



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

25th November 2020

Headteacher's Update 2020/2021 – Letter 9 (of 9)

As always, I trust that this letter finds you and your families well. I am pleased to say that despite things being very busy, I have had the opportunity to focus on many wider educational matters recently and can share some of our plans in this letter.

We have received correspondence with some good ideas and supportive comments. Many apologies that I am not always able to reply individually but I can assure you that they have all been read and, in terms of ideas, considered.

End of Term Events

Clearly, with restrictions still in place in December, many of our usual lovely end of term events cannot happen as they normally would. Although the actual Awards Evening and Christmas Concerts are cancelled, we are planning alternative celebrations.

We aim to film and share musical items which would have featured in our Christmas Concert.

Some of these items we will use in our End of Term Assemblies, which will be held on a year group basis. These assemblies will also allow us to recognise the awards that have been received. Although parents will unfortunately not get to sit in the audience, the Chair of Governors and I are thinking about filming our congratulations and sharing this with you. (This will be shorter than my usual speech!)

Sixth Form Recruitment Events

As you know we are very proud of our Sixth Form. We are large enough to offer a range of options but small enough for the individual to be known. A range of online resources will be shared particularly with regards to subject information. Our Year 11s will be able to benefit from assemblies and the team can also work with tutor groups. If you require any further information do not hesitate to contact the Sixth Form Team.

Parents' Evenings

Although other arrangements have been put in place for the Year 11 and Year 7 events that were due to take place this term, we are actively exploring other options. This includes a subscription with SchoolCloud 'Parents Evening with Video Appointments.' This would link well with our School Information Management Systems (SIMS) and I think some face-to-face contact is beneficial. This means that we will look to re-schedule the cancelled Year 11 Parents' Evening in the Spring Term. We will keep you updated on these developments.

Feedback on Coronavirus Management

The feedback on our new measures is very positive. Different School Council groups have told me that 'teachers are happier' and more importantly that the quality of education has improved. There is more frequent cleaning of desks and this has provided reassurance. Some staff have been redeployed to clean more regularly those shared surfaces and areas that we all use.



The weather, although now a little cooler, has been kind to us and the vast majority of students have been outside at lunchtime. Understandably, many would appreciate more benches and areas to sit.

We have kept the use of masks in classrooms under review. My feeling at the moment is that the visors and masks do affect communication and therefore this could impact on the quality of education. More significantly, it is not suggested in the Department for Education guidance.

Specific Considerations

Where there are specific considerations with regards to a particular year group or a school trip, we are generally communicating directly with those concerned. However, I include some points in these letters because of the wider general interest. For example, the DfE guidance comments on specific areas for different Key Stages. For Years 10 and 11 it says that “the majority of pupils... are expected to continue to study their examination subjects....in exceptional circumstances, it may be in the best interests of a Year 11 pupil to discontinue an examined subject because the school judges that, for example, they would achieve significantly better in their remaining subjects as a result, especially in GCSE English and Mathematics.” Senior staff have this in hand and will communicate separately with Year 11.

Food Bank Appeal

During December, we are looking to support local Food Banks and students will be asked to bring items (not soup or pasta!) into school, should you wish to support this. Further details will be given via Form Tutors. A related scheme is already underway in the Sixth Form.

Contact with the School Office

If reporting a pupil absence please email the details, including the reason for absence, to attendance@thomasmills.suffolk.sch.uk Alternatively, please telephone 01728 726677.

If your child is leaving school early for an appointment, it is helpful if this is also emailed to the attendance email, as well as recording the details in the log-book. On collecting your child, please ask them to sign out at reception and then to meet you in the car park.

Visitors/Parents should continue to contact us via telephone and emails and not come into the school without a prior appointment.

Summary

From my many meetings with School Council in the past two weeks, as well as some socially distanced visits to lessons, there is a great focus on education. The enthusiasm from Year 7 is infectious and whilst there is natural anxiety in Year 11 and Year 13 about next year’s examinations, alongside a general resilience and determination to do well. We have been in a fortunate position to be able to focus on what matters, and it remains my aspiration that we do all that we can to keep this going.

It’s now nearly three weeks until the end of term – let’s keep safe and whilst not physically together, we can remain so in spirit and endeavour.

Yours sincerely



P J Hurst
Headteacher