# Sophos 'a faster solution with superior support' at **Sidmouth College**

Sidmouth College is a successful, unique and special place of learning for students aged 11–18 in East Devon. The college buildings sit within an attractive 13-acre campus in the beautiful Sid Valley. Its technology facilities, resources and expertise are excellent, supporting students' learning and equipping them with the practical skills, knowledge and experience they will need for further education and/or work.

CUSTOMER-AT-A-GLANCE
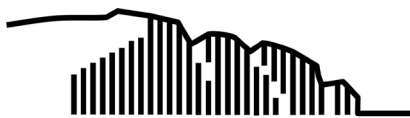
Sidmouth College

Industry
Education

Number of Users
800 students
/ 100 staff

Sophos Solutions
Sophos XG Firewalls
Sophos Central
Sophos Professional Services

Sophos customer
Since 2020

'Sophos is very effective. It's easy to make changes and reporting is fast too. We get a complete oversight of our network.'

Peter Bond, IT Manager, Sidmouth College

When a neighbouring school switched to Sophos and recommended the company to Sidmouth College, they decided to take action. The team at the college weren't 100% happy with the filtering solutions they had in place and their infrastructure was changing due to college expansion. Read on to find out what happened next and why the college is delighted with the decision it made.

Business challenges

Sidmouth College had been using a well-known filtering solution for 10 years and although the team were happy with the solution itself, they felt the support they received was poor. They discussed this with a neighbouring school who had just made the switch to Sophos. They told the IT team at Sidmouth about their positive experiences with Sophos, which compelled IT Manager Peter Bond to speak to Sophos Partner Softcat about a potential solution.

The technical solution

Softcat recommended Sophos XG Firewalls, featuring an action-oriented dashboard, a full suite of on-box historical reporting, and Sophos Central cloud reporting included in the package. The college also explored other options including all the major brands over a five-year contract. Having weighed up the benefits of each product, they decided to go ahead with Sophos and also purchased two days of Professional Services to ensure the rollout went smoothly.

'The biggest differences we see are speed and support. Plus our staff find Sophos very responsive – it's absolutely brilliant.'

Peter Bond, IT Manager, Sidmouth College

Business benefits

Having put the wheels in motion, the team at Sidmouth College began to notice the difference in the service they were receiving, compared with their previous provider. They could immediately see the support they were getting was superior and they received free training on Sophos products to increase their own knowledge. Peter is delighted with the decision to move to Sophos and lists multiple benefits, including:

‣ **No-hassle implementation** – Sophos Professional Services managed the entire install, which took just one day. It was quick to configure and each firewall was implemented separately to provide a failover service, keeping the college protected at all times. Peter has been so impressed with the service he has fed his positive comments back to the management team at Sophos.

‣ **Faster working –** Peter admits that the previous solution took far longer to work, with the team often waiting for up to 10 minutes for the product to get into gear. "We now just wait seconds for a report but with the solution we used before, it was 10 minutes," he says. Reports to comply with the Internet Watch Foundation are required regularly, meaning Sophos saves them hours of reporting each month.

‣ **Remote connectivity –** Sophos XG Firewalls have been useful to connect staff who were shielding during the pandemic, as well as staff and students working from home. Sophos Endpoint Protection within Sophos Central has also been rolled out to 115 new laptops given to students to enable home schooling.

‣ **Easy access to safeguarding information –** "We can quickly access information for the safeguarding team, which is important if any action needs to be taken," says Peter. "This means the safeguarding team get all the information they need and can act on it in a timely manner to keep students safe."

‣ **Compliance with Prevent duty legislation –** Sophos XG Firewalls filter out inappropriate material while not over-filtering, helping to prevent students being drawn into terrorism – an objective for the college.

‣ **Rapid country-based firewall blocking –** Sophos prevents hackers from breaching the telephone exchange for free calls. The previous solution the college had in place required a member of the team to manually add IP addresses to the block list, but with Sophos this is whitelisted and therefore a faster process.

Peter is clearly very happy to now have Sophos solutions in place protecting the college. Not only does Sophos allow him to work faster and save time, he also gets fantastic support from the Sophos team and the peace of mind this brings. He places great trust in the Sophos solutions and knows he can rely on them to keep the college, staff and students safe, regardless of where they are working.

Peter is also impressed with the service he received from Softcat, saying: "Softcat have been really good, liaising with us all and organising meetings – and they are also available to support us if needed. They gave us several unbiased options but we opted for Sophos and we are delighted that we did."

'Sophos Professional Services were absolutely brilliant – they know the products inside out. Even when working remotely due to the pandemic, everything was up and running on the same day. I can't fault them.'

Peter Bond, IT Manager, Sidmouth College

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

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