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ACHIEVEMENT ~ DIVERSITY ~ RESPECT

Headteacher: Ms Jo Butler

Friday 9 January 2026

Press release from Cotham School regarding our Playing Fields at Stoke Lodge

Cotham School to Resume Use of Stoke Lodge Playing Fields

Cotham School is pleased to announce that it will resume use of its off-site playing fields at Stoke Lodge from Monday, 12 January 2026.

Following the outcome of High Court proceedings in June 2025, the school has undertaken essential work to reinstate the perimeter fencing to ensure the site is appropriately safeguarded for students and staff. Pitch markings have now been completed, and goalposts reinstated, meaning the site is fully prepared for school use.

From Monday, 12 January, the school will once again use the playing fields during the school day. For safeguarding reasons, the site will be locked while in use by the school.

Unfortunately, the automated gate electronic access control system has been criminally damaged since the school last had access to the site and is currently inoperable. As a result, locking and unlocking the gates requires manual intervention, placing a significant additional demand on school resources. Despite this, the school remains committed to enabling permissive community access to the playing fields outside school hours whenever possible, subject to sufficient staffing resources.

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The gates will be locked to the public each weekday from 7.00am until the school has ceased its use. Once the school has finished using the facilities for the day, the gates will be unlocked by 2.00pm for permissive public access. The gates will remain unlocked for permissive public access for the remainder of the day and evening.

Previous criminal damage, including the removal of fence panels and deliberate interference with locks, has caused considerable disruption and expense. This is not acceptable. Therefore, public access continuation will be dependent on the site being treated with care. This includes no criminal damage to fencing, gates, or padlocks.

It also includes members of the public adhering to the no dogs rule for permissive access. **Dogs are not permitted on the school playing field/within the fenced area at any time** to maintain the site for its intended sporting and educational use.

Cotham School hopes to continue using its playing fields for their intended educational purpose while maintaining a positive and respectful relationship with the wider public.

Cotham School
9 January 2026