



Nailsea School

Cyber Security Policy

Academic Year 2025/26

Headteacher Mrs D. Elliott

Cyber Security Policy

Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
Governor(s)	Sue Renny (Chair of Local Partnership Board)
Head of centre	Dee Elliott
Senior leader(s) i/c exams	Paul Jones
Exams officer	Nicola Beattie
Other staff	Sarah Hurlow (Business Manager)

Purpose of the policy

At Nailsea School, the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of our information assets, IT systems, and the personal data of students, staff, and stakeholders are of paramount importance.

This policy establishes our comprehensive cyber security framework, delineates the duties and accountabilities of all relevant parties, and ensures strict adherence to JCQ regulations, the Data Protection Act 2018, the UK General Data Protection Regulation, and the statutory guidance detailed in *Keeping Children Safe in Education*.

This Cyber Security Policy details the measures taken at Nailsea School to mitigate the risk of cyber threats under the following sections:

1. Roles and responsibilities
2. Complying with JCQ regulations
3. Cyber security best practice
4. Account management best practice
5. Training

The Senior Leadership Team recognises the need for staff involved in the management, administration and conducting of examinations to play a critical role in maintaining and improving cyber security at Nailsea School, and as such, all staff undertake annual cyber security training.

In addition to adhering to industry best practices, the following areas are addressed in this policy to ensure that members of the exams team protect their individual digital assets:

- Cyber Security Awareness and Training
- Device Security and Asset Register
- Creating strong, unique passwords
- Keeping all account details secret
- Enabling additional security settings wherever possible

- Updating any passwords that may have been exposed
- Setting up secure account recovery options
- Reviewing and managing connected applications
- Staying alert for all types of social engineering/phishing attempts
- Monitoring accounts and reviewing account access regularly

Scope

This policy applies to all staff who have access to Nailsea School's IT systems and data, with particular focus placed upon those members of staff who are involved in the management, administration and conducting of examinations and assessments.

1. Roles and responsibilities

Local Partners/Governors

- To oversee and review cyber security arrangements and policy compliance

Head of centre/Senior leadership team

- To provide overall responsibility for policy implementation and cyber security strategy
- To ensure that an up-to-date device security and asset register is maintained which details all computers, devices, and user accounts used for examinations and assessment administration. This ensures that all technology used is regularly reviewed, patched, and secured, thus reducing the risk of overlooked vulnerabilities being exploited
- To ensure that all devices are secured with up-to-date anti-malware and software updates
- To ensure that members of the exams team, supported/led by the IT team, adhere to best practice(s) in relation to:
 - the management of individual/personal data/accounts
 - centre wide cyber security including:
 - Establishing a robust password policy
 - Enabling multi-factor authentication (MFA)
 - Keeping software and systems up to date
 - Implementing network security measures
 - Conducting regular data backups
 - Educating employees on security awareness
 - Developing and testing an incident response plan
 - Regularly assessing and auditing security controls
 - Managing and reporting a cyber-attack which impacts any learner data, assessment records or learner work

Network Manager/IT Team

- To implement technical controls, monitor systems, respond to incidents, manage access and updates

Data Protection Officer

- To ensure compliance with data protection law, advise on data handling, and oversee data breaches

All staff

- To follow this policy, complete annual training, report incidents or concerns promptly within the centre

Exams officer/Exams assistant

- To ensure that they follow best practice in relation to the management of individual/personal data/accounts
- To provide evidence of an awareness of best practice in relation to cyber security as defined by JCQ regulations/guidance, including the completion of certificated, annual, up-to-date cyber security awareness training
- To undertake training on:
 - the importance of creating strong, unique passwords
 - keeping all account details secret
 - enabling additional security settings wherever possible
 - updating any passwords which may have been exposed
 - setting up/an awareness of secure account recovery options
 - reviewing and managing connected applications
 - awareness of all types of social engineering/phishing attempts
 - reviewing and monitoring account access on a regular basis

Invigilators

- To ensure that they follow best practice in relation to the management of individual/personal data/accounts
- To provide evidence of an awareness of best practice in relation to cyber security as defined by JCQ regulations/guidance, including the completion of certificated, annual, up-to-date cyber security awareness training

