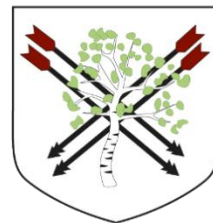


# Birchwood Avenue Primary School's News



Issue 4, January 2025



## Dates for your diary

Dates for 2025	
27 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2025	Athlete visit
29 <sup>th</sup> January	Safer Places pop-up 9:30-11:00
30 <sup>th</sup> January	Y6, Positive Minds session
4 <sup>th</sup> February	Whole school- well-being workshops
5 <sup>th</sup> February	Reception class- open classroom (phonics session)
10 <sup>th</sup> February	Phonics workshop- YR & KS1 parents
10 <sup>th</sup> February	'Climate Change' STEM sessions YR & KS1
17 <sup>th</sup> -21 <sup>st</sup> February	Half-term
4 <sup>th</sup> March	Y5 STEM Challenge in school
6 <sup>th</sup> March	Year 1 and Year 6 trip to RAF Hendon
11 <sup>th</sup> March	Y4-Y6 Show Racism the Red Card workshops
4 <sup>th</sup> April	End of term- school closes 1:30pm
7 <sup>th</sup> -18 <sup>th</sup> April	Easter break
21 <sup>st</sup> April	Easter Monday- Bank holiday, school closed
22 <sup>nd</sup> April	Children return to school
30 <sup>th</sup> April	BMX Academy display & workshops Y5 & Y6
21 <sup>st</sup> July 2025	INSET
22 <sup>nd</sup> July 2025	INSET
23 <sup>rd</sup> July 2025	INSET

## Message from Miss Hall

Dear families,

I'd like to take this opportunity to address some communication and behaviour concerns that have arisen within our school community.

As the headteacher, I am committed to maintaining open and positive dialogues with all our parents. We value the partnership between home and school, and believe that by working together, we can provide the best possible educational experience for our pupils.

Unfortunately, I have been made aware of some instances where the lines of communication have broken down, leading to frustration and anger from a small number of parents. This is concerning, as it can negatively impact the learning environment for all our pupils.

I want to assure you that we take the concerns of our parents very seriously. We are dedicated to addressing any issues that arise, and to finding constructive solutions that benefit our entire school community.

While most of our pupils demonstrate the Birchwood Avenue values of kindness, respect, and hard work, there have been a few isolated incidents of disruptive or inappropriate behaviour.

We take a firm but fair approach to behaviour management at our school, and we will continue to work closely with pupils and parents to ensure that our high standards are maintained. However, we also recognise that sometimes additional support may be needed, and we are committed to providing that support wherever possible.

I encourage all parents to continue to engage with their child's teacher for any initial conversation sharing any concerns. By working together, we can ensure that Birchwood Avenue Primary School remains a welcoming, inclusive, and safe environment for all our pupils.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership.

Miss Hall

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## School Diary

Please check the school diary on our website for updates for school events. This calendar can be synced to your phone.

[Calendar | Birchwood Avenue Primary School](#)

## Lost Property



In school, there is already a growing collection of uniform with no names on. Please write your child's name or initials on the label of their uniform. This is costly and 'lost' uniform can be avoided.

## Staffing Update



'Welcome' to Mrs. Laura McGrath, our new admin assistant. Mrs. McGrath has a wealth of experience working in a busy school office.

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Thank you to everyone who contributed to Asda's 'Cash for Schools'. You raised £412.59 for our school. We'll let you know what we spend it on.

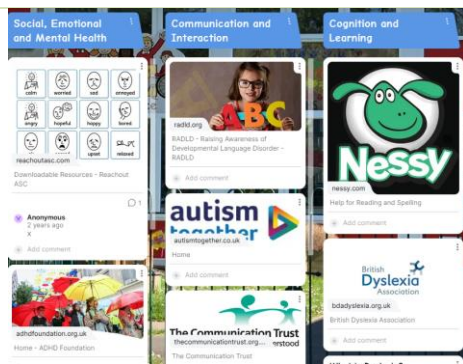
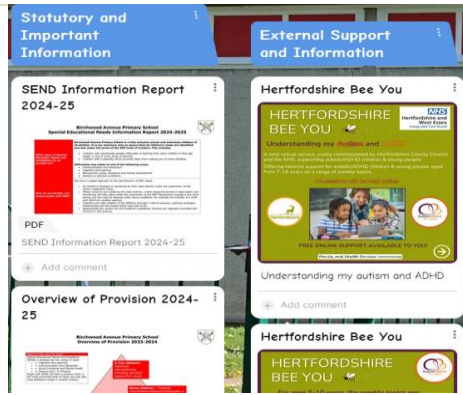
## SEND at Birchwood

Miss James has been updating the page providing support to parents of children with SEND needs.

