



# Thomas Mills

High School & Sixth Form

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Dear Parents

17<sup>th</sup> January 2025

## **Headteacher's Update Letter 2024/2025 – Letter 7 (out of 7)**

I hope this letter finds you well. A belated Happy New Year. A very brief update from me.

### **Barbara Etheridge**

Barbara had been one of our Lunchtime Supervisors for many years until last Summer. We were very sad to learn that she had recently passed away. Our thoughts are very much with her friends and relatives currently. Many staff have fond memories, as behind the scenes she displayed many acts of kindness. Students who have used the canteen over the years will remember Barbara as she marshalled the queue and encouraged them to leave their places tidy.

### **Inclement Weather and Safety**

It is the time of year where the weather brings its challenges from the dark mornings and evenings as well as frost, ice and possibly even snow. There is even more reason to take care:

#### Travel to and from school

- Students should have coats and preferably with some reflective coating
- Cyclists should ensure they have lights as well as helmets
- Pedestrians should act sensibly as any silly or dangerous behaviour potentially distracts drivers
- Students on buses – behaviour needs to be excellent so that drivers focus on the road ahead
- Car parking – please consider our neighbours

#### Within school

At all times, students must walk and not run, around the site. It is now the time of year where the field is closed for a period of time and therefore students have access to their own form rooms at lunchtime. This is a privilege and Miss Ames, Deputy Headteacher, has issued a protocol to all form groups.

#### School Closure

If we decide to close the school, I would aim to make the decision by 6.30am so it is communicated by 7am. On these occasions we are in touch with the bus companies and key staff and so I would consider transport, the school site, as well as any local authority advice.

### **Online Safety Newsletter**

We subscribe to a newsletter which has some very helpful advice. This can be accessed [here](#).

This edition includes some advice about social media influencers, the Monkey App, 'report remove' as well as smartphone free childhood.

### **Homework**

I have asked teachers to make sure that homework is set regularly, and it is recorded in the Log Book.

Homework plays an important role in learning. If any concerns emerge, please contact your child's teacher or tutor in the first instance.

## **National Education Developments**

2025 is set to be a busy year in terms of wider developments within education. Below is a summary of what I know so far:

- A curriculum review is underway and at the point when decisions are made, all state schools will be expected to follow any directives
- Ofsted are developing a new approach through a 'balanced scorecard' ahead of September 2025 'inspections.'
- The Regional Schools Group will take on more responsibilities including funding (from an agency called the ESFA) and school improvement through RISE (Regional Improvement for Standards and Excellence Teams).
- A Schools Bill is going through Parliament. It is in two parts: 1) welfare and 2) schools. There is a lot of detail for me to read!

## **Reception and the Main Office**

These can be busy places, and they work hard to maintain a helpful and civil environment both in person and on the telephone. We appreciate your continued support in maintaining this ethos.

## **Attendance:**

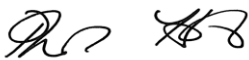
We have received a letter from Pharmacy First highlighting a free NHS service which may assist in getting students back to school following a minor illness. It allows children and adults to get quick access to healthcare advice as they can walk into a pharmacy and access the service, removing the potential delay of having to wait for a GP appointment. More details can be found [here](#).

## **Summary**

Overall, it has been a pleasing return. Year Eleven are working hard in their Prep Exams and invigilators have been very positive. I have delivered the traditional Thomas Mills Day assemblies to the rest of the school and it is always a good opportunity to reflect on our valued heritage and ethos. Personally, I have reflected on the school motto – *Temporis Filia Veritas* or, Truth is the Daughter of Time. Although this motto was borrowed from Mary Tudor it has much relevance for our lives today.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,



P J Hurst  
Headteacher