



THOMAS MILLS HIGH SCHOOL

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Dear Parents

1st October 2020

Headteacher's Update 2020/2021 – Letter 5 (of 5)

Further to my letter last week, I write to update you on several items of interest, including some feedback following the proposals we shared with you.

Temporary Change to the Academic and Pastoral Bubbles of Year 10 and Year 11

From Monday 5th October until Friday 23rd October, the academic and pastoral bubbles for Year 10 and Year 11 will temporarily swap round. This means that Year 10 will be based in the Science Laboratories and Year 11 in the Mathematics classrooms.

The new tutor bases will be as follows:

| | | | |
|-----------|-----|-------|----|
| 11ERi | MC3 | 10MAh | N1 |
| 11JCp | MC4 | 10NBr | N4 |
| 11SCa/MHs | MC5 | 10BCa | N2 |
| 11TMa | MC1 | 10AWa | N6 |
| 11AGr/HBa | MC2 | 10AHo | N3 |
| 11JWi | MC6 | 10RGi | N5 |

This move will give Year 11 students a break from the Science Rooms and enable Year 10 to experience practical demonstrations in Science lessons. Mr Ward, Assistant Headteacher, will re-room the timetable and advise teachers and students.

Feedback to the adaptation of bubbles

Although the majority of the responses were supportive of the proposals, others raised some constructive observations. The quotes below give you a sense of the comments:

"Would like to commend you on all the excellent steps you have taken in trying to prevent outbreaks of coronavirus at the school... [has] any thought been given to allowing children a more relaxed approach to uniform?"

"Taking into the consideration the 'balance of advantage, considering safety as well as the quality of our education' is spot on."

"Can I caution against any change that would cause more students to be together where social distancing cannot be maintained.... The current system of asking teachers to move to the classrooms reduces the amount of bodies moving around the school."

"The practical aspects of subjects such as science are so important to embedding knowledge and this can't be achieved when these lessons are being taught away from the appropriate room."

"...proposals seem balanced and proportionate.... Great idea to get the pupils to wipe their own workstation. It gives them some responsibilities but also some level of control over looking after themselves."

"pupils taking responsibility for cleaning and disinfecting working surfaces needs to be carefully considered or we may lose again the teaching time."



At this point, **no** decision has been made. As ever, it is clear that both an organisational as well as a personal response is needed to make any proposals work. Senior colleagues are therefore looking into a number of aspects such as safe cleaning protocols for pupils, pupil and staff movement and school cleaning capacity, as well as seats for Science rooms.

Other Coronavirus Management Updates

It is really good to have completed our first month back! Clearly sustaining the measures, as well as the general focus, will be important. This is always a long term but one where there are so many opportunities for strong progress.

We are pleased to welcome Colin Hind as our new Premises Manager. He brings much needed capacity to the school at this time.

With the refurbishment work complete (pictures are on the Gallery section of the School Website), Room E10 is now available for school use.

Finally, our 'September Re-Opening Manual' (SROM) has served its purpose! Key updates will be given through these letters. However, Mr Mugliston, Business Manager, will prepare a new document called Coronavirus Management Document (CMD) each month.

Open Evening and Year 7 places (September 2021)

It is with regret that we have not been able to run our usual Open Day and Open Evening. The students are always excellent ambassadors and over many years now, interest in our school has been strong. Instead, a number of short videos and information will be posted on the school website. Prospective parents can contact the school so that specific enquiries can be addressed.

Other After School Events

All evening events continue to be cancelled until further notice. Where alternatives can be arranged, organisers will make contact with you.

School Trips

In the current climate, we are being cautious about authorising new school trips. As many parents will know, there are some school trips still in the pipeline and there is uncertainty all round. Difficult decisions are being weighed up by families as to whether to cancel (and incur some loss) or to stay with the trip. Although I know that all parties will have read the 'small print' quite carefully by now, it might also be worth checking the information about ATOL. This stands for Air Travel Organiser's Licence. It is a government-run financial scheme operated by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). This covers package holidays that include flights. ATOL cover means that if the ATOL protected company fails and your holiday can no longer go ahead you will be entitled to a refund if you are yet to travel, and hotel costs and flights home if you are abroad.

I imagine there are good reasons why the Government is not giving a steer on this. However, in the absence of this, the school cannot simply cancel trips and incur liabilities with presumably both parents as well as the tour operators. At this stage our insurers will not commit to covering any losses. Even if we had the money, the Educational Skills and Funding Agency (ESFA) would not consider this good use of public money. As we know, a lot can change between now and the departure dates, the first of which is the Ski-Trip planned for February.

We all look forward to a time when we can fully return to the full Thomas Mills High School experience where extra-curricular activities and school trips both home and abroad are integral.

In the meantime, do stay safe. The basic messages given to us all in March are still very useful and I genuinely believe they make a big difference.

Yours sincerely



P J Hurst
Headteacher