

BIRCHWOOD *News*

newsletter@birchwoodhigh.org.uk

Birchwood's British Physics Olympiad Gold Winners

Year 13 Physics students William Blakey and Alex Sawyer have had an amazing start to their final year. It started with their A level Physics teacher Mr William-Powlett encouraging them to enter the British Physics Olympiad; a test for the very best young physicists in the country and beyond. The Olympiad had nearly 5,000 of the best British and International students entering. Amazingly both young men scored a Gold in the paper, putting them in the top 20% of results in the world. William was amongst the very best results in the cohort and was awarded a Top Gold and invited to try out for the British Physics Olympiad team with an even more fiendishly difficult paper.



The good news didn't stop there. A week after receiving the BPhO results both boys found out that they had received offers from Oxford University to study Physics subject to their grades in the Summer. William and Alex have worked hard but also shown a keen interest in Physics outside of their lessons and are thoroughly deserving of their places. Mr William-Powlett said "With students of this ability it is more a case of inspiring them to seek out new information than help them understand the course content. William and Alex are always keen to know more about the world and have happily attended extra lessons where we have covered all of the optional units in the A level as well as exploring subjects that are outside of the curriculum such as General Relativity. Both boys thoroughly deserve their success."

School Principal Chris Ingate said "I remember interviewing William and Alex when they were in Year 11 for a place in the Sixth Form – something struck me at the time about their quiet understated talent and absolute fascination with physics. Its great to see them pursuing their dreams. They will be stars of the future"

Mr William-Powlett, Science



Senior Maths Challenge

Each year, a handful of students are entered for the UKMT senior Maths challenge, and this year both Alex Sawyer and William Blakey were entered for more prestigious competitions following their outstanding results. Alex was entered for the UKMT Kangaroo in which he received a certificate of qualification. William was entered for the incredibly challenging Maths Olympiad, in which he managed to achieve a certificate of merit. This was a sterling effort and both boys should be immensely proud of themselves in what is their last Maths challenge at Birchwood.

Inside this month's edition: Headlines...page 3, PSFA ...page 5, House News... page 11,
Would you like to advertise in Birchwood News?

A one off advert (5cm x 5cm) £25.00, or to advertise for a whole year (8 editions) £100.00
please contact newsletter@birchwoodhigh.org.uk for further information.

FINANCE

I am Mrs Young, the parental and student contact in relation to all income for the school.

We use an online payment system, ParentPay, for administration of the school income. We would like to keep the students and ourselves as safe as possible so encourage everyone to use this payment method.

If you require ParentPay login details or have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me via email:

jyoung@birchwoodhigh.org.uk



News in Brief.....

Year 11 Leavers Books

We are currently organising the Year 11 Leavers book. Books can be ordered via ParentPay and cost £7.38. Please contact Mrs Young

jyoung@birchwoodhigh.org.uk if you require your ParentPay login details.

If your child is currently in receipt of Free School Meals, the cost of this will be met in full by the school; please email Mrs Young on the email address above, to confirm your child would like a copy. The books are being printed externally therefore the deadline for payments and emails is Thursday 17 March.



Riley Beckenham received his medal with his football team, U13 Elsenham Greens, for becoming Royston Crow Football League Winners 2021/2022.

BACK TO THE THEATRE WE GO!

GCSE Dance and BTEC Performing Arts students were excited to get back to the London West End to watch the dazzling Matthew Bourne's choreography of the Nutcracker!

The students were taken on the magical journey of Clara's sweetie land world. Seeing characters from Marshmallows, Gobstoppers and Knickerbocker glories! The lavish set was mesmerising, and the students enjoyed being swept up in the spectacle. The Year 12 students are now enjoying using the various sweets to create their own work back in the studio.

A lovely evening had by all. Miss Adams would like to thank Mrs Pressland, Mrs Goddard, and Ms Willsmore for their support on the trip and to all our wonderful students who represented the school by conducting themselves extremely well.

Miss Adams, Head of Dance



ALUMNI NEWS



COMPANY

RHIANNON HANDY

Training: ArtsEd, London

Television includes; Eastenders and Holby City (BBC).

Theatre includes; 2:22 Ghost Story (West End); Ten Times Table (UK Tour); The Comedy of Errors (RSC, UK Tour); The Jew of Malta, Love's Sacrifice and Volpone (RSC); Gaslight, Ten Times Table, Improbable Fiction (The Mill at Sonning Theatre); Lady Anna: All at Sea (UK Tour); The Lost (The Young Vic).

