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Anglo-American School in St. Petersburg Closes After 40 Years

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Sergei Vedyashkin / Moskva News Agency

The Anglo-American School in St. Petersburg (AASSP) has shut its doors after 43 years in operation — the latest casualty of diplomatic tensions between Russia and the West.

Earlier this year, Moscow ordered the U.S. and U.K consulates in St. Petersburg to close after Washington and London expelled dozens of Russian diplomats over the suspected poisoning of ex-spy Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia in England. The British Council was also forced to shut down in the aftermath of the expulsions.

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"The AAS Board of Directors learned on Sept. 20 of the Russian government's regrettable decision to close the Anglo-American School in St. Petersburg, by not renewing its existing

lease," the school said in a statement on its website Thursday.

The school "has no legal grounds to function" following the March 31 closure of the U.S. consulate, the St. Petersburg administration told the state-run TASS news agency on Thursday.

Russia warned the U.S. in October 2017 – after Russia's consulate in San Francisco closed in tit-for-tat measures over a U.S. Congress vote to tighten sanctions – that the AASSP does not enjoy immunity, the Fontanka.ru news website reported. The warning was reportedly reiterated on Aug. 22, 2018 when the Russian Foreign Ministry told the U.S. ambassador it sees no reason for the school to continue its work.

The St. Petersburg-based outlet said the school's alleged lack of a Russian education license made it prone to inspections for building code violations and non-renewal of its lease.

Founded in 1975, the school taught 140 students of 30 nationalities between the ages of 5 and 12 this academic year.

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