



# THOMAS MILLS HIGH SCHOOL

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Dear Parents

June 2020

## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION: Public Health – Coronavirus – LETTER 9 (OF 9)**

As the weeks pass by, I know we all very much hope that the national response to the epidemic moves forward so that the transmission rate reduces and that where people are diagnosed, there is effective treatment. At the same time, the effect on our economy, education system as well as every other aspect of society, presents many worries in a period of uncertainty.

With this in mind though, I am pleased to report that the return to school last week, for some Year 10 and Year 12 students was very successful and we have received many positive comments. The students and teachers were probably quite apprehensive at first but it was pleasing to see the control measures adhered to. Although teaching and learning was different – it was still good to see this going on. I know that teachers have enjoyed the interaction with young people which as we know, has many other positive benefits too. In short it was great to welcome you back. My thanks to everyone in our school community for making this possible.

As always, the purpose of this letter is to update you as we move forward with possible options for the next few months.

### **Current Years 7, 8 and 9**

I am pleased that the online and pastoral provision has progressed and hopefully provided a new burst of energy to home learning and support. I know on occasions that some pupils (and teachers) may have felt overwhelmed and I hope this is manageable for the next few weeks.

As you will probably know, I receive direct guidance from the Department for Education and a largely unreported change was included last week. It stated that, *“where possible, schools may invite pupils in other year groups in for a face to face meeting before the end of this term, where it would be beneficial.”*

In response to this, Senior Staff are exploring the opportunity for every pupil to have face to face contact before the end of the Summer Term. We are currently working towards the following schedule:

Monday 13<sup>th</sup> July – Year 7 (specific pupils would be invited to a session with up to half the year group being present at any one time)

Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> July – Year 8 (as above)

Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> July – Year 9 (as above)

This could include some tutorial time and we will plan this with the latest control measures – including social distancing. The Government Guidance states that protective measures would need to be in place.

In discussion with your child, it would be helpful to gauge parents' views on this and I would be most grateful if you could complete the following survey referred towards the end of this letter.

### **Summer Holiday / Key Worker Provision**

At the moment there have been no official Government announcements about this. Parents, as will the school, should plan for different scenarios including usual school shut down.



### **Year 6 into Year 7 transition**

Mr Symes, who will be next year's Head of Year Seven has been in contact with many primary schools as well as parents. A lot of information has already been sent out. As it looks unlikely that we can hold the planned New Intake Evening, we will find an alternative online platform to share the key messages that we would normally give. In the meantime, parents and pupils may find it helpful to have a look at the video submitted for our World Class Schools submission (a link is on the school website under 'our school').

However, we feel with the guidance change above that we can explore a Year 6 New Intake Day. We will update you and other Year Six parents and Primary Schools on this if we can develop feasible plans.

### **September Re-opening**

As I have mentioned previously, all the usual preparations are continuing. As I understand it, the current social distancing measures are under review, and they would need to safely change if we were able to physically welcome our school back. Clearly there are different scenarios including a combination of home as well as school learning.

I am currently working on the assumption that the Government will prefer schools to re-open to all pupils. However, as we work on the school calendar, I would like to propose that we have a phased return for *our* year groups. It would give us more time, as well as availability of teachers, to support some of the issues related to particular year groups including the new Year 7.

### **Online Survey for Parents of Years 7, 8 and 9**

I would welcome a response our online survey by Monday 29<sup>th</sup> June which can be accessed by the following link:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=bAZ96jw-P0uqQxizW8eYR6UK658EWR1DgbZplXaNcmhUNEk4M1VKRDJJMzJZM0pZMjFZN0oyNDdLSi4u>

### **Covid-19 Mobile Testing Station on the School Site**

We have provisionally agreed with a number of authorities that a mobile testing station could operate on the school site and would provide a testing facility for the local community. This would be situated in the car park on the east side (King's Avenue entrance) and would be a drive through facility manned by military personnel. The areas used would be cordoned off from the rest of the school and there would be no interaction between the testing team and our staff and pupils. The public would be required to stay in their cars at all times. We do not yet have a start date.

### **Additional Site Developments**

Mr Mugliston, Business Manager, is seeking quotations to refurbish some of the toilets in the Main Building. This would include more accessible sinks. In the meantime, we have also leased additional sinks which supports the advice on more frequent hand washing.

As always, thank you for your continued support in these times. I very much hope that we are able to move forward with re-opening the school for more pupils in the weeks and months ahead. Of course, any plans are subject to change due to Government announcements or other local considerations.

Otherwise, I trust that you and your families remain safe and well.

Yours sincerely



P J Hurst  
Headteacher