



Closure FAQ – Update June 2026

This Q&A has been provided in response to some questions that have been submitted to the School and Board. We have tried to keep answers as succinct and clear as possible. Some of this information has already been provided in previous communications however it has been included for completeness.

Q1. Why is the School closing at the end of the 2025/2026 academic year?

The School is facing critical financial challenges, is no longer financially sustainable and does not have enough money to remain open.

The School was breaking even in 2023 and the accounts for that year state that the “Governing Body consider the economic uncertainty and the impact on pupil numbers to be the most significant risks for concern”.

Around 100 pupils have left and not been replaced since then, amounting to an enormous loss in income of around £1,800,000. At the same time, the School has been dealing with the introduction of significant cost increases, including higher operating costs, the introduction of VAT on school fees, the loss of business rates relief, and increased National Insurance contributions.

These external economic factors compounded with the significant and steady loss in pupil numbers have driven the School to a severe loss-making position.

For reference, the School has a DfE designated capacity of 800 pupils, operated most effectively at around 550 pupils and started the 2025/26 academic year with 332 pupils.

The School’s challenges are so severe that it did not have sufficient reserves to continue operating until the end of the current academic year. A bridging loan was secured to enable the School to complete the current year, pay staff, and support pupils through to the end of term. This is the reason the School did not close mid-year.

Q2. What steps were taken to try save the School?

The Board of Governors and School SLT have explored every reasonable option to reduce costs and find an alternative future for the School over several years. Steps taken have included reviewing expenditure and making substantial cost savings over several years, such as coming out of TPS and improving efficiencies across the curriculum and operations; reviewing strategic options including closing the Prep School and Sixth Form to reduce operating costs; looking at alternative models such as 0+ nursery; commissioning an independent assessment of the School’s finances and options; consideration and attempts at undertaking a charity and/or a non-charity merger or acquisition; conducting confidential marketing exercises to identify potential merger partners or acquirers; and engaging directly with interested parties on potential transaction terms.

The School approached and engaged with an extensive number of interested educational parties regarding a transaction to merge or take over the School. Following this, in-depth engagement for several months followed with two separate parties in 2025. Despite extensive efforts these discussions were ultimately unsuccessful.

The Board has also engaged constructively with the Parent Rescue Group since the closure announcement in February 2026 to further explore opportunities to try and save the School but no viable financial plan has been submitted.

Q3. How has the Board of Governors engaged with the Parent Rescue Group (PRG)?

Since the proposed closure was announced in February 2026, the Board of Governors has engaged extensively with the PRG with a clear focus on avoiding closure.

It is clear that certain members of the PRG have their own views regarding the engagement. The Board of Governors is grateful for the time and commitment shown by the PRG.

This engagement has included entering into a non-disclosure agreement, as is customary when engaging formally with a group that is seen as a viable partner, providing access to a dedicated data room containing operational and financial information, reviewing multiple iterations of business plans submitted by the PRG, providing detailed written feedback on those plans, and engaging with a potential education partner introduced by the PRG. The partner, upon completion of their own due diligence, decided not to proceed.

The Board of Governors has extensively reviewed and provided feedback on three separate business plans presented by the PRG.

It is true that the PRG requested certain further information including specific salaries for the precise roles of individuals across the staff body. The Board of Governors decided on professional advice it could not provide this information without potential risks of breaching confidentiality and data protection laws for staff. Workarounds were found that enabled the Board of Governors to supply information that should have been sufficient for the PRG to make relevant calculations and assumptions for planning purposes.

We are not aware of any instance where any piece of information was requested by the PRG that was made at the specific request of funder or lender working with the PRG. We were not put in touch with any lenders to try to address concerns about a lack of information preventing them from providing committed funding.

Q4. What happened with the latest proposal presented by the PRG?

The PRG's latest business plan was provided on 15 May 2026. It relies on an unapproved funding application and is not supported by a viable underlying financial plan. It was based on a model that would only retain the prep school for now. Whilst the Board of Governors considered this plan in detail, it was unable to accept this proposal. To reiterate, the PRG plan does not have confirmed funding.

We of course would love to keep the School open, however, a fundamental challenge has remained throughout: no PRG proposal has been supported by evidence of committed funding and a credible business plan that can provide certainty that the School could remain open, educate pupils in an effective and compliant way, and continue to operate sustainably.

Q5. What was the PRG proposal based on?

The PRG proposal is not supported by committed funding, a viable underlying financial plan or a credible overarching business plan. The proposal is based on a prep school only model from September 2026 and the proposed development of a senior school after this. It depends on the sale of School assets, timely and speculative planning approvals for sites that have historically had numerous objections and issues, ambitious pupil growth (e.g. expanding by over 100% after Year 1) in a highly challenging local market, ongoing

operations being supported by unconfirmed future donations, continuing trading losses for at least three years, and inadequate safeguarding, staffing and governance arrangements.

Parents and members of the community are welcome to approach the PRG and ask for a copy of their latest proposal to understand it themselves.

Q6. Why can't the Board of Governors just accept the proposal and see what happens? Would that not be better than closure?

To do so would risk the School's, and the charity's, ability to meet its existing duties to pupils and staff, including the payment of staff wages and the orderly transition of pupils to alternative provision. The Board of Governors has a duty to act in the best interests of the charity, pupils and staff, and cannot risk further uncertainty for pupils and staff on the basis of proposals that are not funded and do not have a viable financial plan amongst other critical issues.

