



**Woodcote House School**  
Snows Ride, Windlesham, Surrey GU20 6PF

Monday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025

Dear Parents, Guardians and Old Boys

As the Directors of Woodcote House School, we (Nick, David, and Rowan) are sorry to be bringing you the very sad news that we intend to close Woodcote House at the end of the summer term, and that therefore the school has entered a period of statutory consultation with staff on the planned closure.

The fact that Woodcote is the ultimate family school only serves to deepen the sadness, both for us family members, but also for staff, parents, current pupils, and Old Boys, many hundreds of whom have felt genuinely at home and happy here ever since our grandparents took over in 1931.

And yet it is, we are afraid, inevitable.

The school has overcome several challenges over the years, but the cruel combination of buffeting headwinds we are facing now has worn us down to a situation where the school is no longer sustainable.

Pupil numbers have been on the slide for a while, showing an even steeper decline in the current financial climate, and sadly the take-up for the Pre-Prep has not been sufficient to make it feasible.

The regulatory demands imposed on a beautiful old building have risen exponentially.

The imposition of VAT on school fees has not directly affected our finances, but it has alarmed several families and contributed to a sharp fall in interest for September.

The burden of increased National Insurance contributions has increased significantly, particularly given our staff-pupil ratio.

The birth rate in the UK has plummeted in recent years.

The school's reserves – never healthy as historically any profit has been ploughed back into the school - have been bled dry.

Our priorities at this juncture are two-fold:

Firstly, we appreciate the difficulties that boys, parents and staff will be facing as a result. To this end, in addition to his busy role as Headmaster, Oliver will primarily be concentrating on helping boys, parents and perhaps staff, find the right school in September. He has, of course, had to steer a very difficult path in the light of the Directors' decision, and any other issues should be addressed to Nick, David, or Rowan (see contact details below), who will make themselves available throughout the coming months.

Secondly, the school will do its utmost to give boys, parents, and staff the best possible experience in their final term at Woodcote. We certainly don't intend to creep our way shamefaced towards early July, and all the usual summer highlights – Speech Day, Chapel, Cricket Teas, Concerts, Drama, Leavers' Trips, and so on – will be very much on the agenda.

You, the parents – past and present – have shown enormous confidence and commitment to Woodcote over the years, for which our family will be forever grateful. We hope very much that you and your children will look back on your association with us with warmth and affection, and we much look forward to seeing you and your boys after Easter.

Yours sincerely

Nick Paterson .

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