



## Birchwood High School Admissions Policy Years 7-11 with effect from September 2025

### Context

This policy sets out the admissions criteria for students admitted into Years 7-11 at Birchwood High School. Birchwood admits 240 boys and girls per year into Year 7 (the “published admission number” or PAN). If the school is over-subscribed, the allocation criteria are set out below in hierarchical order of importance. The general principle of these criteria is to give priority to students with brothers or sisters already at the school or those who live locally to the school address. We do not apply aptitude tests and are proud of our all-ability intake.

### Admission Arrangements for Entry to Year 7 in September 2025

The Local Authority Common Application Form (CAF) must be completed when applying for a place at Birchwood High School in order for your application to be assessed correctly.

The CAF form you should complete depends on where you live. Secondary Transfer Forms are available from your Local Authority. Hertfordshire residents must use the form supplied by Hertfordshire County Council available at [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions) Essex residents must use the form supplied by Essex County Council [www.essex.gov.uk/Education-Schools/Schools/Admissions](http://www.essex.gov.uk/Education-Schools/Schools/Admissions)

**If the school is oversubscribed (more applicants than available places) places will be allocated** using the following 6 criteria in the order set out below:

**Looked after child** (children in public care) A 'looked after child' is a child who is (a) in the care local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions at the time of making an application and previously looked after children (children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted or became a subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order).

**Siblings:** Children who, at the closing date for applications, have a brother or sister currently attending Birchwood High School in years 7 – 11. They also need to live at the same permanent address from Monday to Friday and to have joined the school during years 7 – 11.

For information sibling is defined as: the sister, brother, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, child of the parent/carer or partner or a child looked after or previously looked after\* and in every case living permanently\*\* in a placement within the home as part of the family household from Monday to Friday at the time of this application.

*\*Children previously looked after are those children adopted or with a special guardianship order or child arrangements order. This definition was amended following a determination by the OSA in August 2014.*

*\*\*A sibling link will not be recognised for children living temporarily in the same house, for example a child who usually lives with one parent but has temporarily moved or a looked after child in a respite placement or very short term or bridging foster placement.*

*'Currently attending' means children who are actually at the school, or children who have been offered or accepted place but have not yet started at the school.*

**Staff:** Priority is given to the children of Birchwood employees provided that they have been employed for a minimum of two years and/or are recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skills shortage. All students also need to live at the same permanent address as the member of staff from Monday to Friday.

**Priority Area:** Children who, at the closing date for applications, live in the Priority Area Electoral Wards of Bishop's Stortford, Thorley Parish and the area North West of Bishop's Stortford namely; Albury, Berden, Birchanger, Brent Pelham, Farnham, Furneux Pelham, Little Hadham, Manuden, Much Hadham, Stocking Pelham, Takeley and The Hallingburys. Addresses are routinely checked and places may be withdrawn if a

false address has been given.

**Geographical distance:** Should there be places unfilled after applying criteria 1, 2, 3 and 4 the places will be offered on the basis of shortest straight-line distance from their permanent residence to the School as determined by Hertfordshire County Council, with those who are closer being accorded a higher priority. Addresses are routinely checked and places may be withdrawn if a false address has been given.

In the event of a tie for the last place in any of these criteria, a tiebreak will be made on the basis of shortest distance from their permanent residence to the School as determined by Hertfordshire County Council, with those who are closer being accorded a higher priority. Addresses are routinely checked and places may be withdrawn if a false address has been given. If the distance criterion is not sufficient to distinguish between two or more applicants for the last remaining place then random allocation will be used. This process will be supervised by somebody independent of Birchwood High School.

Distances are measured using a computerised mapping system to two decimal places. The measurement is taken from the AddressBase Premium address point of your child's house to the address point of the school. AddressBase Premium data is a nationally recognised method of identifying the location of schools and individual residences.

### **Students with a Statement or Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC):**

If the school is named in a Statement of Special Educational Needs or the student has an Education, Health and Care Plan, the Local Authority concerned will consult with the school in the first instance. Thereafter, if the professional view is that the school can accommodate the student's needs, priority for admission will be given before any other applicant and such admissions will count towards the published admission number.

### **Other Information:**

- ✓ The Governing Body will normally only admit children into their normal chronological age group, although each case will be considered on its facts, which must be included in any application form submitted for such a place
- ✓ At secondary transfer the twin or multiple birth sibling of any child allocated a place will also be admitted if one child is allocated the last place available.
- ✓ The Governing Body will normally only consider one application for admission to the school for a student in any one academic year. In the case where circumstances relevant to the application have substantially altered the governors may, at their discretion, consider a further application within the school year.

*You must also return your Secondary Transfer Form to the appropriate Local Authority on time.*

### **Failure to gain a place at Birchwood High School**

- ✓ If you fail to gain a place at the school, the Local Authority will offer you a place at a different school.
- ✓ Whether or not you accept such a place, you can ask to be placed on the Continuing Interest List for Birchwood High School. If a place becomes vacant during the year, the school will only offer it to someone from its Continuing Interest List, in strict accordance with the admission arrangements set out above. As the year progresses, the Continuing Interest List may include people who have just moved into the area and want a place for their child. They will have the same status as others on the list and, depending on which of the criteria they match, may be offered a place first.
- ✓ Children who are the subject of a direction by a local authority to admit or who are allocated to a school in accordance with the locally agreed Fair Access Protocol will take precedence over others on the Continuing Interest List. <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/media-library/documents/schools-and-education/admissions/fair-access-protocol/hcc-fair-access-protocol-2018.pdf>
- ✓ It is the responsibility of parents to contact Hertfordshire County Council to state their continued interest at the start of each academic year.
- ✓ You have the right to appeal. Parents wishing to appeal who applied through Hertfordshire's online system should log in to their online application and click on the link "register an appeal". Out of county residents and paper applicants should call the Customer Service Centre on 0300 123 4043 to request their registration details and log into [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schoolappeals](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schoolappeals) and click on the link "log into the appeals system."

## **Admission Arrangements for Entry at other times (In-year admissions)**

For in-year admissions, the following process applies:

- Contact Hertfordshire County Council to find out whether there are places in the year group concerned.
- The Governing Body will normally only admit children into their normal chronological age group, although each case will be considered on its facts, which must be included in any application form submitted for such a place
- If the year group concerned is full, the same over-subscription rules set out above will apply.
- If your application is processed successfully, we will then contact you to arrange to meet your child's Head of Year to discuss start dates, classes, form group, uniform and equipment and any questions you may have.
- If there are no places, your application will be added to our Continued Interest list. Once a place becomes available, your application will be assessed according to the allocation criteria points 1-5 above.
- Continued Interest lists will be annually reviewed to ensure those on the list are still interested in a place.
- The county council will write to you with the outcome of your application and, if you have been unsuccessful, will include registration details to enable you to login and appeal online at [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schoolappeals](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schoolappeals)
- The appeals process will be carried out in line with Hertfordshire County Council's Appeals' Administration Service. The decision of the Independent Appeal Panel is binding on all parties.

## **Change of Address**

If your family is in the process of moving house, your new address will not be considered until a move into the area has actually taken place or you are able to offer proof of pending residence (e.g. a solicitor's letter indicating that there has been an exchange of contracts). New addresses will only be considered up to the agreed "late" date in the December preceding the allocation year.