[Birchwood Avenue Primary School SEND](#)

Please follow the link above and find all our SEND info in one place.

A couple of screen shots are below to give you a taste of what you can access.



*We've been busy this month.*

Have a look at some of the things the children have been up to.

### Reception Class

Reception have been exploring the traditional tale 'Jack and the Beanstalk'. All the children have been planting magic beans.



### Year 1- Traffic Survey

Year 1 enjoyed completing a traffic survey as part of their history of transport topic. They were excited to be able to spot lots of cars and vans, but they were a bit disappointed that no motorbikes came past.



### The Whole School

Mrs Gethin-Golder arranged another visit from the University of Hert's planetarium. Each class had a session in the planetarium and there was much awe and wonder during their time in the

Messages from our school office.



Please check that you are receiving emails from Arbor. Some people have not been receiving these due to changes in contact email addresses.

Please check that you log-in to Arbor and SchoolGrid are working. Please let the school office know after half-term if you need support with accessing either of these platforms.

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Hatfield Foodbank

If you are struggling at the moment with the cost of living and buying essentials, please speak to Miss Hall or Miss James and we will support you with getting a code to access the Foodbank.

Positive Minds

Year 6 have been having a weekly session with 'Positive Minds' with Watford FC Community Sports and Education Trust. [Positive Minds; Education - Watford FC Community Sports & Education Trust](#)

Mariam – 'Karen from Positive Minds is really nice to talk to and understands what we say. She's very optimistic about things - every time we have discussions about the negative side of things, she always brings up the positive sides.'

Isabelle – 'It's really nice because we get to share our thoughts and get to know how other people feel. We have also learned lots of things we didn't know about, like how long people spend on their devices and how people feel when people say things about them.'

dome. The children experienced being very close to the moon and seeing the craters.

Year 5 say...  
'I enjoyed the planetarium that had real life features of asteroids hitting the moon.'  
'I liked seeing the constellations and what they represent.' Luca  
'I liked the asteroid which crashed into the moon and the sun going supernova.' Mason

Year 1 say...  
'I enjoyed watching the sun rise and set.' Jaida  
'I liked it when it felt like we were flying through space.' Thomas



**Great Athletes Visit**

This week, Steve Frew, gold medallist gymnast, visited the school. All children completed a circuit with him before he gave an inspirational assembly. Steve also shared some of his gymnastic skills with us. There was a real buzz in the school. You are all amazing and have raised just over £900 which is incredible. Thank you all for your support.



Year 6 say....

Devon – 'It was really fun. Because we got to do a lot of exercises and learn about the muscles that we have to use to exercise. My favourite thing was probably doing the squat jumps because even though you're exercising, it was lots of fun jumping.'  
Jamie – 'I thought it was very fun because we got to use all of our energy in that one session. My favourite thing was the exercise in the push up position because we had to stay in the position the entire time and tap our shoulders as many times as possible in 1 minute.'

Year 1 say...

Olaf- 'I thought he wouldn't make it when he jumped four people but he did.'  
Brodie- 'I liked the running and the star jumps.'

## Working in Partnership with Step2Skills

I met with a community liaison officer from Step2Skills last week. They are part of 'Hertfordshire Futures' and provide a wealth of resources and courses for parents, and families, to support returning to work, parenting and new hobbies and interests to name a few. Please take a look at their flyer for February events. There may be something which grabs your attention...



