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WHOLE SCHOOL NOTICES

1. A message from the PE department

The PE department have been delighted with a super start to the year, seeing the students really keen to get back into PE.

Here are a few reminders to help with the rest of the year.

PE kit - Please ensure that your child's PE kit is named AND ideally their bag also has a name on it. We have already had a number of students (not just year 7's) lose their PE kit in the first week back. If it does not have a name on it, it makes it extremely difficult to return to the student.

Shin pads are required for all football and hockey lessons. Mouthguards are 'strongly recommended' for rugby and hockey lessons.

Missing kit - should your child not have an item of clothing required for the lesson then the child will need to bring a note in to explain what is missing and that you are looking to replace the item/s as soon as possible. If the student does not have a note that will be a Kit Mark and will result in their uniform card being signed, in line with the new school policy.

Earrings - if your child has had them pierced over the holidays and they are currently unable to take them out for PE lessons, it is their responsibility to bring in tape or something to cover them until they can take them out.

We strongly recommend that students now wait until the next summer holidays before getting their ears pierced.

Excused from lessons - if your child is unable to take part in their timetabled activity for reasons of poor health, please do send in a note to hand to their teacher at the start of the lesson briefly explaining why they are unwell but please also send them in with their PE kit too. The expectation is that they will still get changed and 'be part of the lesson' in some way. It may be that it is not appropriate for that student to stay with their class, but they may be able to join a different class doing a different activity.

Clubs - separate information regarding the clubs on offer by the PE department this term will follow shortly. Students will be expected to bring in trainers to play in the lunchtime clubs. Afterschool clubs will finish at 4.30pm.
Should you require further clarification or have any questions please get in touch via the school Admin email.

2. Duke of Edinburgh News

Next week the 8 DofE Gold students are heading to Snowdon in Wales to complete their qualifying expedition. Let's wish them good luck and great weather!

We are beginning the application process for the 2025–2026 Bronze Award. Please note that the deadline to submit your application letter is Friday, 26th September.

Additionally, a separate letter will be sent regarding the 2025–2027 Gold Award. The deadline to submit your application letter for the Gold Award is Thursday, 19th September. Letters should be submitted to Miss LaLonge or Mr. Loveday.

3. Co-Curriculum

Dear Parents and Carers,

I'd like to take this opportunity to warmly welcome our Year 7 families to Birchwood, and to reintroduce all parents to the exciting opportunities available through our Co-Curriculum. The Birchwood Co-Curriculum is a distinctive and valued part of our school experience. It's designed to inspire students to explore their favourite subjects more deeply, discover new interests, and develop essential life skills. Whether it's through reading, watching, visiting, creating, or reflecting, students are encouraged to enrich their learning in imaginative and meaningful ways beyond the classroom.

You can find more information and access the student submission form via the link below:

[Birchwood High School – Co-Curriculum](#)

At Birchwood, we believe education is about more than just exam results. It's about nurturing curiosity, confidence, resilience, and ambition - qualities that help young people thrive both in school and in life. The Co-Curriculum supports this by encouraging students to follow their passions, try something new, and reflect on their personal growth.

We are incredibly proud of the students who have embraced these opportunities with such enthusiasm since the programme's launch last year. Their creativity, commitment, and curiosity have been truly inspiring.

Thank you for your continued support in helping us foster not only academic success but also a lifelong love of learning.

Warmest wishes,

Mrs Kee-Rose

Lead Practitioner

4. Flu Vaccinations Letter

Flu has had a serious impact on the health of England's population over the past two winters. Vaccinating your child helps reduce the risk of serious illness and plays an important role in protecting vulnerable individuals in your community, friends and family.

Our team will be visiting your child's school on Monday 22 September 2025 for Years 7-9 (Years 10-11 will be on Wednesday 8 October 2025) to offer the flu vaccine. **You can choose between the quick, painless nasal spray or a pork gelatine-free injection.**

For further information about the vaccines, please click here [Vaccination UK Immunisation](#). The form is available in 10 languages— select yours when it opens.

If you **do not** want your child to be vaccinated, please **submit a decline** via the same link to avoid further contact from our team.

Note: School aged children cannot receive this vaccination with their GP unless they are clinically vulnerable

5. Reminder: Procedure for Students Feeling Unwell During the School Day

We would like to kindly remind you of the procedure for students who are feeling unwell during the school day. If your child is unwell, they should not contact you directly. Instead, they are expected to attend their lesson and inform the teacher of how they are feeling. The teacher will then use their professional judgment to assess the situation and determine if the student needs to see the school nurse.

If the nurse assesses the student and determines that they should go home, parents will be contacted at that point.

We appreciate your cooperation in reinforcing this procedure with your child, as it ensures that we can address their needs in a timely and appropriate manner.

