

## Thomas Mills High School

### Community Cohesion Policy

#### Vision Statement

*We, the staff and governors, aspire  
to ensure that all our students,  
irrespective of ability  
and regardless of anyone's doubts,  
achieve their potential in full;  
and we aspire in this way to make Thomas Mills High School  
the best in the country*

#### Charter of Values

*We, the staff, pupils and governors of Thomas Mills High School, regard the following twelve values as central to our purpose:*

- 1. A love of learning for its own sake*
- 2. Vigour and optimism in embracing the future*
- 3. The intrinsic virtue of persistent hard work*
- 4. Acceptance of personal responsibility*
- 5. Equal value accorded to all persons*
- 6. Courtesy, self discipline and respect for others*
- 7. A determination to achieve excellence in all we do*
- 8. Honesty, moral courage and integrity*
- 9. Good fellowship*
- 10. Service to others*
- 11. Leadership and enterprise*
- 12. Respect for the traditions and achievements of the school*

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The current Funding Agreement between the Secretary of State and the Academy Trust states in paragraph 12(a) that “the school will be at the heart of its community, promoting community cohesion and sharing facilities with other schools and the community.” This policy sets out how the school seeks to discharge its duty to promote community cohesion.

- 1.2 Community Cohesion has been defined as promoting “a society in which strong and positive relationships exist and continue to be developed in the work place, in schools and the wider community.”
- 1.3 Although the demographics of Suffolk are changing the number of pupils from ethnic minorities groups (3.8%) and the percentage that do not have English as their first language (1.7%) at Thomas Mills are low when compared to the county figures. In 2014 there were 97,000 children in Suffolk schools of which 7.9% are BME and there are 122 languages spoken (suffolk.gov.uk).

## 2. How does Thomas Mills High School contribute towards community cohesion?

The school is pro-active in promoting community cohesion by:

- ensuring equality of opportunity for all learners
- encouraging a strong sense of belonging and a shared vision by all members of the school community
- promoting high standards of behaviour
- providing opportunities for pupils to participate in a wide range of activities and volunteering opportunities in order to contribute to the community cohesion within the local neighbourhood and beyond
- engaging constructively and generously with other schools and the wider community to help build real links to bind society

This is achieved by / through the following:

- **Curriculum**

The school’s curriculum is designed, *inter alia*, to:

- help teach pupils tolerance and understanding of other cultures and faiths
- promote shared values and challenge prejudice
- promote respect for the rule of law
- promote awareness of human rights and of their responsibility to uphold and defend them
- develop skills of participation and responsible action

- **Equity and Excellence**

The school’s policies and practices are designed to ensure equal opportunities for all members of the school community to be successful at the very highest level in any given activity. This is achieved by maximising access and participation in learning and to a wide range of extra-curricular activities; also by seeking to eliminate variations in outcomes for different groups

- **Engagement and Extended services**

- The school will provide opportunities for all members of the community to understand better other cultures by developing links with other schools, the local community, nationally and around the globe
- The school provides a range of extended services with opportunities for pupils, families and the wider community to participate in activities and to receive services which develop positive interaction and promote achievement for all groups
- The school opens its facilities to other local schools and tries to support their development.

**3. The school seeks to promote community cohesion at different levels of “community,” for example by:**

**3.1 The school community**

- the significant peer support systems within school, including: paired reading schemes, the VI Form peer mentors and sports and language leaders
- pupils have a strong voice in decisions that affect their learning and many undertake additional roles with significant responsibilities, including: Lower and Upper School Councils
- school and house officials assume responsibility for a number of events and activities
- by tracking of all pupils comprehensively, with particular consideration for targeted pupils such as those with English as an additional language and those pupils who qualify for free meals and those from ethnic minorities

**3.2 The local community**

- taking part in an extensive inter school fixtures within the High Suffolk School Sport Partnership and other schools in the county
- providing opportunities for pupils to participate in a range of events and competitions with other schools, such as Book Mastermind and mathematic competitions
- promoting community use of sports facilities
- providing lifelong learning for the local community through the Adult Learning programme
- staff attending Safer Neighbourhood Team meetings
- facilitating a local community understanding of the school’s history – particularly the combining of Framlingham Modern School and Mills Grammar School to form Thomas Mills High School in 1979 – through the school’s official history “Think On These Things”
- engaging with a wide variety of community groups through activities such as carol singing at residential homes and distributing Harvest Festival boxes to local residents
- distributing the school magazine OUTLOOK (free of charge) to parents and the local community
- encouraging the local community to participate in a wide range of events (concerts, productions, fun evenings etc)

**3.3 The UK community**

- extending and developing the school curriculum through a wide range of trips to places of interest in the UK and by participating in national events and activities
- actively using assemblies to promote awareness of national issues such as homelessness and racial prejudice
- the organising of annual charity days to support national charities, including the bi-annual Red Nose Day Appeal

**3.4 The global community**

- providing an extensive range of residential and exchange opportunities in different countries to allow pupils to experience and learn from other cultures
- seeks to employ language assistants from other countries to support the work of the French, German and Spanish departments; working with small groups of pupils to improve language skills and promoting a better understanding of other European cultures

- providing work experience opportunities in Europe
- actively utilising assemblies to promote awareness of human rights
- establishing the Tercentenary Fund on the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Thomas Mills with the intention of “advancing secondary education in poor countries”. Pupils advise trustees on how money should be spent in support of the Fund’s aims
- hosting American students as part of the People to People Ambassador Programme

**4. Other relevant school policies:**

- Equality of Opportunity policy.
- Common Curriculum policy.
- Extra-Curricular policy.
- Behaviour policy.
- Cultural Education policy.
- Statement on the Duty to Combat Extremism.

**5. Review**

The Policy will be reviewed annually in accordance with the Handbook of Governance.