**Funded by  
UK Government**

**STEP 2 SKILLS**  
PREPARE FOR SUCCESS IN HERTS

# Learn something new in February

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
<p><b>Preparing for Maths KS2/SATs</b> 2.5 hours   FREE Online   3rd Feb. 10am-12.30pm</p> <p><b>Developing Numeracy Skills</b> 2.5 hours   FREE Online   10th Feb. 12.30-3pm</p> <p><b>Supporting Your Child with the 11+ Exam</b> 2.5 hours   FREE Watford   17th Feb. 10am-12.30pm</p> <p><b>Amigurumi Crochet</b> 5 weeks   £25 Bishop's Stortford Starts 24th Feb. 12.45-2.45pm</p> <p><b>Introduction to Team Leading</b> 5 weeks   £25   Online Starts 24th Feb. 10am-12pm</p> <p><b>Preparing for Maths KS2/SATs</b> 2.5 hours   FREE Online   24th Feb. 10am-12.30pm</p>	<p><b>Numeracy for ESOL learners</b> 2.5 hours   FREE Online   18th Feb. 10am-12.30pm</p> <p><b>Amigurumi Crochet</b> 5 weeks   £25   Online Starts 25th Feb. 9.45-11.45am</p>	<p><b>Numeracy Skills for ESOL Learners</b> 2.5 hours   FREE Online   5th Feb. 9.30am-12pm</p> <p><b>AI in the Workplace</b> 4.5 hours   £10 Online   5th Feb. 10am-2.30pm</p> <p><b>Introduction to MS PowerPoint</b> 4.5 hours   £10 Stevenage   12th Feb. 10am-2.30pm</p> <p><b>Revision Strategies &amp; Exam Techniques</b> 2.5 hours   FREE Online   19th Feb. 9.30am-12pm</p> <p><b>Grow Your Mind</b> 5 weeks   £25   Online Starts 26th Feb. 9.30-11.30am</p> <p><b>Improving your Skills in MS Excel</b> 5 weeks   £25 Stevenage Starts 26th Feb. 10am-12pm</p> <p><b>Improving your Skills in MS Word</b> 5 weeks   £25 Stevenage   Starts 26th Feb.   1-3pm</p> <p><b>Public Speaking &amp; Presentation Skills</b> 5 weeks   £25   Online Starts 26th Feb. 9.45-11.45am</p>	<p><b>Smart Living with AI</b> 4.5 hours   £10 Online   13th Feb. 10am-2.30pm</p> <p><b>AI in the Workplace</b> 4.5 hours   £10 Online   20th Feb. 10am-2.30pm</p> <p><b>Introduction to Digital Marketing</b> 5 weeks   £25   Online Starts 27th Feb. 10am-12pm</p> <p><b>Sewing for Intermediates</b> 5 weeks   £25 Stevenage   Starts 27th Feb. 9.45-11.45am</p> <p><b>Amigurumi Crochet</b> 5 weeks   £25 Stevenage Starts 27th Feb. 12.45-2.45pm</p> <p><b>Setting Up Your Own Business</b> 5 weeks   £25   Online Starts 27th Feb. 9.45-11.45am</p> <p><b>Boost Your Confidence</b> 5 weeks   £25   Online Starts 27th Feb. 12.45-2.45pm</p> <p><b>Improving your Skills in MS PowerPoint</b> 5 weeks   £25   Online Starts 27th Feb. 1-3pm</p>	<p><b>Public Speaking &amp; Presentation Skills</b> 4.5 hours   £10 Online   7th Feb. 10am-2.30pm</p> <p><b>Boost Your Confidence - Taster</b> 2 hours   £5   Online 14th Feb. 9.45-11.45am</p> <p><b>Digital Photography</b> 5 weeks   £25   Online Starts 28th Feb. 9.45-11.45am</p> <p><b>Introduction to Working in Schools</b> 5 weeks   £25   Online Starts 28th Feb. 10am-12pm</p>
<p><b>Gain a recognised qualification</b> We offer accredited English and maths courses at various times on various days and locations across the county or online. <b>Visit our website to find out more...</b></p>				<p><b>Key</b>   Face to Face   Online   Accredited</p> <p>If you are struggling financially, please call us on 01992 556194 to discuss how we may be able to support you with the fees.</p> <p>Scan to sign up to our monthly newsletter.</p>

Book your place at:  
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 01992 556194






Social media: @step2skills



# MOMENTS MATTER, ATTENDANCE COUNTS.

The data below shows attendance for this term so far.

	Year 6	97.02%
	Year 5	95.13%
	Year 3	95.08%
	Year 2	95.04%
	Year 4	94.49%
	Year 1	92.09%
	Reception	91.15%

Our whole school attendance figure for the school year so far is at **94.3%**. The national average to date is 94.7%. Thank you for ensuring your child attends school daily and is punctual.




Unfortunately, we already have 17.6% of our children who are 'persistent absentees'. This means their attendance is below 90%. This is an ongoing concern.

## Term Time Holidays

Families are reminded that Amendments to the 2006 Pupil Registration (England) Regulations, which came into effect on 1st September 2013, removed all references to family holidays and extended leave for holidays in term time. The amendments make clear that Headteachers may **not** grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

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## Contact us...

 [admin@birchwoodavenue.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@birchwoodavenue.herts.sch.uk)  
 01707 262503  
 @birchwoodavesch

## What Parents Need to Know About YouTube

At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit [nationalcollege.com](http://nationalcollege.com).

# What Parents & Educators Need to Know about YOUTUBE

Almost anyone with an internet connection knows YouTube. The Google-owned site lets anyone upload videos to be shared around the world, and as a result, it's an incredible resource with instant free access to material covering every conceivable topic. But with over 500 hours of video uploaded every minute, not all of it will be appropriate for young eyes.

### WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

### INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

YouTube is free and can be accessed via numerous devices, even without creating a YouTube account. Some content is flagged as age-restricted (requiring the user to be logged into an account with a verified age of 18), but children can still view some mildly inappropriate content. This can include profanity and violence, which some young users may find upsetting.