YEAR 7

A message from Mrs Hinski - Head of Year 7

I wanted to take a moment to say how incredibly proud you should all be of your children. They have made a *fantastic* start to life at Birchwood High School, and it has been a genuine pleasure getting to know them over the past week.

Many members of staff have gone out of their way to compliment how polite, enthusiastic, and eager to learn our Year 7 students are—and I couldn't agree more. Even our school photographer was impressed, commenting that this was the best year group he has worked with in over six years! With such a strong and positive beginning, I feel very optimistic about the year ahead.

What We've Seen So Far

This week, I've been fortunate to visit many Year 7 lessons and wanted to share just how impressed I've been. I've seen:

- Beautiful handwriting and pride in presentation
- Calm, focused, and purposeful classrooms
- High energy and enthusiasm for learning

Please do take a moment this weekend to congratulate your child—it's been a superb start, and they deserve to know it.

Reminders and Updates

Satchel One & ParentPay:

While a few students and families have experienced teething issues with Satchel One and ParentPay, most systems should now be fully operational. If you are still having problems, please email:

admin@birchwoodhigh.org.uk

with the name of your child's tutor in the subject line, and someone will be happy to assist.

Social Spaces:

- The social area (just outside my office) is a space for chatting and relaxing at break and lunch.
- For football or running around, students should use the Year 7 hardcourt next to the Sports Hall.
- For a quieter space, students are welcome in the Library or PLC. Please note: if these areas become too crowded, students *not* on the SEND register may be asked to leave to ensure access for those who need it.

Homework and Uniform:

Please encourage your child to:

- Check and complete their homework the night before.
- Lay out their uniform ready for the following day.

These small routines make a big difference to confidence and organisation.

Lunch Arrangements:

Currently, all Year 7 students are being dismissed slightly early for lunch to help them avoid the queues. We will review this arrangement at the end of next week.

Upcoming: Team-Building Trip

We are very much looking forward to the Year 7 Team-Building Trip next week, which will take place on Thursday or Friday, depending on your child's tutor group.

If your child is not attending the trip, they should still come to school as normal, in full uniform, and will join a different class for the day to continue with lessons.

Focus for Next Week: Manners Matter

Next week, we will be focusing on the importance of manners, especially encouraging students to thank staff at the end of each lesson. Please take a moment to talk with your child about how small gestures of kindness and respect can go a long way in building strong relationships and a positive reputation.

Once again, thank you for your continued support. We are thrilled to have such a wonderful group of students joining us, and we look forward to a rewarding and successful year ahead.

YEAR 8

A message from Mr Edwards - Head of Year 8

Welcome to Year 8 – A Strong Start!

I would like to extend a very warm welcome to you and your child as we begin the new academic year. It has been a pleasure to see our Year 8 students return to school with such a positive attitude and a clear commitment to their learning and personal development.

We have introduced a number of new routines and high expectations this term, all designed to support a calm, focused, and respectful learning environment. I'm pleased to share that the majority of students have responded incredibly well. They have adapted quickly, demonstrated maturity, and are already showing pride in their conduct, appearance, and learning. Their readiness to engage with the routines and meet our high standards has not gone unnoticed. Staff have been impressed with how the year group is settling into their lessons, making the most of every opportunity, and showing real ambition for the year ahead. This strong start is laying a solid foundation for continued success both in and outside the classroom.

We value the partnership between home and school, and your support in reinforcing our expectations at home is truly appreciated. By working together, we can ensure that every student in Year 8 thrives and reaches their full potential.

If you have any questions or concerns as the year progresses, please don't hesitate to get in touch with your child's form tutor or the Year 8 team. We're looking forward to a successful and rewarding year ahead.

Thank you once again for your continued support.

YEAR 9

A message from Mr Loney - Head of Year 9

On behalf of all staff, old and new, at Birchwood High School we would like to welcome back our students after what has hopefully been a relaxing Summer. Year 9 does present challenges, but it also presents opportunities. The choosing of options looks to have been a large success overall with the vast majority of students choosing subjects that they are passionate about. Students should also have access to attend a larger variety of clubs when we have settled back into the routine of school life with our now extended lunch time.

At the time of reading, Year 9 have been back in school for one week, which will have been a shock to some and a pleasure for others. I would like to thank you for helping your child with their uniform and enabling them to return to school with a fully stocked pencil case (which will soon be empty no doubt). Your support at home enables your child and the school to be a success.

The last part of my message is aimed towards the students of Year 9, which I will have mentioned in my assembly on Wednesday. Summer may not have been an easy experience for everyone. Please reach out to your friends, especially those you have not seen recently. If anything doesn't feel right or if you have a concern, please report this to a member of staff. We are a caring community who must look out for one another.

YEAR 10

A message from Mr Noblett - Head of Year 10

I am very proud of the way Year 10 have returned from the summer break and how well they have settled into their GCSE options. Many teachers have already shared how impressed they are with students' positive attitudes, and I have seen this first-hand in the lessons I have visited. A reminder that next Wednesday is our Year 10 Information Evening. This will be a valuable opportunity to hear about the year ahead, including how best to support your child with their revision and exam preparations. I am confident this will be a successful year and look forward to seeing all that Year 10 achieve.

