



Providing a life-enhancing education that develops the character, talents and potential of every child

ACHIEVEMENT ~ DIVERSITY ~ RESPECT

Headteacher: Ms Jo Butler

Thursday 16 October 2025

**Press release from Cotham School regarding our Playing Fields at Stoke Lodge
Response to "We Love Stoke Lodge" Statement of 15 October 2025**

The Court of Appeal has refused leave for Katherine Welham to appeal against the High Court decision that Cotham School Playing Fields at Stoke Lodge are not a town and village green. This is great news for Cotham School. We will continue the process to get back to using our fields.

We write in response to the statement issued by the We Love Stoke Lodge campaign regarding the Court of Appeal decision.

We must address a significant and misleading misrepresentation in their statement that they persist in claiming. WLSL claim that our headteacher, Jo Butler, has "admitted" there is no safeguarding requirement for fencing, and that this position somehow undermines the legitimacy of necessary safety measures. This is categorically false. Our headteacher has never stated that a fence is not required to enable school use on this site, and the school stands firmly by the position that appropriate fencing is absolutely essential for the safeguarding of students.

The safety and protection of children in our care is paramount and non-negotiable. The fencing is not optional; it is a fundamental safeguarding requirement that enables the school to use the land safely and responsibly. This basic principle of child protection should not be controversial.

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Registered in England: Company Number 07732888

Registered Office: Cotham School, Cotham Lawn Road, Cotham, Bristol BS6 6DT



WLSL's statement also perpetuates the baseless and inflammatory allegation that the school has "privatisation and development ambitions." This is simply untrue. The school's objective is straightforward and legitimate: to safeguard its students through appropriate fencing and to return to maintaining and using the playing field for its intended educational purpose. There are no hidden agendas, no development plans, and no attempt to "privatise" public space. These accusations are unfounded and unhelpful.

The fencing enables the school to fulfil its duty of care to students while they use the field. It does not represent privatisation; it represents responsible safeguarding practice that any reasonable person would expect a school to implement.

Cotham School