



Thomas Mills

High School & Sixth Form

Headteacher: P J Hurst BA MA MBA NPQH
Thomas Mills High School & Sixth Form
Saxtead Road, Framlingham, Suffolk, IP13 9HE

T: 01728 723493
E: inmail@thomasmills.suffolk.sch.uk
thomasmills.suffolk.sch.uk

Dear Parents,

3rd April 2025

Headteacher's Update Letter 2024/2025 – Letter 10 (out of 10)

As always, I trust this letter finds you well. This is my final round-up for this term. It was a delight this week speaking to so many parents at the Year 12 Parents Evening. Year 10 have also approached their Prep Exams well. It's been an extraordinarily busy term but with lots of achievements both inside and outside of the classroom. These achievements are always captured in our termly magazine *Outlook*. I include here a few items of whole school interest.

Free School Meals (FSM) and Suffolk County Council

Hopefully parents have seen some correspondence from the county council about changes to Free School Meals. My understanding is as follows:

- Any pupil confirmed as eligible for free school meals from 1st April 2025 will be subject to ongoing checks to confirm continued eligibility.
- Children who are already confirmed as eligible will maintain their eligibility until the end of their current phase of education.
- The county council are awaiting FSM guidance from the Government.

The following link should take you to the relevant Suffolk County Council web page.

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/children-families-and-learning/schools/school-meals-uniforms-and-trips/apply-for-free-school-meals>

However, please do not hesitate to contact the School Office if we can help in any way.

New Payments System Introduction Planning

We have now finalised our arrangements for switching our payments system from Gateway to Arbor. Mr Mugliston, Business Manager, will be writing to you with more details, but the school would be grateful if you can ensure any negative balances are brought into credit before May half term, which is when we anticipate the transfer will be made. Thank you in advance.

Documents in Incompatible Formats

Our IT team have asked me to ask parents to send files in a Word.doc or pdf format. The issue seems to have mainly arisen when parents have sent files, created in Notes from an Apple Computer. They can only be converted using the Apples Macs we have in the Music Technology room and this room is not always available. The IT team have provided some instructions which should be of help:

1. Open the document you want to save
2. Select the File tab
3. Click Save As
4. Choose a location to save the file
5. Enter a file name
6. Select Word Document (.docx)* from the Save as type dropdown
7. Click Save

Article about Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Recently, one of our trustees sent me a newspaper article about the development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in schools. It's a straightforward, positive and interesting read.

Our policies will need to develop but as with all forms of communication, critical reading and thinking will be essential in the years ahead.

45th School Anniversary Gala Concert at Snape Maltings

Recently many members of our school community enjoyed a wonderful concert at Snape Maltings. 100 students were joined by 12 current and former staff, as well as 80 alumni. The result was a wonderful evening. A video is being prepared so everyone will be able to enjoy it. However, in the meantime, two links. One is a short video, and the other is a review written by an appreciative grandparent in the audience.

[TMHS Gala Concert Montage.](#)

[Review of 45th School Anniversary Gala Concert.](#)

Update on School Vision, Mission and Values

Following on from my last letter, thank you for the feedback. Below is a list of some of the key words and themes which have emerged so far. After the holidays, we propose to undertake an important piece of engagement work with our students in Form Time as well as with School Council.

'Empowering' 'love of learning' 'social awareness' 'curiosity' 'kindness and respect' 'future citizens' 'global and well rounded' 'excellence' 'character and personality' 'confident' 'self-belief' 'strong' 'community' 'high achievement' 'talent'

Summary

It may be the case that we use AI to finish the work on vision and values, although we are keen to develop something distinctive which reflects our special school. In the past few years, I have been able to visit several schools across the country and it really is apparent that each school is unique as they meet the needs of different communities. In our school students can develop their personalities, discover their range of talents and learn in a variety of ways. We appreciate the parental support, and it looks likely that we will feature again in *The Good Schools Guide*. In recent months we have had a lot of interest in school places and next year's new intake is very popular.

Anyway, if you are feeling inspired or overwhelmed by developments in technology, the following line from Douglas Adams in *The Salmon of Doubt: Hitchhiking the Galaxy One Last Time* will be of interest:

"A set of rules that describe our reactions to technologies:

- 1. Anything that is in the world when you're born is normal and ordinary and is just a natural part of the way the world works.*
- 2. Anything that's invented between when you're fifteen and thirty-five is new and exciting and revolutionary and you can probably get a career in it.*
- 3. Anything invented after you're thirty-five is against the natural order of things."*

I shall not describe my reaction as I don't wish to give my age away!

Although some year groups will be focussed on forthcoming examinations, I do wish you all a relaxing and enjoyable Easter Break.

Yours sincerely,



P J Hurst
Headteacher