



CUSTOMER CASE STUDY

How Northern Leaders Trust keeps students, staff, and systems secure

With a four-person IT team managing more than 1,400 devices, Northern Leaders Trust uses Sophos Endpoint to improve visibility, simplify security management, and keep learning technology protected.



Northern Leaders Trust

Industry
Education

Overview
Multi-academy trust

Two schools
Kenton School and Studio West

Number of Users
More than 2,500 students
and 350 staff

Sophos solutions
Sophos Endpoint

Challenges:

- Protecting staff, students, sensitive data, and school operations as cyber threats against education increase.
- Managing endpoint security across more than 1,400 devices with a small IT team.
- Replacing endpoint protection that was difficult to manage and did not provide the visibility the Trust needed.
- Maintaining safe access for users without interrupting teaching and learning.

Outcomes:

- Clearer visibility across endpoints, servers, and mobile devices.
- Easier deployment and management for IT staff with different levels of cybersecurity experience.
- More time for the IT team to support staff, students, and wider school priorities.
- Greater confidence that devices and users are protected while Sophos works quietly in the background.
- Better value for education budgets compared with the previous endpoint protection product.

Northern Leaders Trust is a multi-academy trust in the north-east of England, supporting thousands of students and hundreds of staff across two schools. Technology plays a central role in teaching, learning, safeguarding, and day-to-day school operations, making its availability and security critical to the Trust's success.

For Liam Steele, Technical Services Manager at Northern Leaders Trust, that responsibility extends across more than 1,400 endpoints, alongside the Trust's on-premises infrastructure, cloud services, and cybersecurity operations. Leading a four-person IT team, he is tasked with balancing strong security with the practical needs of staff and students across both schools.

Steele had seen firsthand how disruptive cyber incidents could be for schools and trusts. Beyond the immediate security implications, recovering from an attack can place significant demands on already stretched IT resources, diverting time and attention away from supporting staff and students. As cyber threats against the education sector continued to increase, strengthening the Trust's cybersecurity posture became a priority.

“Although I had used Sophos in the past, it was very important to involve my team in the entire process. We invited Sophos in to show us the dashboards, threat analysis centers, and deployment. My team and myself found it very easy to deploy and were very impressed with the visibility that provided us across all of our devices.”

Liam Steele
Technical Services Manager
Northern Leaders Trust

“Over the past few years, the education sector has seen a significant rise in cyber threats and attacks. Trusts such as ourselves then hold the responsibility to protect and fight against these threats.” — Liam Steele, Technical Services Manager, Northern Leaders Trust

When Steele joined Northern Leaders Trust, one of his first priorities was reviewing the Trust's approach to endpoint security. The team needed greater visibility into what was happening across its environment and a solution that would be easier to manage day to day, particularly for a small IT team supporting two schools and more than 1,400 devices.

Rather than making the decision alone, Steele involved the wider IT team in the evaluation process. The Trust reviewed several options and invited vendors to demonstrate how their products would work in a real-world school environment. Ease of deployment, day-to-day management, and visibility across devices were all key considerations.

That process gave the team a clear view of what Sophos could deliver. During the demonstration, they were able to see the dashboards, review threat analysis capabilities, and understand how deployment would work across the Trust's devices. For a team with different levels of cybersecurity experience, that usability mattered.

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Security that supports teaching and learning

Since deploying Sophos Endpoint, Northern Leaders Trust has gained greater confidence in its ability to protect users and devices across both schools. The team can quickly understand what is happening across its environment, review activity, and respond when potential issues arise. That visibility helps the team identify and address concerns before they become larger problems.

For Nnamdi Adeem, Cyber Security Lead at Northern Leaders Trust, the value is practical. Sophos Endpoint makes it easier to see endpoints and servers in one place, understand what is happening, and act quickly when something needs attention. It also helps the team focus on other IT priorities because protection runs quietly in the background.

“It has enabled us to focus on other things because we know Sophos is running under the hood. So we can support teachers and students in other things.”

Nnamdi Adeem
Cyber Security Lead
Northern Leaders Trust

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Greater visibility has helped Northern Leaders Trust take a more proactive approach to both cybersecurity and safeguarding. The team can identify concerns sooner, investigate activity more effectively, and provide the right information to the right stakeholders when action is needed. For Steele, that makes cybersecurity an important part of protecting the wider school community.

“In education, cybersecurity isn’t just about protecting technology. It’s about protecting everybody, including all of our staff and students.” — Liam Steele

Value was another important consideration. Like many education organizations, Northern Leaders Trust must balance growing technology demands against finite budgets. Steele said Sophos provided stronger functionality than the Trust’s previous endpoint security product while remaining cost-effective, helping maximize the value of the Trust’s cybersecurity investment.

That forward-thinking approach extends beyond endpoint protection. As technologies such as AI continue to reshape the education landscape, Steele believes schools will need greater guidance and support to address new risks and challenges. Northern Leaders Trust is already considering how its cybersecurity approach will evolve to meet those future needs.

For Steele, the value of Sophos is not only the technology. It is the confidence that the Trust can protect users, manage risk, and keep learning moving with a small IT team.

“It doesn’t matter what the size of the school is. I could fully recommend, from primary schools to secondary schools without hesitation, Sophos as both software, a service and a brand to work with in education.” — Liam Steele

If you’re ready to start your journey with Sophos, speak to an expert today.

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Liam Steele
Technical Services Manager
Northern Leaders Trust

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