



Thomas Mills
High School & Sixth Form

Headteacher: P J Hurst BA MA MBA MSc 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

12th January 2026

Headteacher's Update Letter 2025/2026 – Letter 5 (out of 5)

I hope this letter finds you well and that the Christmas Holiday was enjoyable. I very much wish you a Happy New Year. We've had a good start to term. In terms of weather, we had a range of forecasts last week which did not quite match to the actual weather. This week should be warmer but as things can change, I thought I would reiterate some important winter considerations.

Adverse Weather

Last week we had to manage frost, snow, ice and rain. It is a reminder that we must take care.

Travel to and from school

- Students should have coats and preferably with reflective markings
- Cyclists should ensure they have lights as well as helmets
- Pedestrians should keep to pathways and be mindful of other pedestrians as well as road users
- Students on buses – behaviour must be exemplary so that drivers can focus on the road ahead
- Car parking – please be considerate with our neighbours

School Site

At all times students should not run; they must walk. In very cold weather there is the risk of untreated patches of ice.

School Closure

If we decide to close the school, I will aim to make the decision by 6.30am at the latest. This is so we can communicate with coach companies, families and staff. The key consideration tends to be transport and so we do consider the advice from the coach companies as well as the local authority. Messages can be sent on the Arbor App as well as our website. It can be useful listening to local radio.

School closure must be a last resort.

The school is open unless you hear otherwise.

Behaviour Policy

Our policy is due to be re-approved by Trustees this term and whilst we will be looking to retain our focus on self-discipline, some minor but significant changes are proposed.

For example, vapes are forbidden on the school site. This used to be considered under the same section as smoking. However, a national survey found that a proportion of vapes contained illegal substances and were harmful. Given this we have referred to vapes in the illegal substances section and this would allow for permanent exclusion in the event of a student supplying or giving a vape to others.

I am very clear that vapes are harmful to children and further advice can be found at TalktoFrank.com

In the meantime, thank you for your support in ensuring our school is safe and respectful.

On a related theme we ask for your support with school uniform. For me, it relates to a mindset. We will ask tutors to contact home where necessary.

Children's Commissioner Resource about Digital Lives

We have had contact from the Children's Commissioner about a new guide for parents and carers on managing children's digital lives. The link to the guide is:

<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/resource/what-i-wish-my-parents-or-carers-knew-a-guide-for-parents-and-carers-on-managing-childrens-digital-lives/>

From the letter to me, I notice the following points:

- Children's safety is a shared responsibility
- Children have said they want to be protected from smartphones for as long as possible
- Children value firm, informed and protective boundaries to protect them online

Our Mobile Phone free school supports this stance.

Summary

I apologise as this starts the year off seriously. However, we have had a good start to the school term and for the short period in which we had some snow, students were sensible and respectful.

It was also nice to celebrate Thomas Mills Day and students responded well.

For those of you interested in local history, before Christmas I was given a copy of a local book by the author John Bridges called *Framlingham A Portrait Through Time 1539-2016*. It contains some lovely paintings from over the years.

Once again, I wish you a lovely New Year.

Yours sincerely,



P J Hurst
Headteacher