### CONNECT WITH STRANGERS

YouTube recommends videos related to what the user has previously watched on their account, aiming to provide content that will interest them. This is intended to be helpful but it can also lead to binge-watching and screen addiction – especially if 'auto-play' is active. Users without an account are shown popular videos from the last 24 hours, which might not always be suitable for children.

### RADICALISATION

YouTube's algorithm tends to promote content that's getting the most traffic – a lot of which can be quite extreme. This can be fine for harmless topics, but YouTube isn't regulated like television, and that means that conspiracy theories, fake news and hateful ideologies can occasionally surface to wrap impressionable minds all too easily. Remember – the more they watch, the more they'll be recommended.

### CONNECTING WITH STRANGERS

YouTube is a social media platform which allows people to interact with other (usually unknown) users. Account holders can leave comments on any video they have access to, as well as message other users directly. Connecting with strangers online can potentially lead to children being exposed to adult language, cyberbullying and – in the worst cases – online predators. If a child is creating content themselves, this can increase the likelihood of them becoming a target.

### TRENDS AND CHALLENGES

YouTube is teeming with trends and challenges, some of which are fun to watch and join in with. Children often find these immensely entertaining and might want to try them out. Most challenges tend to be safe, but many others may cause physical or emotional harm to children who watch or copy them. The point is that some challenges – where people use these two ingredients to burn their skin – is just one of many examples.

### SNEAKY SCAMMERS

The comments sections of popular content creators regularly have scammers posing as that influencer, attempting to lure users into clicking on their phishing links. Scammers impersonate YouTube users by adopting their names and profile images, and often offer cash gifts or 'get rich quick' schemes. Children may not realise that these users aren't who they claim to be.

## Advice for Parents & Educators

### APPLY RESTRICTED MODE

For older children, Restricted Mode is an optional setting that prevents YouTube from showing inappropriate material (such as drug and alcohol abuse, graphic violence, and sexual content) to underage viewers. To prevent children from changing across age-inappropriate content on the platform, we would recommend enabling Restricted Mode on each device that they use to access YouTube. It's worth also turning the auto-play feature off to prevent YouTube's algorithm automatically recommending unsuitable inappropriate.

### TRY GOOGLE FAMILY

Creating a Google Family account allows parents and carers to monitor what their child is watching, uploading, and sharing with other users. It will also display their recently watched videos, searches, and recommended videos. In general, a Google Family account gives a parent or carer oversight of how their child uses sites like YouTube and helps to ensure that they are only accessing appropriate content.

### MONITOR ENGAGEMENT

YouTube is the online viewing platform of choice for billions of people, many of them under 18. Younger children will watch different content to older ones, of course. You may want to keep an eye on how children interact with this material – and, if applicable, with content creators – to understand what they're interested in. Remember that creators often share content outside of YouTube, so don't ignore their web presence elsewhere.

### CONSIDER YOUTUBE KIDS

It's possible to sidestep most inappropriate content completely via Google's own YouTube Kids app for Android handsets and iPhone. This lets you filter content by "preschool" (4 and under), "younger" (ages 5 to 9) and "older" (ages 9 to 12). This isn't a perfect substitute for parental supervision, as the app's filtering system is automated, and Google can't manually review all videos.

### CHECK PRIVACY SETTINGS

YouTube gives users the option of uploading videos as 'private' or 'unlisted' – so they could be shared exclusively with family and friends, for example. Comments on videos can also be disabled and channels that a child is subscribed to can be hidden. If the child is only uploading videos set as 'private', they are far less likely to receive direct messages from strangers.

### LIMIT SPENDING

Although YouTube is free, it does offer some in-app purchases. For example, users can rent and buy TV shows and movies to watch. If you're like to avoid children purchasing content online, limit their access to online payment methods. Many parents have discovered the hard way that a child happily consuming a paid-for series quickly leads to an unexpected bill!

### Meet Our Expert

Alan Martin is an experienced technology journalist who has written for the likes of Wired, TechRadar, Tom's Guide, The Evening Standard and The New Statesman.



The National College

[@wake\\_up\\_weds](https://twitter.com/wake_up_weds) [www.thenationalcollege.com](https://www.thenationalcollege.com) [@wake.up.wednesday](https://www.instagram.com/wake.up.wednesday) [@wake.up.weds](https://www.tiktok.com/@wake.up.weds)

Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Release date: 26.01.2023 Last reviewed: 31.05.2024

## Safeguarding

If you specifically have a safeguarding concern, please contact Miss Hall, Miss James or Ms Swash.

Alternatively, you can still contact Children's Services directly on 0300 123 4043.

