BLACK SWAN
CYBER SECURITY SOLUTIONS

Is your school or multi-academy trust really safe from cyber attacks?

How can you be sure?

Cyber attacks on schools and multi-academy trusts (MATs) in the UK continue to make headlines. Indeed, the education sector is a key target for cyber criminals as 73% of institutions experienced at least one breach or attack during the past five years.

UK government data, published in 2024, found that 52% of primary schools, 71% of secondary schools, 86% of further education colleges, and 97% of higher education institutions, experienced a cyber attack during the previous 12 months, compared to 50% of all UK businesses.

That's a headline worth paying attention to.

It is, therefore, paramount that your school or MAT takes every precaution available to ensure you have robust cyber security during these challenging times.

You may have solutions in place. You may think you are safe and secure from hackers and cyber criminals. But is there more you can do?

The answer to that is, of course: Yes.

We've put together this helpful checklist for you to consider. If you answer 'No' to at least one of them, then perhaps you're not as safe and secure as you perhaps thought.

Take a look at the following and if, by the end, you're unsure your school or MAT is adequately protected, we can help you with the next steps.

The checklist

Are you meeting the Department of Education (DfE) cyber standards? A cyber attack could disrupt lessons, compromise confidential data and damage trust. By aligning with the DfE's cyber standards, schools and MATs can minimise risks and create a safer digital environment for staff and students.

Read more here

Do you know how well protected you are from phishing attacks? Phishing is the most common form of cyber attack across schools and MATs, because of the sensitive data they handle and the high volume of communication with parents, staff and suppliers. During 2024, 92% primary and 89% secondary schools reported a phishing attack.

Read more here

Ransomware attacks can force schools to close – do you know how prepared you are to prevent that happening to you? A ransomware attack could compromise your school's data, completely shut down your IT systems, and even bring your phone lines down. Advanced ransomware encryption protection is essential, as these solutions automatically detect and stop encryption attempts – often the first sign of a ransomware attack.

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Are your staff fully trained to spot a potential cyber threat? Your school may well have a robust IT infrastructure, but there is only so much that can do when it comes to human behaviour. Educators and staff are often the first line of defence, and providing them with cyber security awareness training ensures they're well-prepared to spot potential threats – indeed, regular training can reduce risk from 60% to just 10%.

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Does your school have a culture of security awareness? Investing in security awareness training (SAT) isn't just about compliance – it delivers tangible benefits. Your phishing susceptibility could be reduced by 40% within just one year, while organisations that implement SAT report a 70% reduction in security incidents. Plus, the Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) statutory guidance, which is a key Ofsted requirement, mandates that staff receive training on cyber security and online safety.

Read more here

Do you have the budget to implement robust cyber security? Budget restrictions are among the top reasons for schools having poor cyber security, we know that. Which means finding effective solutions can feel like an uphill battle. The good news is that you don't need to spend a fortune to protect your school's data and systems.

Read more here

Are you confident your school's software is completely up to date? Hackers will exploit outdated software, so patch and vulnerability management is your way of keeping systems secure. It's unfortunate, but true, that most schools use unsupported software or do not keep software up to date.

Read more here

Do you know who's backing up your school's data? If you believe that cloud vendors, such as Microsoft and Google, are backing up your data, you could be wrong. This is a common misconception in schools. In reality, this is a shared responsibility as the cloud providers only guarantee access to the platform – it is down to the schools to back up their own data, so cloud backups are your safety net.

Read more here

How did you score?

If you ticked every item on the checklist, you may not need Black Swan Cyber Security Solutions. However, if there's even one without a tick, then it's highly likely your school or MAT is not as safe or secure as you perhaps think.

As an IT and cyber security provider with 20 years of experience, and with a long-standing history of working with schools and MATs, our tailorable cyber security solutions are built to tackle your unique needs.

Contact us today, and we will design a custom package to help you achieve compliance with DfE cyber standards while keeping your staff and students safe.

FAQs

What are the DfE's cyber standards for schools?

The DfE's cyber standards outline essential measures schools should take to protect their data, systems and networks. It also states that schools should conduct regular, timely training for all staff and at least one governor or trustee, emphasising the importance of recognising phishing attempts and other common threats.

How can Black Swan help your school comply with the DfE's standards?

We assess your current cyber security setup, identify gaps, and implement tailored solutions such as endpoint protection, secure backups and staff training.

Do we offer cyber security services for multi academy trusts (MATs)?

Yes. We work with individual schools and MATs to create scalable, cost-effective cyber security solutions that ensure all member schools meet the DfE's standards.

What training do we provide for school staff?

Our training equips school staff with practical skills to recognise and prevent common threats such as phishing emails and ransomware attacks.

Can our services be customised for smaller schools with limited budgets?

Absolutely. We specialise in creating affordable, scalable solutions for schools of all sizes, ensuring that even smaller institutions receive the protection they need.

How to get in touch

Please call us on **01246 927142,** email us at **hello@blackswancyber.co.uk** or complete this form on our website.

With us by your side, you can pour your energy into what really matters – delivering top-notch education – safe in the knowledge that your digital environment is secure.