Students/users

- To follow this policy, complete annual training, report incidents or concerns promptly within the centre

2. Complying with JCQ regulations

The head of centre/senior leadership team at Nailsea School ensures that there are procedures in place to maintain the security of user accounts in line with JCQ regulations (sections 3.20 and 3.21 of the *General Regulations for Approved Centres* document) by:

- Developing and maintaining this cyber security policy
- Ensuring that all members of centre staff who access awarding bodies' online systems undertake annual, certificated cyber security training which includes:
 - the importance of creating strong, unique passwords
 - keeping all account details strictly confidential

- the critical role of Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) in protecting against unauthorised access
- how to properly set up and use MFA for both centre and awarding bodies' systems
- an awareness of all types of social engineering/phishing attempts
- the importance of staff quickly reporting suspicious activity, events and incidents
- Downloading and retaining certificates of completed staff cyber training on file
- Implementing and enforcing robust security measures, including:
 - mandatory Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) for all accounts and systems containing exam-related information, including those that interface between awarding body and centre systems, to enhance security and protect sensitive data
 - regularly reviewing and updating security settings to align with current best practices
- Enabling additional security settings wherever possible
- Updating any passwords that may have been exposed
- Setting up secure account recovery options
- Reviewing and managing connected applications
- Monitoring accounts and regularly reviewing account access, including removing access when no longer required
- Ensuring authorised members of staff securely access awarding bodies' online systems in line with awarding body regulations regarding cyber security and the JCQ document *Guidance for centres on cyber security* (www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations), and that where necessary, they have access to a device which complies with awarding bodies' multi-factor authentication (MFA) requirements
- Reporting any actual or suspected compromise of an awarding body's online systems immediately to the relevant awarding body

3. Cyber security best practice

The head of centre/senior leadership team at Nailsea School ensures that:

- Security measures are in place including:
 - Firewalls and network security controls
 - Anti-virus and anti-malware software on all devices
 - Regular software updates and patch management
 - Secure data backup and tested recovery procedures
 - Encryption for sensitive and personal data
 - Multi-factor authentication (MFA) for critical systems and remote access
 - Secure configuration and monitoring of cloud services (e.g. Office 365, Google Workspace).
 - Prompt removal of access for leavers
- They and all staff involved in the management, administration and conducting of examinations/assessments stay informed about the latest security threats and trends in account security.
- Staff within the exams team are educated on how to identify phishing attempts, use secure devices

and how to protect systems and data by undertaking annual Cyber Security training.

Best practice, advice and guidance is observed for all IT systems, particularly those where learner information, learner work or assessment records are held.

National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) training and guidance is followed by the IT department at Nailsea School which includes:

- Establishing a robust password policy
- Enabling multi-factor authentication (MFA)
- Keeping software and systems up to date
- Implementing network security measures
- Conducting regular data backups
- Educating employees on security awareness
- Developing and testing an incident response plan
- Regularly assessing and auditing security controls

The Exams Office training and guidance is followed at the Exams team at Nailsea School which includes:

- Good practice in creating strong and unique passwords
- Account security: Keeping account details secret (including sharing passwords, remembering passwords and monitoring account access)
- Additional security settings (including, multi-factor/two-step/two-factor authentication, the security of confidential examination materials)
- Updating expired or exposed passwords
- Account recovery (including recovery options)
- Reviewing and managing connected applications (including reviewing and removing access, using a third-party or a cloud service, granting permissions, saving passwords, saving details on local web browsers, using a shared browser)
- Social engineering/phishing attempts (including suspicious emails and phone calls, sharing information, QR codes, phishing attempts, recovery plan)
- Monitoring and reviewing access (including suspicious, unusual or unauthorised activity, departing staff, levels of access, reviewing user accounts)

Exam specific guidance is also provided on each of the areas listed above

By adopting industry standard cyber security best practices, the head of centre/senior leadership team are significantly reducing the risk of cyber-attacks and protecting valuable data and assets within the centre. If a cyber-attack which impacts any learner data, assessment records or learner work is experienced, the senior leadership team/exams officer will contact the relevant awarding body/bodies immediately for advice and support.

