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Cotham School's Playing Fields at Stoke Lodge.

Following the closure of the school playing fields at Stoke Lodge at the beginning of lockdown and the subsequent unauthorised community access, the School has been following government advice in planning the re-opening of the sports fields.

We are very sorry that some people were disappointed when we closed the playing fields in line with Government advice and our insurer's requirements, and of course, we regret the vandalism that the fields subsequently suffered during lockdown. These playing fields are a precious asset for the School, and we want get back to sports use and to honour our promise to share the field with the community, when not in use by the school.

We are pleased to be able to let you know that the school playing fields at Stoke Lodge will be re-opened for sport and informal community use from the week beginning 6 July 2020.

In preparation for the re-opening of the fields we have been planning some improvements that we hope will work better for all users. As some of you may have seen the grass has been regularly cut and a running track and pitches have been marked out.

We will be carrying out repairs to the damaged fence panels and re-fixing / replacing panels to create a secure perimeter; this will be carried out in the week of 29 June 2020. We hope that everyone will respect the fence and support the school in deterring any further vandalism. Security is a vital element of safeguarding for our students and others using the fields for organised sports.

We have now installed three remotely controlled access points, these are- the single gate entrances at Parrings Lane, at West Dene and to the rear of the Adult Learning Centre near the children's play area off Shirehampton Road. These gates will be open to enable informal community use when the fields are not being used by the school, other authorised sports use, or during times of repairs or maintenance in the fields. During term time the fields will generally be open to informal use from 1.00pm. to 9.00pm in the summer, and 1pm to 5.00pm in winter (October to March). At weekends and during the school holidays, when not in use for other authorised, organised sports, the gates will be opened between 8.00am to 9.00pm in the summer months and between 9.00am and 5.00pm in the winter months. These times will be regularly reviewed, and could be amended, even at short notice. We apologise if this causes any inconvenience to informal users.

Informal community use of the playing fields will continue to be permitted, however please note these are school playing fields, and the following restrictions of use apply:

- no dogs;
- no horses;
- no motor vehicles (including motorcycles) *except maintenance vehicles*;
- no golf;
- no cycling or scooters *especially on the cricket strip*;
- no model aircraft or drones without written permission of the school;
- no barbecues;
- no alcohol;



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- no organised events, training or large groups without the written permission of the School.

Our groundsmen will be regularly cutting the grass and at these times public access will not be allowed. Please help us to keep everyone safe, and leave the site if asked to do so.

Cotham School playing fields are available for booking by sports clubs and other organisations seeking access to sport facilities, do please contact the school for more information, to find out about our fees and the facilities available.

In the light of the continued vandalism to the perimeter fence the School have made the decision to seek planning permission for an additional CCTV camera to the rear of the Shirehampton Road, this would help us monitor the fields and hopefully deter further vandalism. We hope this application will be determined by the City Council soon.

In due course, we plan to carry out further improvements to the sports facilities including the refurbishment of the pavilion, which is even more pressing now due to the strict health and safety standards we must apply during pandemic. At this time, we will also review our School Travel Plan and include the provision of cycle parking facilities at Stoke Lodge.

We will soon need to carry out some necessary tree works to ensure the safety of our students, users of the fields and to protect the buildings on the fields. At this time, we will also consider works to improve the perimeter walkway. The arboriculture surveys will be updated and the School will work with Bristol City Council to take these works forward.

We are planning to set up a user group, where we can talk to people that use the playing fields, to consider any user suggestions and improvements we could consider. For example, this could include the range of sports offered and opportunities for nature conservation.

Still outstanding, are the two Town and Village Green (TVG) applications lodged with the Commons Registrations Authority at Bristol City Council and awaiting determination. We will update everyone when there is any further news.

We hope students, sports users and local people will enjoy the improving facilities at Cotham School's Playing Fields, Stoke Lodge and work with us to ensure the safe use and enjoyment by all.

We will publish further updates when we have any more news and information to share.

In the meantime if you do wish to contact the School please email info@cotham.bristol.sch.uk and your query will be passed to the relevant person.



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