Congratulations to alumni student Rhiannon Handy who is currently appearing in 2:22 A Ghost Story in the West End at the Gielgud Theatre.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Term Dates 2022

Spring 2022

Wednesday 5 January -
Friday 1 April

Half Term

Monday 14 February -
Friday 18 February

Summer 2022

Tuesday 19 April -
Friday 22 July

Half Term

Monday 30 May -
Friday 3 June

CPD Days

Thursday 21 July
Friday 22 July
2022/2023

Autumn Term 2022

Monday 5 September
(Year 7 and Year 12 only) -
Tuesday 6 September
(Whole School)
Tuesday 20 December

Half Term 2022

Monday 24 October -
Friday 28 October

Spring Term 2023

Thursday 5 January -
Friday 31 March

Half Term 2023

Monday 13 February -
Friday 17 February

Summer Term 2023

Monday 17 April -
Wednesday 19 July

CPD

Thursday 1 September 2022
Friday 2 September 2022
Friday 30 September 2022
Thursday 5 January 2023
Friday 21 July 2023

Occasional Day

Thursday 20 July 2023



Dear Parents/ Carers

I hope you enjoy another bumper-packed edition of Birchwood News, full of uplifting stories and amazing student achievements. It is great to see the 'Student of the Month Awards' resume, selecting a different person each month for recognition in a variety of subjects across the curriculum.

Good luck to anyone who fancies answering the Physics challenge question determining the internal resistance of a cell – something that I'm sure William Blakey and Alex Sawyer could do in their sleep. I remember interviewing these two students when they were in Year 11 for a place in the Sixth Form – something struck me, at the time, about their quiet, understated talent and absolute fascination with physics. It's great to see them pursuing their dreams. They will be stars of the future.

Another key focus for this edition is to mark our achievements in terms of encouraging all students to read and improve their literacy skills. Research conducted by the Education Endowment Fund (EEF) showed that the biggest impact of lockdown was that young people had stopped reading, writing and discussing. Since September, students have regularly read a chosen piece of fiction twice a week with their form tutor. Feedback from School Council has been very positive. We are also making sure that teachers use as much subject specific terminology as possible. In my own subject, GCSE students need to know over 100 Geographical terms and the more we practice these the better. Our Librarian, Jo Gibson, has also been supporting reading recovery and library usage outside lesson time. This focus on literacy needs to continue to help everyone get back to where they were pre-pandemic.

As we look forward to the lighter and, hopefully, warmer weather of March, there is a growing confidence within the school. We have been very fortunate to have relatively low covid infection rates with students and staff since September. We are, therefore, currently busy restoring all the pre-pandemic elements of our school, alongside introducing new strategies and funding additional resources. This includes a new internal system of advertising after school clubs and educational trips. Financially, we are in a good position to begin to address facilities in need of renovation or renewal.

The recent Survey Monkey results showed that students enjoy coming to school with over 90% saying that they felt they worked hard at school and knew what was expected of them. Staff figures were equally impressive with 99% saying they thought the school had managed the pandemic well, 98% saying they felt they had good working relationships with students and 97% acknowledging the strong support they gained from each other. Using Ofsted style questions, 93% of parents said that their child was happy at Birchwood and would recommend the school to another parent. Obviously on all these counts, I would like 100% so we are looking at ways to further improve but I do want to acknowledge how difficult the last two years have been so I do understand why someone might be unhappy.

Practically speaking, when we all return on Monday 21 February, at this half-way point in the school year, could you as parents check uniform, shoes and equipment. If you do need new items of uniform, I have been informed that Fosters have good stocks available. We have relaxed the wearing of coats in the classroom for the winter to allow fresh air into the room but this will not be permitted from 21 February – students have been informed.

And finally, can we spare a thought for our current Year 11 and 13 students who have only 10 school weeks left before their exams. Over the last two years, there have been no public exams and, in order to accommodate the disruption these students have experienced, exam boards have reduced the number of topics so these students have less content to remember. Teachers are busy sharing this with their classes. They will still be challenging but I have every confidence that students will do their best. We have seen 140 Year 11s applying for places at Birchwood Sixth Form and 67 students securing places at FE Colleges. Very few students are looking to go to another Sixth Form which I understand. After so much turbulence, sometimes it is best to stay where you feel secure and known.

