

CEO Letter to Parents and Carers

4th February 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing as Chief Executive of Forward Education Trust to update you on the ongoing closure of Leycroft Academy and to acknowledge the disruption and understandable concerns this has caused for our families.

Over the past week, the school has experienced a series of significant electrical faults affecting power and heating across the building. Despite engineers' sustained efforts, further power surges mid-week created risks to equipment and systems, leading to a full shutdown for safety. Investigations have since confirmed that the underlying fault lies within an external power cable serving the school, including historic underground joints ("torpedo" joints) that have now begun to fail. As the issue sits outside the school site, it could not have been foreseen or addressed internally.

Contractors have now located the defective section and sourced the specialist equipment and replacement parts needed for the repair. Once installed, all systems will undergo extensive safety testing to ensure power can be restored safely and reliably, without any repeat of the issues experienced.

We remain committed to reopening only when we are completely satisfied that every system is stable and safe. At present, we are working towards reopening on **Monday 9th February**, and we will confirm this as soon as final checks are complete.

Impact on Pupils and Families

We recognise how difficult this situation has been for our pupils, particularly those with autism who depend on routine, structure, and predictability. Families have shared the impact that short-notice closures have had on emotional regulation and wellbeing, and I sincerely regret the disruption caused. We are reviewing our communication processes to ensure clearer and earlier updates wherever possible.

Why Temporary Alternatives Were Not Feasible

We explored the use of generators and temporary relocation. However:

- A generator with sufficient capacity would still have required substantial installation work, meaning it would not have enabled earlier reopening.
- Alternative school sites were either at full capacity or unsuitable for Leycroft pupils, whose needs require carefully managed specialist environments.

While situations of this nature are extremely rare, we will strengthen contingency planning across the Trust to minimise disruption in any future emergency.

Continuing Support During Closure

Remote support continues through Class Dojo, with staff sharing activities and offering help where needed. If your child is struggling with the change in routine, please contact the school team — they are ready to assist.

Support When School Reopens

We are exploring limited opportunities for access to school during half-term, depending on volunteer availability. The school will confirm details shortly.

As previously planned, school will remain closed on **Friday 13th February** for statutory training that could not be delivered safely during the power outage. However, the planned half-day training sessions on **3rd and 23rd March** will now become full teaching days, as staff were able to complete this training during the closure. Further reminders will be shared closer to the time.

Thank You

Thank you for your patience, understanding, and resilience throughout this challenging period. Our staff, contractors, and Trust colleagues have worked tirelessly to resolve this unexpected and complex issue, and your support has been truly appreciated.

We look forward to welcoming pupils back as soon as it is safe to do so and will provide a further update once the final engineering confirmation is received.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Dilkes', written in a cursive style.

Simon Dilkes
Chief Executive Officer