Sophos MDR 'a light at the end of the tunnel' for Bloxham School in Oxfordshire

Bloxham School is an independent day and boarding school, based in the large village of Bloxham in Oxfordshire, and is part of the Woodard Schools group. The school has a main site, with two boarding houses based in other locations within the village. The pupil base of around 650 children, between the ages of 11 and 18, attend the school either as day students or boarding. There are around 300 staff, which includes teachers, administration and support staff.

CUSTOMER-AT-A-GLANCE

Bloxham School

Industry
Education

Number of Users
Circa 1,000 endpoints

Sophos Service
Managed Services - Sophos Managed Detection and Response (MDR)

Sophos Customer
Since 2018

"With the rising threat of cyberattacks on educational establishments, my team was stressed with the worry that the worst might happen. We're accountable for ensuring students, data, and staff are protected, so we needed to find a solution to respond to any threat or attack, but within the budgetary constraints acceptable to the school's Leadership team."

Dave Quinney, Director of IT, Bloxham School

Oxfordshire-based independent Bloxham School has been a Sophos customer since 2018. Aware of an increase in malware and cyberattacks on educational institutions, Bloxham School sought to bolster its cybersecurity and threat protection, and turned to the Sophos Managed Detection and Response (MDR) team for help.

Business challenges

Bloxham School already had Microsoft 365 A5 endpoint protection in place to protects its students, staff and 1,000 endpoints. Yet, with the rise in cyberattacks and ransomware threats, including the risk of internal hacking in the school network, the IT team wanted to strengthen its cybersecurity to cover the school 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Bloxham School has around 650 students and 300 staff, and every student and teacher is provided with a laptop. In addition, for sixth form students, the school runs a 'bring your own device' scheme to help prepare students for university. The school accommodates both day students and boarders, so a significant number of students require access to the network outside of school hours. The threat of an attack from a hacker within the school network was also a real possibility.

In 2023, the school's Director of IT, Dave Quinney, acknowledged that his team did not have the capacity and expertise to monitor and protect the school's IT infrastructure 24/7/365, or respond in the event of a malware or ransomware attack. With the IT team concerned about the vulnerability the school faced, Dave sought to find a solution to strengthen the team's ability to respond to cyber threats. Having concluded that doing this in-house would be unaffordable and unfeasible, he began to explore other options.

The school considered four cybersecurity providers. In most cases, the quotes were well beyond the school's budget, or the solutions offered were incompatible with those the school was already under contract for. Sophos, however, came through with a solution that ticked all the right boxes.

"Sophos MDR was the 'light at the end of the tunnel' for us. We knew we couldn't deliver the protection and response we needed in-house, and the other providers submitted offers we simply couldn't afford. Sophos MDR offered us the perfect solution to stick with the solutions we'd already paid for, whilst giving us that extra layer of protection and support."

Dave Quinney, Director of IT, Bloxham School

The Technical Solution

Bloxham School implemented Sophos Managed Detection and Response (MDR). It provides the school with round-the-clock threat detection and response from Sophos' team of experts, while enabling the school to keep its existing third-party endpoint protection platform. The school was committed to the Microsoft solution it already had in place, so the Sophos MDR service stood out to Dave and the Leadership team as it required no duplicate spend. It concurrently enables the school to take advantage of Sophos' industry-leading threat detection and response expertise 24/7/365.

As an existing Sophos customer, Dave had been very satisfied with the solutions and services Sophos had provided previously, so he was delighted that Sophos offered an affordable solution that exactly met the school's needs. Furthermore, two other schools within the Woodard group had recently been targeted with cyberattacks and Sophos had successfully led the response. This further underlined the effectiveness of the service and prompted the Leadership team to give the go-ahead.

Business Benefits

Since implementing Sophos MDR, Bloxham School has experienced significant benefits from the service, including:

‣ Cybersecurity protection and peace of mind 24/7/365

‣ Support from Sophos throughout implementation and beyond

‣ A cost-effective solution, cheaper than other providers or establishing capabilities in house

‣ Easy integration of the service alongside existing infrastructure and solutions

‣ Access to support from Sophos' industry-leading threat detection and response agents

Dave highlights the peace of mind Sophos MDR brings. "I can sleep much better at night, knowing we've got Sophos there monitoring 24/7 and ready to respond. To anyone in a similar position at an educational establishment, I'd recommend you look into Sophos MDR. It's a great service and has made a huge difference for us."

"Taking advantage of the opportunity to strengthen our existing infrastructure and capabilities, with the expertise Sophos provides at a cost that's affordable, was a no-brainer for us. Myself, my team, and the Leadership team now have peace of mind that we've got the skills and expertise behind us, whatever comes our way."

Dave Quinney, Director of IT, Bloxham School

 To learn more about Sophos solutions, visit Sophos.com

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