Parents Information Evening

Year 10 Parents' Information Evening will take place on Wednesday 17 September from 5:30pm to 7:00pm. We kindly ask that, due to limited space in the hall, only **one family member attends per student** and that students do not attend the evening.

YEAR 11

A message from Mrs Collyer & Mr Hill - Heads of Year 11

As we begin this pivotal academic year, we are delighted to introduce ourselves as the new Heads of Year 11. We are Mrs Collyer (ACO) and Mr Hill (SHL). We will be working together to support your child throughout this important stage of their school journey.

We are both incredibly excited to work with the Year 11 students, helping to guide them through what is a crucial year filled with both challenges and opportunities. Our focus will be on academic achievement, wellbeing, and preparation for post-16 pathways, and we are committed to ensuring each student reaches their full potential.

We will be working closely with the excellent team of Year 11 form tutors, who play a key role in the daily support and care of your child:

Mrs Collyer's Team:

Mr Cusumano – CCO

Mr Asquith-Fox – TAX

Mr Jankovskis – EJS

Miss Rolfe/Mr Rotich – ARE

Mr Hannant – CHT

Mr Hill's Team:

Mr Grogan – MGN

Ms Burgess/Mr Budd – ABS

Mr Zacharopolis – AZS

Mr Creed – SCD

We will be in regular contact throughout the year with updates, key information, and ways you can support your child from home. In the meantime, please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or concerns.

We are truly looking forward to a productive and successful year with your child.

Parents Information Evening

Year 11 Parents' Information Evening will take place on Tuesday 16 September from 5:30pm to 7:00pm.

We strongly encourage you to attend this evening if you are able to, as it will enable you to help your child make an informed choice about their future. Simply due to limited capacity we ask that only **1 parent** attends the evening, and your child should **not** attend.

SIXTH FORM

Year 12 Parents Information Evening

Year 12 Parents' Information Evening will take place on Tuesday 23 September from 6:00pm to 7:00pm. More information to follow.

Year 13 Parents Information Evening

Year 13 Parents' Information Evening will take place on Thursday 25 September from 6:00pm to 7:00pm. More information to follow.

IS A CHILD YOU KNOW CURRENTLY BEING SEXUALLY EXPLOITED?

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR



Adults befriending young people including buying them vapes, food and drinks



Missing from home



Absent from School



Not engaging with usual friends



Unexplained access to money



Receiving gifts from unknown sources



Displaying inappropriate sexualised behaviour



Drug or alcohol misuse



Sharp change in mood or character



Change in appearance



Poor mental health and self-harming

DON'T IGNORE YOUR GUT FEELING THAT SOMETHING IS NOT RIGHT



SAY SOMETHING IF YOU SEE SOMETHING

What is Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)?

Young people, boys and girls, under the age of 18 who are encouraged, coerced, manipulated or deceived into a sexual relationship or situation.

It often involves the young person being offered something in return for performing sexual acts, such as alcohol, cigarettes, gifts, money, drugs and affection.

CSE has become a national issue which is affecting our community and could be happening around us, including to a child you know.

Although CSE isn't always easy to spot there are signs to look out for which could indicate that it is taking place. It is your responsibility to help protect children and stop the sexual exploitation of children happening. The important thing is not to ignore suspicious

behaviours and report anything that doesn't seem right. Protecting children is everyone's responsibility. Remember, your observations and phone call can make all the difference to a sexually exploited child.

In the past few years, public awareness of CSE has increased but too many children and young people are still victims. We have been working to raise awareness of the issue, but we need the help from members of public, parents and guardians to protect children at risk of being exploited or help those who are already victims.

Protecting children is everyone's responsibility. Remember, your observations and phone call can make all the difference to a sexually exploited child.

SAY SOMETHING IF YOU SEE SOMETHING

Report online: herts.police.uk or call 101.

In an emergency call 999.

Follow us @hertspolice



03/2025 JH

BIRCHWOOD BOBCATS CHEERLEADING SQUAD

Do you have what it takes? Then join our cheer team!

TUESDAY CO-CURRICULAR 3.15-4PM

YEARS 7-9

£4/ SESSION PAID TERMLY

This club offers a variety of skills; dancing;
cheering; gymnastics and stunting!



PLEASE CALL CRESSY ON 07788 561175

OR EMAIL STORTFORDCHEERLEADERS@HOTMAIL.COM

for more information on joining the Birchwood
Bobcats Cheerleading Squad.

FOR KS1 CHILDREN WANTING TO CHEER, WE HAVE A NEW SQUAD CALLED
THE STORTFORD STAGS, PRACTISING ON SATURDAY MORNINGS AT 9.30