Based on the plan presented there is a real risk that in a years' time the School would be again facing closure. The pain and instability caused to pupils and their educational journey would be unjustifiable to risk, as well as causing instability for staff and risking their redundancy payments and salaries.

Q7. What is happening with the Governors?

The Governors are continuing to work with Mrs Wood and her colleagues as they prepare for the end of the academic year for pupils and transition for September 2026.

Some parents have requested that the Governors resign and a number have communicated this to the Governors. We respect the opinions of these parents, however, the resignation of the Governors does not solve the financial challenges facing the School or the fact that the latest proposal presented by the PRG does not have confirmed funding or a viable financial plan.

The Board of Governors has a legal duty to oversee the completion of the academic year, the proper treatment of staff through the redundancy process, the transition of pupils to alternative provision, and the responsible disposal of the School's assets in accordance with its charitable purposes. The Board of Governors takes its responsibilities seriously and intends to continue to fulfil its duties until such time as the closure process is complete, pupils and staff are cared for as much as possible, and the charity's affairs are properly concluded. The Board continues to seek professional advice to ensure they are fulfilling their responsibilities.

Q8. Is the School liaising with the Charity Commission?

Yes, the School has been engaging with the Charity Commission throughout this process and notified them of the proposed closure in February 2026. The Charity Commission is aware of the reasons for the proposed closure and has not cited any concerns with the reasons for the closure and the process since then. The Woodard Corporation and Sisters of St. Joseph are also aware of the reasons for the closure and have been informed throughout.

Q9. Why didn't the Board of Governors or SLT attend the public meeting on 8 June?

The Board gave careful consideration to whether to attend the public meeting. We absolutely recognise and respect the need for members of the community to come together at times like this.

However, the reasons for the School's proposed closure have been explained and these challenges have not changed or been addressed by any proposal received by the Board of Governors. We felt that writing to all parents and staff in advance of the meeting was the best way to communicate the School's position in a clear and detailed way.

Additionally, the first the Board of Governors and SLT heard about the meeting was through public advertisements stating the meeting was for a vote of no confidence in the Governors. The Governors were then formally invited on 5 June and told the meeting was for the purpose of discussing the future of the School with no mention of the vote. These advertisements and correspondences did not seem focused on a constructive meeting that would add clarity for the community.

The Board of Governors understands that its absence was disappointing to those in attendance but hopes that the above information adds some context and that the open letter and subsequent communications have provided clarity on the key issues.

Q10. What support is available for pupils and families?

Our priority remains supporting pupils, families and staff through the remainder of the academic year and the transition to September 2026.

Every pupil needing a school place for September 2026 has now secured one, thanks to the exceptional efforts of AESG staff, parents, and the receiving schools who have worked collaboratively and quickly.

The School is continuing to assist families in supporting these transitions and working to ensure that the final weeks of term are as positive and stable as possible for pupils. Parents with specific questions about their child's transition are encouraged to contact the School directly.

Q11. What support is available for staff?

The Board of Governors deeply values the commitment and professionalism of staff, who have continued to provide exceptional care and education throughout this difficult period.

A full redundancy consultation process has been conducted with the support of specialist HR advisers. Teaching staff were given one full term's notice and support staff are being given notice in accordance with their contracts of employment. Commencing the consultation process in February 2026 has allowed staff to maximise the time available for them to secure alternative positions.

Staff have been supported throughout this process with wellbeing provisions and access to relevant career coaching. We will continue to support all staff over the next few months up to the end of their contracts of employment on the 31 August 2026.

We would like to thank all the parents who have been supportive of staff. We would also like to clearly state that we have zero tolerance for and do not accept poor behaviour directed towards staff. This has been a particularly difficult time for them, as they face losing a School they love and their employment. We want to have a full staff body over the remaining weeks and for all staff to feel safe and reassured in the workplace.

Q12. I have heard lots of different versions of events in the community – what is going on?

The Board of Governors and School have never wanted to make promises we can't keep or cause further confusion for staff and pupils. We have wanted to be realistic about the challenges facing the School and the viability of the proposals the School has received.

This has resulted in some commentary criticising the Board of Governors and the closure. People are entitled to their views and the Board of Governors has fully considered the feedback received. We would rather be direct and clear and face criticism, than risk causing further uncertainty for pupils, families and parents. The Board of Governors continues to act in the best interests of the charity, pupils and staff at all times.

People are absolutely entitled to have their views about this process. Ultimately the School is working towards an orderly closure and this is heartbreaking news for the community.

We understand that rumours and uncertainty about the School's future and the closure process overall can be difficult for the wider community to make sense of without having the substantive details. We also understand that people will of course have questions. We direct those with further questions to the specific section on the School's website which clearly outlines what has been communicated to our staff and parents.

Q13. What restrictions have there been on communications?

We acknowledge that parents would have preferred more detailed communication throughout this process. We have sought to be as open as possible while respecting the clear constraints that apply in this situation. It is a difficult position as communications must keep in mind the strict requirements of the staff redundancy consultation process to ensure it is a fair process for them, commercial confidentiality relating to discussions with potential buyers, and data protection obligations. The Board of Governors recognises that these constraints have at times created an unfortunate gap compared with other information which has circulated about the School's position. We do apologise for this and hope that this Q&A provides further context.