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## **Pear Tree Point School to Close at End of This Academic Year**

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Pear Tree Point School will close at the end of the academic year, Headmaster David Trigaux has announced in a statement on the private school's website.

Parents of the co-educational day school's 120 students in Kindergarten through Grade 6, who come from Darien and other area towns, will be looking for other schools for their children. Some fraction of the students might attend Darien public schools starting next school year, as a result.

"In an early all-school meeting, we discussed the many factors that have been impacting Pear Tree Point School and other small independent elementary schools in our region and beyond for a number of years," Trigaux wrote in a statement published on [the home page](#) of the school's website.

He didn't elaborate on what those factors are, but added: "Due to the cumulative impact of these factors, Pear Tree Point School will close at the end of this academic year."

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Trigaux's statement was published on [the school's Facebook timeline](#) on Sept. 14. The school's closing does not appear to have been reported elsewhere. Darienite.com learned of the closing too late to get comment Tuesday from school officials or others.

Trigaux's statement was largely upbeat. At one point, for instance, he said, "It has been a joyful privilege for me and for our faculty members and staff to work in such a beautiful and caring place where so much learning and character development has occurred."

The school presented its strengths as having small classes and teachers who could devote more attention to individual students because of small class sizes.

The school also bills itself as "Connecticut's only Core Knowledge school," an institution dedicated to the "Core Knowledge Curriculum," which it described this way on its website:

Pear Tree Point School uses the Core Knowledge Curriculum developed by the Core Knowledge Foundation, which was founded by Dr. E. D. Hirsch at the University of Virginia. Pear Tree Point School has developed additional curriculum detail in reading, mathematics and writing. Areas taught by specialists include art, music, drama, science, physical education, Spanish and Mandarin.

### **Where Will the Students Go?**

"We are dedicated to helping our families find new schools for their children and making this year one filled with treasured memories," Trigaux wrote.

The 22-year-old private elementary school enrolls about 120 students in kindergarten through Grade 6, according to the school website.

It lists the towns where the students come from as "Darien, Fairfield, Greenwich, New Canaan, Norwalk, Southport, Stamford, Westport and Wilton."

Parents of the school's students clearly want their children in private schools, and there are private schools in surrounding towns.

According to the school's website: "On average, 70 percent of graduating students attend independent schools, 25 percent attend public schools and 5 percent attend international schools."

The website [Niche.com](#), likely relying on older information, reports as many as 178 students at the school, which may indicate a drop in enrollment in recent years.

According to Niche.com, the school has 24 full-time teachers and seven part-time, but the school's own

website states that the student/teacher ratio is 10:1, which would indicate 12 teachers still working there.

#### **Property for Sale?**

Nothing in Trigaux's statement indicated what will happen to the school's property after it closes.

The school is located at [90 Pear Tree Point Road](#) on a three-acre site between Pear Tree Point Road and Long Neck Point Road on the expensive Long Neck peninsula.

Darien town government has long had a policy of trying to purchase significant tracts of land as they become available.

The town has used them for schools, parks and other public purposes, but hasn't been willing to spend large amounts of money on buying land priced high because it sits on a premium site.

When "Great Neck," the 63-acre waterfront estate owned by the Zeigler family was [offered for sale](#), town officials said they wouldn't be buying the estate at its then-listed price of \$175 million.

On the other hand, a three-acre site in the same neighborhood, even on prime land, would be much easier to finance.

The town recently bought a bit more than 16 acres at the northern end of Ox Ridge Hunt Club (which retains 22 acres). The land will be used for "passive recreation" purposes, including sports fields without permanent goalposts or other fixtures.

Much smaller parcels have been purchased by the town on Cherry Street, Short Lane and Hecker Avenue in the past few years.

#### **Full Statement on the Closing**

*Here is Trigaux's entire statement on the school website:*

Welcome to our website. We are looking forward to an exciting and fulfilling 2017-18 school year at Pear Tree Point School. Our students are benefiting from our robust Core Knowledge curriculum, small classes, differentiated teaching and strong sense of community. We feel very fortunate to have such a keen and energetic parent organization enriching our experiences at school through community service and social gatherings this year.

In an early all-school meeting, we discussed the many factors that have been impacting Pear Tree Point School and other small independent elementary schools in our region and beyond for a number of years. Due to the cumulative impact of these factors, Pear Tree Point School will close at the end of this academic year.

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Despite this decision, we are going to celebrate 22 wonderful years of educating young people: over one thousand three hundred in fact, who have gone on to quality schools locally and abroad. We hear from so many of our alumni/ae, when they visit or write, that the Pear Tree Point School experience provided a significant foundation for their later achievements.

We are dedicated to helping our families find new schools for their children and making this year one filled with treasured memories. It has been a joyful privilege for me and for our faculty members and staff to work in such a beautiful and caring place where so much learning and character development has occurred. Please join us in this year's celebration of more than two decades of success for our students and their families.