4. Account management best practice

- **Creating strong unique passwords**

- For every account, users are instructed to use a strong unique password and that the same password is not used across any other account(s), which is not easily guessable information such as birthdays, singular names or common words for a password.
 - Passwords should not contain the account username or the any part of the user's name.
 - Passwords must be a minimum of 10 characters.
 - Passwords must contain at least 1 character from three of these four categories:
 - Uppercase letters (A–Z)
 - Lowercase letters (a–z)
 - Numbers (0–9)
 - Non-alphanumeric/special characters (e.g. , ! @ # \$ % ^ & * () _ +)
 - Passwords are forced to be changed at least once every 6 months, with the previous 3 passwords set on the account unable to be reused.
- **Keeping all account details secret**
 - Staff are instructed never to share login/password details or additional factor/authentication codes with anyone else. All staff have a unique user access, so staff should never share an account assigned for their use with anyone else. Staff are reminded that anything done with an account assigned to someone will be attributed to that person in the first instance
 - **Enabling additional security settings wherever possible**
 - All staff will follow awarding body multi-factor authentication (MFA) wherever available/requested. Staff are made aware of the purpose of MFA, which includes adding a layer of account security to help to protect users if the extra steps/factors are protected
 - **Updating any passwords that may have been exposed**
 - If it is believed that a password may have been exposed/become known to others, staff will inform the Network Manager immediately, and any exposed passwords will be changed as soon as possible.
 - **Setting up secure account recovery options**
 - Staff are instructed to follow centre account recovery options which include alternate email accounts or phone numbers protected by 2SV/2FA/MFA, or password resets by the Network Manager.
 - **Reviewing and managing connected applications**
 - Staff within the exams team will regularly review and remove access for third-party applications or services that no longer require access to accounts, and access should only be provided to trusted services.
 - Staff will only grant permissions to required applications or the necessary access to allow them to function. The Network Manager is responsible for downloading and installing applications with established reputations from trusted sources, on behalf of individual staff.
 - **Staying alert for all types of social engineering/phishing attempts**
 - Staff must take care if unsolicited or unexpected emails, instant messages, or phone calls are received asking for account credentials or personal or confidential information.

Passwords MFA codes should not be given out to anyone. Staff will never approve or authenticate a login request that they did not initiate. Staff will not share codes/approve logins. Requests to share codes/approve logins should be treated with a high degree of suspicion

- Staff are instructed that they should have a wariness of anyone or anything that seems to want to gain their trust, rush them into doing something or that just seems off, they should hang up/not reply and not click on links or take any action and check with a trusted party via a secure channel (i.e. call awarding body customer services via a known support number)
- Staff will not click on suspicious links, download attachments or scan QR codes from unknown sources. Staff will verify the authenticity of any communication by contacting the organisation directly through official known channels
- Exams staff will report any phishing attempts which reference awarding bodies/their systems to the awarding body concerned immediately

- **Monitoring accounts and reviewing account access**

- Staff email accounts are continuously monitored for any suspicious, unusual or unauthorised activity.
- Access control and permissions for all staff are based on job roles and reviewed regularly to ensure accounts have the minimum level of access required for their current role, and accounts are promptly disabled when users leave
- The Exams staff will immediately report to the relevant awarding body, if any suspicious, unusual or potentially unauthorised activity is observed on awarding body systems, particularly if it is believed that user account security may have been compromised

5. Training

The head of centre/senior leadership team ensure that there are procedures in place to maintain the security of user accounts by ensuring that all staff complete annual cyber security training with practical advice on protecting assessment systems and recognising attacks such as phishing or social engineering.

Records of cyber training are retained for all staff and are available for inspection

Review

A designated member of the Senior Leadership Team will carry out annual evaluation of this policy, incorporating updates as required to remain abreast of new technologies, threat developments, and industry best practices.

Upon completion of the review and any revisions, the policy will receive formal approval from the Local Partnership Board.

Approved/reviewed by LPB	
March 26	
Date of next review	March 27