With Year 13, we have had 90 University Offers and are working hard to ensure Year 13 students wishing to go into employment or higher apprenticeships are supported. A personal target for me is to ensure all Year 11 and 13 students can move on to their chosen Post-16 or Post-18 destinations successfully.

Enjoy February Half Term and thank you for your tremendous support. I go back to the lateral flow testing at the start of this term where over 1300 of you emailed in photo evidence to show your child had a negative LFT result. Last week I ran a series of assemblies and I asked the students to remember to thank you for your day-to-day support during an unprecedented time. If they forgot (!) perhaps you could coax this out of them next week.

Dr Ingate, Principal

Upgrade of PS Financials

On the 10 January 2022 the school went live with the latest version of PS Financials V7. With the new system there has been a fundamental overhaul of the business processes whereby we have ditched the "yellow" purchase order document and implemented an online portal for the requisitioning/ordering/receiving and invoicing of goods and services. All necessary authorisations are undertaken by Budget Holders and SLT where appropriate within the online system eliminating the endless paperwork trail and providing visibility to all on the progress of items within the system. The staff have embraced this change "with gusto" and can see the benefits of access to real time information through the reporting suite.

We have had a number of technical issues with the core financial system and we are working closely with the PS Financials team to resolve these asap and hope to have a stable system fully functioning by half term. If you require any further information on this project please do not hesitate in contacting the Finance Department.

Deryk Bull
Financial Director
Birchwood High School



**Birchwood Parents Staff and Friends Association
invites you to take part in our**

Virtual Valentine's Balloon Race

**Each balloon costs £3. The three balloons which have
travelled the furthest will win;**

1st Prize £60

2nd Prize £25

3rd Prize £15

**The Race starts at midday on Monday 14th February 2022
and ends at midday on Monday 21st February 2022**

**To purchase your Valentine's balloon, please visit
www.balloonrace.com/BirchwoodPSFA**

Following on from the success of last year's Virtual Valentine's and Easter Balloon Races, the PSFA have decided to host another Valentine's Balloon Race.

The prizes to be won; 1st Prize - £60, 2nd Prize - £25, 3rd Prize - £15

For those unfamiliar with the concept, a virtual balloon race works in the same way as a helium balloon race but the balloons fly around their own virtual world rather than in the atmosphere, making it much more environmentally friendly. Each balloon costs £3. Please go to <https://www.balloonrace.com/BirchwoodPSFA> where you can choose your balloon and even add your own personal message on the tag.

On Monday 14 February 2022 at midday, the balloons will be released to float around their virtual world using a specially designed algorithm, which ensures a random pattern, with no clear leader emerging. Every hour each balloon travels between 1km and 20km. You can follow your balloon throughout the race and see where you are on the race leaderboard.

At the end of the race at midday on Monday 21 February 2022 the three balloons which have travelled the furthest win cash prizes.

You can buy as many balloons as you like, for friends as well as family.

Please share this as entry is open to everyone.

Thanks for your support. Birchwood PSFA



Why not follow us onFacebook

We have a Facebook page where you can keep up to date with events and meetings. Please follow us at Birchwood Parents Staff and Friends Association (PSFA) Birchwood PSFA (birchwoodpsfa@gmail.com)

DON'T FORGET you can help us raise funds via TheGivingMachine

If you are a regular online shopper 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.

Birchwood Bonus Ball

Congratulations to Katrina Gore who was the winner of the December draw and winning £141! Ball 20 was drawn by Mr Gilbank.

The Bonus Ball is a great way to support the school, and at the same time be in with a chance of winning some cash every month! It is £3 per month per ball, payable either in one lump sum (£30 for the remainder of the school year for one ball) or monthly as a standing order. A draw takes place at the end of each month and the winner receives half of the money collected, the other half going towards PSFA funds, for our children. Our bank details are:

Barclays Bank, Account Name: Birchwood PSFA, Account Number: 23298728, Sort Code: 20-25-19
Email treasurerbwpsfa@gmail.com to let us know you've paid and how many balls you would like.
PSFA Facebook Page, 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 Preloved Uniform

If you are replacing items of 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 clean items of uniform to our reception. If you would like to make a purchase of preloved uniform, please email psfapreloved@gmail.com. Please note this email address will be checked once a week and uniform requests available for collection from reception, upon receipt of payment.

