

Why cyber security matters to schools

An increasing number of schools and colleges are being seriously impacted by cyber incidents: perhaps a phishing attempt to steal money and passwords, or a ransomware attack that encrypts files preventing access. But why?

- **Many cyber incidents are untargeted.**
They can affect any school that doesn't have basic levels of protection.
- **Schools hold plenty of sensitive information.**
For example, staff and parents' bank details, medical information about students, safeguarding records. All this has to be kept safe and confidential.
- **Cyber criminals want to make money.**
They understand that an organisation's information is often sufficiently important to that organisation that they might be prepared to pay a ransom to get it back

Who is behind cyber-attacks?



Online criminals

Are really good at identifying what can be monetised, for example stealing and selling sensitive data, or holding systems and information to ransom.



Honest Mistakes

Sometimes staff, with the best intentions just make a mistake, for example by emailing something sensitive to the wrong email address.



Hackers

Individuals with varying degrees of expertise, often acting in an untargeted way - perhaps to test their own skills or cause disruption for the sake of it.



School pupils

Some students simply enjoy the challenge of putting their cyber skills to the test.



Malicious insiders

Use their access to an organisation's data or networks to conduct malicious activity, such as stealing sensitive information to share with competitors.