



# Sophos and Wave 9 keep **The Mercian Trust** up, running and secure during lockdown

The Mercian Trust is a group of six academy schools working together under a common banner. It offers the broadest and best education to all pupils regardless of their socio-economic, cultural or ethnic background.

## CUSTOMER-AT-A-GLANCE



**Mercian Trust**

**Industry**  
Education

**Number of Users**

2000 endpoints

**Sophos Customer**

Since 2015

**Sophos Solutions**

Sophos UTM

Sophos XG firewall

Keeping schools within The Mercian Trust up and running – albeit remotely – during the coronavirus outbreak is James Fendek's top priority. He is the Trust's IT Lead, Data Protection Lead and Communications Officer and thanks to Sophos and Sophos partner Wave 9, he is able to deliver the resources the teachers and staff need while on lockdown.

In 2015 – before the schools in The Mercian Trust came together to form the Trust – each was using its own firewall, provided by the Local Authority. IT Lead James says the functionality was “limited” and decided to work with Sophos partner Wave 9 to upgrade the firewalls to Sophos UTM.

## Business challenges

Back in 2015, Aldridge School – a founding member of The Mercian Trust, embarked on a firewall project with Sophos partner Wave 9. The schools within the Trust were using firewalls provided by the Local Authority, yet James believed them to be inadequate – so when the schools moved away from IT provision from the Local Authority and formed a Trust, James had the authority to choose the firewalls he believed to be the best. Wave 9 suggested Sophos UTM and Sophos RED boxes as a replacement firewall solution to be used across the Trust and James decided to go ahead, supported by nine other IT staff members working in Trust schools.

Fast forward five years and the Trust is now in the midst of the coronavirus outbreak, with the IT team managing communication from the Trust to staff and teachers. Thankfully, the Sophos solution, now known as Sophos XG is robust enough to cope with this new demand and James is pleased he made the decision to switch when he did.

## The technical solution

The Sophos XG firewall has been designed with schools in mind and includes features purpose-built for schools and the challenges they commonly face, such as child safety, compliance and problematic behaviour online. It provides all the visibility, security, and controls that education institutions need while making everyday management and reporting easy in an affordable package.

## Business benefits

The Sophos XG firewall now protects 5,500 students and 2000+ endpoints across all six Trust schools. Management of the firewall in each of the schools is carried out remotely and Wave 9 is always available to help out with setting bespoke permissions if required.

*‘Each school had a Local Authority firewall previously and the functionality was limited.’*

James Fendek, IT Lead  
Trust Data Protection Lead  
and Communications Officer  
The Mercian Trust



## CUSTOMER CASE STUDY **THE MERCIAN TRUST**

The Trust lists the benefits of the XG Firewall as being:

The set-up time of just a matter of hours


Excellent functionality for a reasonable price

A tool that just works properly with no stumbling blocks

The ability for students to get the most from their learning

- Guaranteed suitability of the content that is viewed online
- Pinpointed reporting to support safeguarding
- A high level overview yet with individual user control when required
- The capability to sit behind and function perfectly with Microsoft Windows Defender
- Easy to manage yet separate online guest access
- Time savings for staff and students right across the Trust
- The agility to cater to shifting requirements and meet the needs of each school and staff member during the coronavirus lockdown

The Trust is also keen to highlight their good relationship with Sophos partner Wave 9 who they say "help to upskill the Trust for the future as well as providing trusted products and support services". Their turnaround time for any queries is less than one day and their pricing is extremely competitive, although it's the relationship the company has with the Trust that James sees as most important.



*'Despite the coronavirus lockdown we are still able to provide finance teams and staff with the files they need and they can access the schools systems safely from home.'*

James Fendek, IT Lead, Trust Data Protection Lead and Communications Officer, The Mercian Trust

To find out more about Sophos solutions, call [0]8447 671131 or email [sales@sophos.com](mailto:sales@sophos.com)