



January 2026

Dear Sir/Madam

As a valued user of our new 3G Sports Facility I am unfortunately writing to inform you that Tameside Local Authority has served the school with two separate notices:

**1) A Noise Abatement Notice**

Noise Nuisance from the use of the all-weather pitches at St Thomas More RC College, Environmental Protection Act 1990.

**The school has been required to prohibit the occurrence or recurrence of the Noise Nuisance from 5pm on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2026.**

**2) A Light Abatement Notice**

Light Nuisance from floodlighting to the all-weather pitches at St Thomas More RC College, Environmental Protection Act 1990.

**The school has been required to prohibit the occurrence or recurrence of the Light Nuisance from 5pm on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2026.**

I would like to reassure you that the school has already followed all planning conditions in relation to noise mitigation measures imposed when planning permission was granted including:

- Commissioning of a noise impact assessment as part of the planning process
- Installation of an acoustic protection fence in the section closest to neighbouring houses
- Installation of an acoustic earth bund/barrier at the rear of the pitch to deflect noise
- Tree/Shrub planting on top of the acoustic bund to reduce noise transmission
- Restricting the usage of the pitch to Monday to Friday 08:00-21:00 - Saturdays 09:00-20:00 - Sundays and Bank Holidays 09:00-18:00

The school has also followed all the planning conditions in relation to Floodlighting Guidance imposed when planning permission was granted including:

- Commissioning of a floodlighting performance report as part of the planning process
- Commissioning of a sports lighting statement as part of the planning process
- Following the guidance within the above reports to use the minimum required level of lighting and to angle floodlighting to be directed to the pitch to mitigate lighting overspill
- Restricting the usage of the pitch during dark periods to 07:45-21:15 Mondays to Fridays - 08:45-20:15 Saturdays - 08:45-18:15 Sundays and Bank Holidays. (Includes a 15-minute buffer before and after usage to allow entry and exit to the pitch).

Despite the school following all planning conditions required and taking best practicable means to reduce and mitigate any light or noise nuisance Tameside Local Authority Environmental Services have seen fit to issue the abatement notices detailed above. The notices include the **threat of prosecution and an unlimited fine** if the school is found in breach of the legal notices. The school understands that the abatement notices have been issued following investigation of a tiny number of complaints from property to the side of the school field. The school itself has received a direct complaint from one household.



We are extremely disappointed that the notices have been served as the school has been in dialogue with Tameside Local Authority and the Environmental Services Representatives in advance of the issuing of the notices and were willing to explore further measure above those already in place to prevent the issuing of these notices. We also note that there has been grass pitches at the same location for a number of years that have been available for community use.

## What happens now?

The school has taken initial legal advice and it is unclear at this stage if additional immediate mitigation measures will provide protection against prosecution and unlimited fines if a further complaint is received by the Local Authority.

The school does however have the right to appeal the notices in Magistrates Court and we will be taking this approach, however the appeal process does not pause the abatement notices and the waiting list for Magistrates Court Abatement Appeal Hearings is currently likely to be between 6 months and 18 months. This could potentially mean the school needs to wait for over a year to have the notices removed if that is the ultimate decision of the Court.

The school will continue to take advice to see if further measures can provide sufficient mitigation to prevent prosecution under the abatement notices while we wait for a Magistrates Appeal Court Hearing, however as I have indicated the current advice is that any further complaint could trigger prosecution.

### 1) All Weekday (Mon-Fri) Evening Bookings of the pitch will cease on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2026

The school cannot afford the risk of an unlimited fine following prosecution by Tameside Local Authority so at the moment unfortunately we are in the position **where all evening bookings for the all-weather pitch will cease on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2026**, as all these bookings may require floodlighting; the cessation of these lettings will protect the school from the threat of prosecution under the Lighting Nuisance Notice.

### 2) All Weekend (Sat-Sun) and Bank Holiday Bookings of the Pitch will cease on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2026

Again, the school cannot afford the risk of an unlimited fine following prosecution by Tameside Local Authority so at the moment unfortunately we are in the position **where all Weekend and Bank Holiday bookings for the all-weather pitch will cease on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2026**, the cessation of these lettings will protect the school from the threat of prosecution under the Noise Nuisance Notice. However, the pitch will not be used at the Weekend or on a Bank Holiday beyond with immediate effect after 6pm as these later bookings may require the use of Floodlighting.

## Next Steps

The school will continue to work with external partners to see if there is anything that can be done to continue to use the all-weather pitch by external community groups and all users of the pitch will be updated as quickly as possible if the situation changes or improves.

We are hopeful that we will be able to get a Magistrates Court Hearing as quickly as possible but we accept that it is unlikely to be before the first date of the notice (27<sup>th</sup> February 2026), when evening usage will need to stop.



Our advice is currently that the school can continue to use the pitch both during and outside school hours for reasonable school activities or activities linked to school students or school staff such as Open Evenings or School Matches.

## Further Points

I would just like to say how sorry I am that I am writing to you with such disappointing news, the planning and building of our superb new facility has taken many years at a cost of over £800,000, with funding provided by both the School and the Football Foundation. The aim of the project was to provide a state-of-the-art sporting facility for local community use and I know that in the first few months since the project has been completed, we have welcomed hundreds and perhaps thousands of children and adults through the gates to play football, the sport that they love.

A key priority of the project was to increase the participation of Women and Girl's in Football and it has been really pleasing to see the high number of female teams that were able to use the facility since it has been built. I am very upset in particular that the progress in this area will be stopped by these notices.

I know how annoyed and frustrated the leaders, coaches, players and member of our community groups/teams will be at the planned ending of activities on the all-weather pitch. I know from experience how hard it is to find suitable facilities and I understand that this will seriously affect your plans for the remainder of the season, the relatively short deadline in relation to the lighting notice is particularly difficult to understand. I know many of the volunteers and coaches who work with the young people of Denton personally, and I know how hard they work to provide engaging sporting opportunities for young people, I am saddened at the prospect that some groups may not be able to find alternative facilities to use in the middle of the playing season, which may lead to a reduction in engagement and participation, or perhaps some groups dissolving completely. For this I am truly sorry but it is a situation that at the moment is outside of my control.

Do please rest assured this is not a decision that has been taken lightly, the school has spent a significant amount of money on the building of the pitch, the school also continues to be liable for staffing costs for staff employed to oversee the hiring of the pitch and additional payments into a maintenance fund for the pitch, these costs should have been covered by the revenue produced from hiring the pitch but following the issuing of the notices the school will now likely have to fund these costs from school funding. Having followed all planning conditions and regulations the school could not have foreseen that it would be issued with these abatement notices and has acted in good faith at all times. The school wants nothing more than to continue supporting engagement and participation in sporting activities, we understand that for many young people football offers a hugely positive environment that keeps them engaged, happy and safe in an organised community activity, the school has never envisioned that we would need to be informing our partners that the usage of the pitch is being restricted.

I am genuinely sorry that I am communicating this situation to you in the middle of the playing season with relatively short notice but I wanted to give you as much time to plan ahead as possible.

Rest assured the school will be doing all it can to reinstate the reasonable and practicable use of the pitch as quickly as possible and we will continue to use every means at our disposal to secure a positive resolution.



# St Thomas More RC College

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We will contact you again when we have further updates, again I am so very sorry.

Kind regards

Yours sincerely

Mr H Brophy  
Headteacher