



Thomas Mills

High School & Sixth Form

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Dear Parents

23rd October 2025

Headteacher's Update Letter 2025/2026 – Letter 3 (out of 3)

I hope this letter finds you well. We are very nearly at the end of this busy first half-term. We have enjoyed a great deal of events including the Careers Fayre, Duke of Edinburgh Award Expeditions and then the Celebration Evening for example. Our Open Week and Evening were very well attended, and families appreciated the opportunities available here.

As ever, these letters provide a brief update on matters of whole school interest.

Parking in our Local Neighbourhood

We have received some correspondence from residents frustrated by parked cars. The greatest concern is about drives being blocked. With this letter we have attached a letter from Halesworth Community Policing Team (CPT). I note the following points from this letter: park legally, show consideration, don't obstruct driveways and obey the Highway Code. In addition, drivers should not park opposite or within 10 metres of a junction. The letter goes onto to mention some of the potential consequences.

If I could ask for your support, it will help us maintain friendly neighbourhood relations.

Student Movement at the End of the School Day

There have been several new arrangements:

- Waiting for Buses: there are designated areas to use once buses have started moving.
- Meeting Parents or Walking: students should use the footpath heading east and so exiting near the Main Entrance or the School House. We also have two gates open on the West Side of the school. Students should not exit along the front of the West Block because of the narrowness of the road.
- Taxis: these are now near the School House and utilise the East Car Park.

Safety Announcement: TikTok 'Behaviour'

The Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership (SSP) and other agencies have put out an alert about some unsafe behaviour called "Tap out". This is very dangerous and can lead to future health implications as well as fatalities. In summary, the behaviour is linked to a chokehold.

Seek urgent medical advice if the following signs and injuries occur: head injuries, loss of consciousness, loss of memory, marks or bruises on the neck, blood shot eye, scratches or small red spots to neck/ eyelids/ cheeks/ behind ears, raspy or hoarse voice and severe headache.

There is no place for TikTok in this school and the misguided 'challenge' is further justification for our mobile phone free school. As ever, we need to be alert for trends and the risk that 'social media' can make such harmful acts seem ok because other participants are laughing. More details can be found [HERE](#).

Admission Arrangements for 2027/2028 school year

In summary the school follows the arrangements for Suffolk County Council (SCC). We are required to consult once every seven years and are doing so with Suffolk County Council. This consultation runs until the 31st January 2026. Further details can be found at www.suffolk.gov.uk/consultations

The main issue usually with admission arrangements is the 'oversubscription' criteria. From our point of view, we have no desire to change from the SCC policy. As you know, in practice, our school covers a wide rural geographical area.

Attendance Matters

I am pleased to report that attendance figures have increased. There continues to be a positive change in culture and the message about attendance and future attainment remains.

That's not to say it's always easy for parents and two very helpful links from the NHS may assist:

[Is my child too ill for school? - NHS](#)

[Anxiety in children - NHS](#)

The Department for Education (DfE) have been able to analyse national attendance data and the link to 95% attendance and strong outcomes is confirmed.

This year, the school is following a DfE strategy, and the tutor plays the key role. However, Suffolk County Council still retain responsibilities, and we work with them on certain cases.

Friends of Thomas Mills

My thanks to the Friends for organising an enjoyable Music Bingo last Friday. We appreciate their support, and the fundraising provides many extras such as our minibuses.

Their next fundraising initiative will be a Grand Christmas Raffle, and they are asking for donations. If you can donate a prize or are aware of any businesses who may support, please do let them know.

Access Arrangements and Examinations

Mrs Wheeler who works in our Learning Support Department diligently oversees access arrangements. The process should start from staff early with a focus on normal ways of working. There are also robust requirements for extra time. JCQ (Joint Council for Qualifications) has also issued a guide for parents which can be accessed [HERE](#).


Summary

This has been a long half term, but I can genuinely say in summary the students have been fantastic. There is a good atmosphere around the site and new students have settled in very well. Year Seven and Year Twelve are very popular and we are full.

We have enjoyed another very successful Book Week and the Library in particular has been busy. The half term is a perfect opportunity for some reading.

Breaks are needed and the half-term provides a good opportunity for a rest. I do have a little bit of marking to undertake for my own Year Thirteen students before enjoying a few days in Yorkshire. Whatever you do I hope you can enjoy a break. We look forward to seeing staff and students return on Monday 3rd November.

Yours sincerely,



P J Hurst
Headteacher