

**From:** [Joanne Butler](#)  
**To:** [Section 62A Applications Non Major](#)  
**Subject:** Stoke Lodge Playing Fields, West Dene, Bristol, BS9 2BH Reference number: S62A/2025/0133  
**Date:** 17 November 2025 16:02:05

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To whom it may concern,

**Re: Stoke Lodge Playing Fields, West Dene, Bristol, BS9 2BH**

**Reference number: S62A/2025/0133**

Schools must risk-assess all sites students use. Given their heightened safeguarding and child protection responsibilities, for a school specifically, CCTV at an off-site field is often considered best practice rather than just optional.

**Safeguarding duties:**

The school has a legal duty of care to protect students and also staff:

- CCTV provides accountability when staff supervise students off-site
- Helps prevent bullying, fights, or inappropriate behaviour during school use
- Protects against allegations involving students or staff
- As it does on the school's main site, helps deter members of the public from entering the site when it is in use by the school

The safety and protection of children in the school's care is paramount and non-negotiable. We see the need for CCTV at our playing field as a fundamental safeguarding requirement that will enable the school to use the land safely and responsibly. This basic principle of child protection should not be controversial and for this reason alone planning permission for the CCTV cameras should be granted.

Furthermore, I support Cotham School's application for CCTV at its playing field at Stoke Lodge for the additional following reasons:

**Out-of-hours security:**

School facilities are frequent targets for vandalism, graffiti, and break-ins. For example, the original sports pavilion at the site was subjected to multiple arson attacks meaning it has had to be recently rebuilt.

The fence at the playing field has been repeatedly vandalised over a number of years:

- The first perimeter fence was systematically vandalised over a number of months to the point where only a few panels out of 10s and 10s were left remaining. The others were either removed from the site by persons unknown or at best thrown to the ground.
- School metal panel signage has also been removed or vandalised. The latter includes large holes of 10cm diameter or more having been forcibly 'punched through' with some type of implement.
- During the week beginning 9 November 2025 a new fence, in place for only a matter of days, was subjected to the most horrendous vandalism with multiple panels even being sawn down the centre with an electronic power tool and ripped open. Other panels have had their fixtures drilled out, been removed and tossed on the ground. Many more have been repeatedly kicked and bent out

of shape.

- Equipment (goalposts, storage sheds) can be stolen or damaged
- Prevents unauthorized access by young people after hours (drinking, drug use, etc.)
- Reduces repair costs and disruption to PE lessons

**Public use conflicts:**

- If the field is used outside school hours, CCTV helps manage disputes
- Documents damage so the school can identify who's responsible
- Deters anti-social behaviour that could make the site unsafe for students or staff

**Risk management:**

- If the field is remote from the main school site, staff can't provide direct oversight
- Allows checking conditions before transporting students there
- Evidence for injury claims or accidents during school activities
- Retention and access policies

A High Court judgment in June 2025 definitively established that Stoke Lodge constitutes private educational land held for the education of Cotham School's 1,650+ students. The installation of CCTV would directly support this legal status, support safeguarding obligations, and support the school in fulfilling its educational mission.

For all of the above reasons planning permission for the CCTV cameras should be granted.

Yours faithfully,

Ms Joanne Butler

(Headteacher, Cotham School)



**Joanne Butler**

[Redacted signature area]

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We believe everyone in our school community adds something special to who we are. We show dignity towards others by being kind and respectful in our communications with each other.

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<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/parking/cotham>

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