



BIRCHWOOD HIGH SCHOOL SIXTH FORM ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

TERM DATES

Year 12 students will start school on **Friday 5 September** alongside the new Year 7. The remainder of the school will return on Monday 8 September.

Sep 2025						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
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29	30					

Oct 2025						
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Nov 2025						
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Dec 2025						
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Jan 2026						
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Feb 2026						
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Mar 2026						
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Apr 2026						
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May 2026						
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Jun 2026						
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Jul 2026						
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27	28	29	30	31		

CPD Days – school closed to students
Student holidays & occasional days
Bank & public holidays
School Open to Yr 7 & 12 only
Open Evening
Year 6 Transition Day

THE SCHOOL DAY

The school day starts at 8:40am with lessons finishing at 3:10pm.

However, please be advised that Sixth Form lessons operate on a **6-lesson day** to accommodate our broad curriculum offer. In the majority of cases, we are able to keep to the normal running of the school day. However, some lessons may finish at 4:00pm. This should be taken into consideration before committing to any transport costs or part time work.

Morning registration	8.40am
End of school day	3.10pm
Lesson 6	3.10 – 4.00pm

ATTENDANCE

All students are expected to attend school full-time, arriving for registration at **8.40am** and remaining on site until **3.10pm**, whether they have timetabled lessons or not. All students will be registered at the beginning of each lesson. In the event of unavoidable absences, parents/carers should follow our Birchwood absence procedure:

<https://www.birchwoodhighschool.co.uk/page/?title=Attendance+%26amp%3B+Absence+Procedures&pid=90>

On the occasion a student needs to leave the site, however briefly, they should first obtain permission from their Sixth Form Tutor or the Head of Sixth Form and must **always sign out and sign back in again**.

Sixth Form studies are vitally important to students' futures. Therefore, we will not authorise any holidays taken during term time.

ACADEMIC WORK

Students are expected to attend all timetabled lessons throughout the year. On the occasion a teacher is absent and no cover teacher is available, students should see Mrs Crimes in the Sixth Form Office to register and collect work which has been left for them.

Students are likely to have in the region of three hours of home learning per day. They are expected to use their study periods and out of school hours to complete this.

STUDY AREAS:

We offer a variety of dedicated study environments to meet different needs, including silent study rooms and group study areas.

Sixth Form Common Room

The Sixth Form Common Room is a dedicated space for students to relax, socialise with friends, or study in a more informal setting, either individually or with groups. It includes a kitchen area, providing students with a comfortable environment to unwind between study sessions.



Sixth Form Study Room & Library

The Sixth Form Study Room, located upstairs in the Sixth Form block is designed to help students benefit from a dedicated quiet study space, with full access to computers and Wi-Fi, ensuring they have the right tools for both focused work and collaborative learning. The library is also accessible throughout the day for students to use for quiet study. We stock up-to-date text books for all the courses on offer in the Sixth Form and also display a wide range of further reading material to encourage and support student academic research.

Café and Outdoor Spaces

Students have access to the school café throughout the day. Additionally, there are plenty of outdoor spaces, including courtyards with picnic benches, perfect for relaxing or studying outdoors during warmer months.

ACADEMIC PREPARATION FOR SEPTEMBER

Preparation work for Year 12 was distributed during Induction Programme 1. This work will be uploaded to the Sixth Form area of the school website under the link “Year 12 Induction”. It is also linked in via a QR code in your Induction pack. It is expected that students arrive prepared in September by completing any tasks set for their chosen subjects.

DRESS CODE

One of the freedoms enjoyed by sixth form students is not being required to wear school uniform. At Birchwood, we have a sixth form dress code, rather than a uniform. It is expected that sixth formers wear professional business wear.

1. Smart attire: Jacket or smart jumper (no logos) with trousers or skirt. Plain in colour.
2. Plain (or subtly patterned) shirt or blouse: Blouses should have a collar and sleeves and be of an opaque material. Shirt top buttons must be fastened, and shirts tucked in.

3. Black or dark brown formal, low-heeled, shoes: Dark socks should be worn with trousers, tights with a skirt.
4. Tie to be worn with shirt and trousers.

Seasonal variations:

- In winter, a smart, roll neck jumper can be worn.
- In summer, short sleeves on shirts and blouses are permitted.

The following are *never* appropriate:

- Loungewear, hoodies, or leggings.
- Stretchy fabrics (lycra etc.), for instance in 'tube' skirts. Skirts should be 'pencil' or 'A-line'.
- Cropped or low-cut tops.
- Ill-fitting buttoned shirts which 'gape'.
- Skirts which are closer to the hip than the knee, or which 'ride up' excessively during normal wear/walking.
- Sheer/see-through fabrics (e.g. lace and chiffon).
- High-heeled shoes, stilettos, wedges, boots (including Dr Martens) and sandals.

