dealing with enquiries (e.g. finding sizes and bagging up orders)

Please contact [birchwoodpsfa@gmail.com](mailto:birchwoodpsfa@gmail.com) if you can help.

### EASY FUNDRAISING

Did you know that whenever you buy anything online – from your weekly shop to your annual holiday – you could be raising free donations for Birchwood with easy fundraising? There are over 8,000 retailers on board ready to make a donation – including eBay, Argos, John Lewis & Partners, ASOS, Booking.com and M&S – and it won't cost you a penny extra to help us raise funds.

All you need to do is:

1. Go to <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/birchwood-parents-staff-and-friends-association/> and join for free.

2. Every time you shop online, go to easyfundraising first to find the site you want and start shopping.

3. After you've checked out, the retailer will make a donation to Birchwood at no extra cost to you whatsoever! There are no catches or hidden charges and Birchwood will be really grateful for your donations.





 CAMPEXCEL

 CLUBEXCELCAMP

FOR  
CHILDREN  
AGED 3-13  
YEARS

# Club EXCEL

Multi Activity Camps  
**BIRCHWOOD HIGH SCHOOL**



**THE ULTIMATE ACTIVITY CAMP**  
**NEW CUSTOMERS GET 20% OFF**  
**BOOKINGS AT BIRCHWOOD HIGH SCHOOL!**

**20% OFF CODE: NBIR20**

Please Note: Offer only available to new customers & bookings at our Birchwood venue. Code valid till 31/12/25

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