Other ways to support the PSFA

You can support the PSFA when shopping online with Amazon Smile. Find us on there under Birchwood Parents Staff & Friends Association or by searching our registered charity number 1184425. Alternatively, you can generate free donations to our school at no extra cost to you every time you online shop via TheGivingMachine. Please have a look online www.thegivingmachine.co.uk and search for Birchwood High School.

**PSFA Annual General Meeting,
Thursday 3 March 2022, 7pm, School Library**

We do have a vacancy for a new Chairperson. Please email birchwoodpsfa@gmail.com if you would like more information on this role.



Planting season is nearly here!

To celebrate the new planting season Mr Osborne (technology) has kindly made our gardening club a wonderful new sign.

The students green fingers are eager to get started. If you have any donations of the following they would be gratefully received - seeds, seed potatoes, compost, canes or propagators.

Mrs Homer

'Read, Review, Reward' competition

Congratulations to Hans Tsui who was the lucky winner of last half term's 'Read, Review, Reward' competition. Hans read and reviewed five books from the reading list – his overall favourite was 'Insignificant Events in the Life of a Cactus' which he rated 4.5 out of 5.

This half term's competition 'Read around the World' has been extended until Easter so there is plenty of time to get involved. You too could be the lucky winner of a £10 Waterstones gift card. For more information on how your child can enter please contact Mrs Gibson, vgibson@birchwoodhigh.org.uk



Book Name: Insignificant Events in the Life of a Cactus

Author: Dusti Bowling

Cover Illustration: Ryan Thomann

Book Type: Novel

What it's about:

The book is about the life of a girl called Aven who is adopted and doesn't have arms. She doesn't like to be told what she can or cannot do. Her family just moved from Kansas to an amusement park in Arizona. In Kansas, everybody is used to her having no arms, but in Arizona everybody stares. She goes to a school and tries to make friends. She then goes through a lot involving relationships between the friends. The friends also solve a mystery about the park and Aven's birth.

What I like about the book:

I really like the book and how it uses a mystery to make the story interesting. It also has a really good moral, don't give up, you can do anything you put your mind to. It also looks at disability and how you shouldn't discriminate against the disabled.

How much I like it: 4.5 stars out of 5.

Review by Hans Tsui

Did you know Hertfordshire Libraries have a number of free reliable online resources?

Knowing where to find free reliable information resources is an important part of education.

Hertfordshire libraries offer members' access to a number of online resources including Britannica Online, Credo Reference, The Oxford English Dictionary and Archive Newspapers. Perfect for helping with home learning, research and study!

Membership to Hertfordshire Libraries is free although children under 16 will need a parent or carer to sign up for them. Please visit www.hertfordsire.gov.uk/orlib for more information.

Mrs Gibson, Library Resource Manager

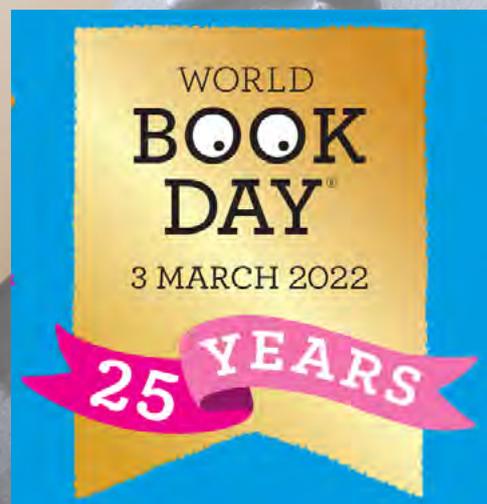
World Book Day - Thursday 3 March

This year marks 25 years of World Book Day, and to celebrate this, staff will be dressing up as a character from their favourite book.

Form groups will be voting on their favourite staff character and there will be prizes for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place! Voting will take place the week after WBD and we will send out a Survey Monkey to forms in order to vote.

Students will also receive a £1.00 book token which can be swapped for a FREE £1 book or be used to obtain £1.00 off another book of their choice.

Miss Long and Mrs Gibson



Half Term 3 Book List

Read Around the World

- The Poet X by Elizabeth Acevedo
- City of Beasts by Isabel Allende
- A Dangerous Game by Malorie Blackman
- Marcus Vega Doesn't Speak English by Pablo Cartaya
- See You in the Cosmos by Jack Cheng
- A Very Large Expanse of Sea by Tahereh Mafi
- Tight by Torrey Maldonado
- The Red Pencil by Andrea Davis Pinkney
- The Boy at the Back of the Class by Onjali Rauf
- The House that Lou Built by Mae Respicio
- Amal Unbound by Aisha Saeed
- Persepolis by Marjane Sartrapi
- Malala, my story of standing up for Girls' Rights by Malala Yousafzai





National Career Week coming soon...

