



Birchwood High School Admissions Policy Years 7-11

Context

This policy sets out the admissions criteria for students admitted into Years 7-11 at Birchwood High School. Birchwood is a DfE Academy and therefore parents must apply to the school as the Admissions Authority as well as the Local Authority in the case of entry into Year 7.

Birchwood admits 240 boys and girls per year. As 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. In 2017, 38% of the Year 7 intake was from those with a brother or sister already at the school, followed by 39% from our priority area and then 19.5% by geographical distance. Birchwood, therefore, has no need to select using aptitude tests.

Admission Arrangements for Entry to Year 7 in September 2018

There are two forms that need to be completed when applying for a place at Birchwood High School in order for your application to be assessed correctly. These are:

- (i) **The Secondary Transfer Form.** The 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.hertsdirect.org/admissions Essex residents must use the form supplied by Essex County Council. No application for a place at Birchwood High School will be accepted unless the Secondary Transfer Form is returned to the address stated on the form by the date specified.
- (ii) **Birchwood High School's Supplementary Information Form (SIF).** This is obtainable from the school web site www.birchwoodonline.org.uk and needs to be completed and returned to the school by **31 October 2017**.

Whilst it is not a legal requirement to complete the SIF, if you choose not to do this and simply apply through Hertfordshire County Council, the school is not able to track and support your admission queries until the point of allocation in March.

Allocation Criteria use the following five criteria in the order set out below:

- 1 **Looked after child** (children in public care) or a child who was previously looked after but, immediately after being looked after, became subject to an adoption, residence, or special guardianship order.
- 2 **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 a place but have not yet started at the school.

3 Staff : Priority may now be given to all 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. In 2017, 3 students were admitted under this rule.

4 Priority Area: Children who, at the closing date for applications, live in the chosen urban priority area 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 Hallingbury's. Addresses are routinely checked and places may be withdrawn if a false address has been given.

In the event of over-subscription with this fourth criterion, a tie break 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.

5 Geographical distance: Should there be places unfilled after applying criteria 1, 2, 3 and 4 then places will be offered 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.

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. In September 2017, the school admitted 3 students with an educational statement under this rule.

Other Information:

- The Governing Body will normally only admit children into their normal age group.
- At secondary transfer the twin or multiple birth sibling of any child allocated a place will also be admitted.
- 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.
- The School Supplementary Information Form should be sent to the school on time. It is important to note that you should apply under more than one criterion if you can, in case a tie-break is needed.
- 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.
- 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. Details may be obtained by contacting the Admissions Officer at the school.

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 proof of future residence is provided (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.

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

For in-year admissions, the following process applies:

- Contact both the school and Hertfordshire County Council to find out whether there are places in the year group concerned.
- If there are places please contact Birchwood High School and apply to Hertfordshire County Council.
- Before a place is offered you will be asked to supply information from your child's previous school and their birth certificate or passport.
- 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.