Our expectations for hair, jewellery and make-up are as follows:

- Hair must be neat and respectable with no extremes of style.
- Hair may be dyed in one natural colour. Any hair accessories must match and be minimal.
- Jewellery should be appropriate (sleepers and studs only, this includes small nose piercings – no nose rings). Clear plastic 'plugs' may be used to keep piercings open.
- 'Natural look' day make-up and well-maintained nail varnish of a single colour is permitted.

Students will carry a Business Wear Card with them in their lanyard which will be signed by a member of staff if they fail to meet the business wear standards. Two signatures or failure to present the card will result in an after-school detention.

In general, if you are not sure whether something fits the following dress code, assume that it does not.

LANYARDS

All students will be issued with a lanyard to identify them as a Birchwood Sixth Form student. This must be worn at all times while on the school site. Students who forget their lanyard will be issued with a temporary replacement. However, repeated failure by a student to remember their lanyard will be sanctioned. Replacement lanyards are available but will be charged.

16-19 BURSARY FUND

In addition to bursaries for students who are in care, care leavers or in receipt of income support (student not parent), the school holds a small fund to help those students most in need. This money is designed to contribute towards course related expenses such as books, transport, or compulsory subject trips. Those students who feel they may be eligible will need to complete and submit an application form for consideration. A copy of our Bursary Fund Policy and an application form are included in your induction pack and can also be found on the website.

SUPER-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Throughout the year students will have the opportunity to participate in a variety of super-curricular activities. These vary from Sixth Form social trips and charity events to activities based in and around the school community. We would recommend that all students become as actively involved as possible. Apart from acquiring a wide range of experiences and undoubtedly raising their level of enjoyment within the school, any participation will be directly reflected in future references.



Photo taken at Sixth Form Winter Ball for charity MIND.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Following the exam period, all Year 12 students will be asked to organise and undertake a week of work experience. A date for this will be confirmed as soon as possible. More information regarding work experience can be found by scanning the careers and work experience QR code in your induction pack.

DRIVING LESSONS AND PARKING

We fully support the notion of students learning to drive and allow them to use one hour of their 'free' school time for driving lessons. However, we must insist that no driving lesson encroaches on any taught lesson, registration, pastoral period or assembly, and that form tutors are given written notice of these lessons in advance.

There are very limited number of parking permits for sixth form students. Permits are allocated to students based on a number of factors including distance to school etc. Please talk to Mrs Crimes if you'd like more information.

PAID EMPLOYMENT

Many students have part-time paid employment. Again, this is something we support but would draw your attention to published research which notes that once a student undertakes regular paid employment of more than nine hours in any one week their grades decrease by, on average, one grade for every three hours. Therefore a 'B' grade student who undertakes paid employment for 15 hours per week is likely to find his or her grade drop from 'B' to 'D' or even 'E/U' (fail) simply by

spending too many hours in paid employment. We would therefore strongly recommend that students and parents seriously consider these implications before making any decisions regarding part-time work.

PLANNING YOUR LEARNING

It is essential that students map their independent learning time and record their Home Learning. At the start of each week, students will identify important dates, events and what they will be completing during their ILT sessions.

LEADERSHIP

Service to the wider school is one of Birchwood's Sixth Form's great strengths. There are a variety of leadership roles and responsibilities that students are encouraged to take on. These include: the Sixth Form Leadership Team, Senior Prefects, House Captains, Mentor Prefects, Environment & Wellbeing Prefects. The hard work of all our students in leadership roles has a huge impact on making the school such a vibrant, inclusive, and successful community.

The Sixth Form Leadership Team responsibilities:

- Be an ambassador for the school and act as a role model.
- Plan and deliver assemblies.
- Support school events.
- Create a sense of pride within the Sixth Form community.
- Liaise, support and work with the wider Sixth Form Leadership Team and school Principal.

Our current leadership team are as follows:

- Principal Student (centre): Gracie Salmon
- Deputy Principal Student: Zoe Lloyd-Rossi
- Deputy Principal Student: Maddison Spencer
- Assistant Principal Student: Nico Beggs
- Assistant Principal Student: Harry Gilbank
- Assistant Principal Student: Olivia Peacock
- Assistant Principal Student: Lily Shillito



TRIPS

Sixth form trips and visits are many and varied and enrich the student experience at Birchwood.

There are a number of curriculum trips including Geography fieldwork visits and external workshops for Politics, Business and Economics. Drama and Dance students attend live performances which broaden students' knowledge and interpretations. Our Modern Foreign Languages faculty encourage the use of the student's chosen language and offer experience of the culture of those countries including film festivals, plays and Christmas markets.

This year, our Year 12s travelled to Mersea Island to take part in a range of teambuilding activities designed to push them outside of their comfort zone and get to know different students within the Sixth Form.



Birchwood also offers an annual ski trip. Last year, we took 50 Year 13 students to Austria. It was the first year that we have had a snowboarding group, as well as our normal larger pool of beginners and one group of experienced skiers. In 2026, Year 13 are off to Barcelona and on to the Pyrenees to ski at La Molina.