7 – 13 March is National Careers Week which is a great opportunity to have conversations about careers. If you want some tips on how to start a careers conversation with your child take a look at this article by careers expert, Julie Poppleton. Why not sign up for the NCW Virtual Careers Fair where you will find tons of opportunities for students to explore. The NCW Virtual Careers Fair will go live on day 1 of Careers Week. All you need to do is follow this link <https://www.ncw2022.co.uk/> on or after 7 March.



National Apprenticeship Week

We have celebrated National Apprenticeship Week before half term. Students signed up for the Festival of Apprenticeships or the virtual events hosted by AllAboutSchoolLeavers- both of which gave the students opportunities to speak directly to employers and apprentices. If you would like to learn more about apprenticeships and the sorts of opportunities and careers young people can access through this route then take a look at the Parent Zone at Amazing Apprenticeships

<https://amazingapprenticeships.com/parent-zone/>

Mrs Crimes, Careers

Career Related Opportunities for our Biologists

At Birchwood High School, we are keen to develop the career aspirations of our students, and as such actively look for opportunities for career related events, run both live and online. We were excited to be able to offer our students the opportunity to sign up to a 6 week online programme run by the Royal Veterinary College, as part of their 'Biology Champions' initiative.

Six of our Birchwood students accepted this opportunity to attend and complete the online course, which featured content including; anatomy and physiology, ecosystems and the environment, cellular biology and immunology. The online session hosts were also joined by guests from the Zoological Society of London, Biochemical Society and Royal College of Pathologists, to explain more about career paths in the biosciences.

Biology Champions aimed to reinforce our students' passion for Biology as well as helping with their understanding of Biology at KS4 and A level. Students were given opportunities to not only revise Biology content and how to answer exam questions, but were also introduced to highlights in the exciting world of Biology through science-based research that has happened or is ongoing. Guest speakers shared exciting information on new discoveries, and busted biology related myths. The course also included invaluable opportunities for students to discuss various careers that they can go into after graduating.

A fantastic opportunity for our students to immerse themselves in a career related experience. Well done to our A level biologists; Ranna, Olivia, Amelia, Rebecca and Max, and our Year 11 Biologist, Grace.



Mrs Pressland, Science

Teacher's enhancing their skills

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) gives teachers the chance to reinforce existing skills, allowing us to build on our interaction skills and to learn new strategies for helping our students to achieve their full potential, ensuring that they leave Birchwood High with strong academic qualifications as well as being a well-rounded individual.

We are firmly invested in honing and developing our skills through CPD, delivered both in-house and via external providers. Last year we were invited to enrol on fully funded accredited qualifications (nationally recognised and meeting quality assurance requirements) through the online learning and skills training provider The Skills Network.

With over 40 courses available, we were able to choose an area for development that we felt passionate about, and one that would support us in continuing to deliver a high quality of secondary education for our students of all ability.

The courses involved 8-16 weeks of distance learning, where we were guided by a dedicated Learner Support Adviser, and subject specialist Tutor throughout. I am pleased to tell you that the following colleagues successfully passed their TQUK Level 2 Certificate award.

Miss LaLonge (Science)

TQUK Level 2 Certificate in Understanding Autism

To gain an understanding of autism and the principles supporting individuals with autism. It included learning about the person-centred approach, and the influence that positive communication methods can have. Importantly, training was given on how individuals with autism can be supported to live healthy and fulfilled lives.

Mrs Pressland (Science)

TQUK Level 2 Certificate in Behaviour that Challenges in Children

To develop knowledge of behaviour that challenges in children, and its effects. This included understanding; intervention strategies, behaviour that challenges coupled with; sensory issues, mental health, disabilities and autism, together with an understanding of the surrounding legislation to protect children.

Miss Peet (School Games Organiser)

TQUK Level 2 Certificate in Counselling Skills

To develop knowledge of the key elements of the main theoretical approaches in counselling, psychodynamics, person-centred therapy and cognitive behavioural therapy. Learning to identify core-counselling skills and develop an understanding of how these are practised in a counselling relationship.

