



Author: CGK
Committee: Curriculum
Date of Trustee approval: 11 December 2024
Date of next review: Autumn 2025
Review frequency: Annual

Birchwood High School

Admission Guidelines to Birchwood High School's Sixth Form for entry in September 2026

Context

Admission into Birchwood Sixth Form is a separate process to that of admission into Years 7-11. The criteria for admission are also very different because provision is exclusively for Advanced Level study including A Levels and Level 3 BTEC courses. These courses have specific competency-based academic requirements. ***Students must therefore meet the overall and subject specific entrance criteria as outlined annually in the Sixth Form Prospectus.***

Students with an EHCP

Students in Year 11 with an EHCP that names Birchwood Sixth Form will be provided with a place. If the child in question is unlikely to meet the academic requirements in terms of GCSE point score, this issue can be discussed as part of the annual review in Year 11.

Internal Applicants

Providing internal students meet the overall threshold requirements and the subject specific grade requirements they will be admitted to the sixth form.

External Applicants

The PAN for the Sixth Form is set for up to 100 places for external applicants.

Should the 6th Form be oversubscribed then places for external applicants will be allocated (to students meeting the entrance requirements) by applying the following oversubscription criteria in the order set out below.

- a) Children Looked After (see note) - Places are allocated to children in public care according to Chapter 7, Section 2 of the School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012. Priority will also be given to children who were previously looked after, including those looked after outside England, but ceased to be so because they were adopted, or became subject to a child arrangements order¹ or a special guardianship order².
- b) Priority will then be given to children who live nearest to the school, measured by using E- maps such as Google/Apple mapping. Should two applicants have the same home-school distance a random allocation will be made and that process will be independently supervised.

Applications

All applicants, both internal and external, will need to complete an online application form via the ULAS system on the school's website.

Applications must be completed using the school's online application system. It is essential that applications are received by the deadline. Applications received after the deadline may not be considered. Should the maximum size be met then applications over this number will be decided on the priorities outlined above.

We will offer a guidance interview to all students to ensure students are making appropriate choices and offer information and advice in reference to their application, although these do not form part of the admissions process itself.

Final Decision

Final decisions and subject choices will only be confirmed once actual GCSE grades are known and it is confirmed that applicants have met the minimum academic requirements and the criteria for each course.

Appeals

In the event of an application being declined, the applicant has the right to appeal to the Governing Body, who will establish an appeals panel in accordance with DfE Guidelines.

Review

Birchwood High School Governing Body will review its admissions arrangements annually in line with current legislation and the School Admission Appeals Code.

The academic entry criteria are subject to review annually.

Progression from Year 12 into Year 13

A student may be asked to change a course of study due to low academic progress during the sixth form. This will be done in conjunction with CEIAG support. Progression and continuation in sixth form is at all times dependent on attitude to learning and demonstration of model behaviour. Students with poor attendance, poor attitude to learning or an inability to support the schools ethos may be referred to the schools behaviour policy and exclusion procedure.

Children Looked After

A “child looked after” is a child who is:

- i. in the care of a local authority, or
- ii. being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (section 221(1) of The Children Act 1989).

All children adopted from care who are of compulsory school age are eligible for admission under rule 1.

Children in the process of being placed for adoption are classified by law as children looked after providing there is a Placement Order and the application would be prioritised under Rule 1.

Children who were not “looked after” immediately before being adopted or made the subject of a child arrangement order or special guardianship order, will not be prioritised under rule 1.

Children previously looked after abroad and subsequently adopted will be prioritised under Criterion Rule 1 if the child’s previously looked after status and adoption is confirmed by Hertfordshire’s “Virtual School”.

The child’s previously looked status will be decided in accordance with the definition outlined in The Children & Social Work Act 2017:

- i. to have been in state care in a place outside England and Wales because he or she would not otherwise have been cared for adequately, and
- ii. to have ceased to be in that state care as a result of being adopted. A child is in “state care” if he or she is in the care of, or accommodated by –
 - a) a public authority,
 - b) a religious organisation, or
 - c) any other organisation the sole or main purpose of which is to benefit society.

¹ Child arrangements order

Under the provisions of the Children and Families Act 2014, which amended section 8 of the Children Act 1989, residence orders have now been replaced by child arrangements orders which settle the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live.

² *Special guardianship order Under 14A of The Children Act 1989, an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child’s special guardian or guardians.*

Appendix

Sixth Form Entry Criteria for September 2025 Entry

Please refer to the Sixth Form Prospectus for the September 2026 Entry Criteria

All courses offered at Birchwood Sixth Form are Level 3 qualifications. In order to provide objective admission criteria, as well as ensure that the right students embark on the right courses, the following will apply:

We expect all students entering Birchwood's Sixth Form to study 3 or 4 courses. For the majority of students, these will be A levels courses, which are linear in structure, with examinations taken at the end of the two years. However, we also have a significant number of students studying for BTEC qualifications. These have a greater degree of modular assessment. A growing number of students in our Sixth Form combine both A Levels and BTEC qualifications and our curriculum is designed with this flexibility in mind.

Our curriculum plans are designed to ensure students are following appropriate courses based upon their prior levels of attainment. We operate a Total Point Score System that measures student's attainment at GCSE and BTEC Level 2. This will be done by taking the 8 best subject grades and assigning them a points value. These points are added together to produce a Total Point Score. The minimum requirement for entry into Birchwood Sixth form is a total point score of 34 or above to access BTEC courses and a total point score of 40 or above to access A Level courses. An example of how our total point score system works can be seen on the below page.

Please note all students wishing to study at Birchwood High School Sixth Form **must have achieved a grade 4 in Maths and either English Language or Literature at GCSE.** Students must also meet the entrance criteria for the individual courses they wish to study. These are outlined in the course outlines QR code, on the school website and on the application form. These minimum requirements apply to both internal and external applicants.

Total Point Score Example:

Your total point score will be calculated by taking the 8 best subject grades and assigning them a points value. These points are added together to produce a total point score like the example below.

Points Calculation	
Grade GCSE	Grade BTEC Level 2
9	
8	Distinction
7	
6	Merit
5	
4	Pass
3	
2	
1	

Example		
Subject	Grade	Points
English Language	7	7
English Literature	6	6
Maths	5	5
Science	4	4
Science	4	4
History	6	6
Business BTEC	Merit	6
French	5	5
Total		43

Curriculum Plans:

At Birchwood, we offer three curriculum plans to ensure that the right students embark on the right courses.

Curriculum Plan 1

For admissions onto Curriculum Plan 1 to study 4 A Levels students should have a minimum total point score of 48 and the specific subject grade. We will consider students below this threshold dependent on subject requirements and combinations.

Students will also be expected to supplement their core subjects with additional supporting qualifications and/ or enrichment opportunities.

Curriculum Plan 2

For admission onto Curriculum Plan 2 to study 3 A levels or 2 A levels & BTEC students should have a minimum total point score of 40 and the specific subject grade. We will consider students below this threshold dependent on subject requirements and combinations.

Students will be expected to supplement their core subjects with additional supporting qualifications and / or enrichment opportunities.

Curriculum Plan 3

For admission onto Curriculum Plan 3 to study 1 Double BTEC or 2 x Single BTECs and 1 x A Level students should have a minimum total point score of 34 and the specific subject grade. Students will be expected to supplement their core subjects with additional supporting qualifications and / or enrichment opportunities.