



THOMAS MILLS HIGH SCHOOL

Headteacher : P J Hurst, BA, MA, MBA, NPQH

Saxtead Road, Framlingham,

Suffolk, IP13 9HE

Telephone : 01728 723493

Email: inmail@thomasmills.suffolk.sch.uk

Website: www.thomasmills.suffolk.sch.uk

Dear Parents

July 2020

IMPORTANT INFORMATION: Public Health – Coronavirus – LETTER 10 (OF 10)

This week has seen a number of Government announcements and I thought it would be useful to highlight these to you. We will continue with more detailed planning particularly for re-opening in September.

Updates from LETTER 9

Face to Face Contact for Years 7, 8 and 9

Following my last letter, Miss Armes, Assistant Headteacher, and the Heads of Year will be contacting pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 about the face to face contact between Monday 13th July and Wednesday 15th July. Unfortunately, we have not been allowed to arrange Year 6 visits to the school.

Thomas Mills Start Dates and 'Phased Return'

In terms of start dates, we have some flexibility with Staff Professional Days (Non-Pupil Days) and can create a phased return which ensures that no pupils lose anymore face to face contact time in school. To do this, we will only have two Professional Days one at the start of the Autumn Term and the other at the start of the Spring Term. The Summer Term will start for pupils on Monday 12th April 2021.

We therefore propose:

Tuesday 1st September Staff Professional Development Day

Wednesday 2nd September Return for Year 7 and Year 12

Thursday 3rd September Return for all other year groups

Mobile Testing Station

Following an assessment from the Military Liaison Officer, Suffolk County Council have informed us that for the immediate future the school site will not be used for Covid testing.

Summer Holiday

The Secretary of State for Education has confirmed that he is not asking schools to open over the summer holidays. This will enable us to undertake some significant improvements. The Fab Labs Appeal will enable Room N4 to be refurbished. Through our own resources, we will also undertake a complete transformation of one block of toilets in the Main Corridor.

September Re-opening

The Government have now published their guidance for the full opening of schools from September. This guidance explains how schools are to operate in this new context and includes sections on school operations; curriculum, behaviour and pastoral support; assessment and accountability; contingency planning to provide continuity of education in the case of a local outbreak.



Over the next few days, the Senior Management Team will study this document and I will share more detailed points with you as our planning develops. The key fact at the moment is that it is the Government's intention that 'all pupils, in all year groups, will return to school full-time from the beginning of the Autumn Term.'

Ofqual Consultation on 2021 Exams and Assessment

Ofqual have now published their consultation on proposals designed to support students taking external examinations in 2021. They state that they have been 'working across the sector to consider a range of possible measures to free up teaching time and, in limited subjects, allow teachers some choice in the topics they teach.' This seems to include:

- Adaptations in some subjects to give teachers more time to cover the full content and help relieve the pressure on students. For example, removing the requirement to record the spoken language assessment in GCSE English Language; GCSE students observing practical science work; and assessing art and design students on their portfolio alone.
- Adaptations to allow for future public health safeguards.
- In examination papers, Ofqual has been asked to explore use of content sampling in question papers and increasing the use of optional questions.
- Changes to the 2021 exam timetable to allow more teaching with GCSE exams possibly starting on 7th June 2021.

Summer Examinations 2020 Appeal

Ofqual has confirmed the following details about appealing calculated grades this summer:

- Appeals will be allowed where a school believes it has made an error when submitting its information – or if the school believes an exam board made a mistake when calculating, assigning or communicating a grade.
- This includes cases where a school believes that significant changes in this year's cohort haven't been properly taken into account during the standardisation process.
- A student with concerns about bias, discrimination, or any other reason why a school didn't fairly assign a grade or ranking, should normally raise this with the school in the first instance.

Our arrangements for Results Days will be shared by other staff in due course. If we are permitted to offer face to face collection, protective measures will need to be put in place.

As always it seems a lot to take in! I have only included factual information from official sources and I am confident that we can work through the guidance. In general, Year 10 and Year 12 have enjoyed coming into school and in most cases I sense that students would have liked more provision.

As ever, I trust that this letter finds you all safe and well. I appreciate it is still difficult time and there are still many frustrations and anxieties too.

I am hopeful that we can work through the latest guidance in order to ensure a safe and effective return from September.

Yours sincerely



P J Hurst
Headteacher