Mrs Collyer (Business and Enterprise)

TQUK Level 2 Certificate in Principles of Team Leading

To develop knowledge of principles of team leading and how a business operates, as well as developing key skills needed to be a successful team leader and communicate with a range of stakeholders. Valuable skills to benefit the learning of Birchwood's A-Level Business students.

Miss Jones (SEND learning support assistant)

TQUK Level 2 Certificate in Understanding Children and Young People's Mental Health

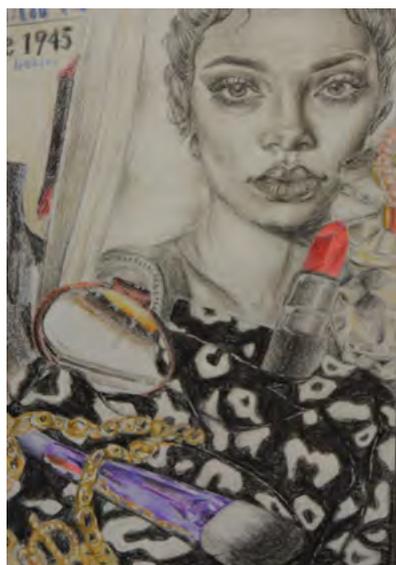
To develop the skills needed to understand mental health conditions that affect people, the legislation and guidance surrounding mental health, risk factors that may affect mental well-being and the impact that has on mental health concerns.

Mr Stopps (Deputy Principal)

TQUK Level 2 Certificate in Special Education Needs and Disability

To consider the many aspects of SEND (Special educational needs and disabilities), including the symptoms of specific conditions, legislation and guidance applicable to individuals with SEND and how such conditions affect individuals in daily life.

Student of the Month Award



Artist

Evie-Mae Evans
(Artwork above)

Business

Lucas Sanders

Chef

Hannah Nicholls

Dancer

Rishel Pereira

English

Lyla Fegan

Film Studies

Oliver Foster

Geography

Aidan Lucas

Historian

Holly Thompson

IT/Computer Science

Bianca Ababei

Linguist

Holly Thompson

Mathematician

George Port

Media

Ruby Roberts

Musician

Matthew Reader

PE

Henry McBride

Performer

Jaiya McCormick

PLC

Alex Bond

Religious Studies

Jessica Smith

Scientist

George Stamm

Social Science

Joel Mutter

Statistician

Millie Evans

Technologist

Chloe Ireland



Well done to Year 9 football team who had an impressive win against Helena Romanes on Monday 31 January. Birchwood won 12-0.

1. Alfie Lawson
2. Alfie Hobday
3. Henry McBride
4. Cameron Morley – 1 goal
5. Samuel Griffiths – 2 goals
6. Adam Carter – 1 goal
7. Lewis Hayes – 4 goals
8. Archie Smith – 2 goals
9. Aaron Stevens – 1 goal
10. Mason Frost – 1 goal
11. Charlie Booker
12. George Port
13. Olivier Rochester
14. Isaac Devereux

Mr Ruggins, PE



House



Well done to all the forms that took part in the competition at Christmas for decorating their form rooms.

The winners are below:

1st Place - 7RNN (pictured to the right).



The total money raised from our last charity day was **£1,266.59!**
Total fundraising amount this year so far is **£2,968.18!**



Sixth Form reap their rewards!

The House Team organised a Sixth Form Rewards trip to The North Pole in Cambridge.

The students were able to attend the trip if they had high attendance, a good attitude and effort to learning, and helped with the wider commitments in sixth form.

The students really enjoyed the ice skating and had some time to do some Christmas shopping.

Walking Cricket

**has arrived in
Bishop's Stortford.**



Walking Cricket is a great way to exercise, suitable for all ages, especially the over 50's and is totally inclusive.

Taking up Walking Cricket can inject a buzz of energy into your life on and off the pitch.

Meet new friends in a safe, friendly environment.

No running but lots of fun...

Come and join us on Tuesday evenings at Birchwood High School, Parsonage Lane, Bishop's Stortford.

First of 10 sessions starting from Tuesday 11 January 2022.

6.30pm -7.30pm.

Cost £5 per session, tea and coffee supplied.

Contact: Sean 07849 973451 seancarey780@me.com

Richard: 07818 431144 richard.hill@ecb.co.uk

PILATES CLASSES

Wednesday's
Birchwood High School

6.30pm - Pure Pilates

7.35pm - Prenatal Pilates

ADVANCE BOOKING REQUIRED

EMAIL TO BOOK:

info@onetwowellness.co.uk

