



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

11th September 2025

Headteacher's Update Letter 2025/2026 – Letter 1 (out of 1)

I very much hope that this letter finds you well. It's lovely welcoming families back and this letter is also an opportunity to welcome many new families to the school. We have large Year Seven and Year Twelve intakes, and given our staffing and resources, the school is full. This is great news, and we hope that students have a very good experience leading to many wonderful outcomes, and future destinations.

I write these letters from time to time on matters of whole school interest. Although addressed to 'parents' I also include staff, trustees, and most importantly, students.

Today's letter focuses on safety, particularly at the end of the day.

Quite rightly, safety considerations are the most important. My main worry on the school site is the convergence of pedestrians (students) with the buses.

Over the years things change, and two factors have evolved in recent years:

- The increase in car use and therefore the parked cars in Saxtead Road
- The increase in fencing of the school site and reduced access points

I hope this letter helps address some of our concerns so that things are safer.

Pedestrian (Student) Departure from the School

We have always advised students to stick to the pavements. We still say to students that they should not walk in front of the West Block at the end of the day which is the point where there is a road entrance, and two carparks begin. However, staff on bus duty have noticed an increase in students milling through the waiting buses. We think this is potentially dangerous.

At all times we want to avoid pedestrians using the front car park area as the space between the West Block and the buses is too narrow.

At the end of the day, we propose:

- to open the gates on west side of the school (students will recognise one of these gates as the patio gate near the canteen). This allows students to join the footpath and exit onto Saxtead Road.

In addition, there are several existing pedestrian exits from the school:

- King's Avenue serving the east side of the school
- The external doors between rooms E3 and E4 are open
- There is a pavement opposite the main entrance allowing safe access to the outside of the school.

If pedestrians exit from the Crush Hall (the entrance near the Main Hall) they are not to walk across the car park. Instead, they must keep to the pavements and leave the site near the main entrance.

Departure for Buses

We do have staff on duty and there are two phases to the bus duty. The first is the very end of the day when buses are stationary. The second phase is when some of the buses arrive, and other buses move forward. Duty staff will supervise students onto these buses where it is safe. Other students will have to line up in a designated safe area until their bus arrives or moves forward and duty staff have ensured it is safe.

It is important that students follow the instructions of duty staff.

Car Parking

There is no space on the school site for parental pick-ups and in any case the west car park is closed until after 4pm to allow bus access. We do politely ask parents to be mindful of our neighbours, and I understand that some of the roads in the new housing estate are private roads.

Parents Dropping Off Students at the Start of the Day

Students broadly arrive to school between 8am and 8.50am and so there is less congestion. It is possible for parents to drop off on the school site, but this should be closer to the main entrance.

This gives enough space for coaches to be parked further behind and for these students to enter safely through the Crush Hall.

Summary

There are several other matters to draw to your attention at the start of term, but I will write to you next week. I hope you appreciate that safety must always be our overriding concern, and it is helpful to re-set and share some of the procedures.

You will have noticed a couple of times my reference to the Crush Hall. This is an historic title and is a popular name for entrances to public buildings including theatres. The Crush Hall in the University of London has marble, Art Deco styling, and a grand staircase! (Maybe one day we will have such grandeur but, in the meantime, would settle for more pedestrian crossings.)

As always, once again, thank you for your support, and I will be back in touch next week,

Yours sincerely,



P J Hurst
Headteacher