

Welcome to the Suffolk County Council Schools IT Newsletter.

A range of the services we offer can be found on our new website, which can be visited by clicking on the following link:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/business/it-services-for-schools-and-academies>

## Suffolk SCC – IT Newsletter update

Following on from our Schools IT Services Survey we have listened to your feedback and you will now be able to find our monthly newsletters on our website using the link below:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/business/it-services-for-schools-and-academies>

We will of course continue to send this out at the start of each month to keep you up to date with the latest news and updates for all our services. If you would like to update your email address or have the newsletter sent to any additional mailboxes, please let us have the details by sending an email to [SchoolsITServices@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:SchoolsITServices@suffolk.gov.uk).

### SIMS – Top Tips

#### GDPR: Review of Key Functionality in SIMS



Watch this on demand webinar to remind yourself of the key functionality available within SIMS.net to ensure you are GDPR compliant. This webinar covers:

- Reminder of the rules of GDPR
- Student bulk delete update
- Single staff delete
- How to delete unlinked persons

Please click on the following link, enter your details and sit back and enjoy this 30-minute webinar:

<https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/3312062584064281611>

## Course Manager and Post 16 Learning Aims Update

*For Schools and Academies providing Post 16 Study Programmes*

The SIMS Support team will be facilitating a presentation from Capita to assist with Course Manager upkeep, and the Post 16 Learning Aims section of the Autumn Census.

We facilitate this regularly as we are aware that some schools and academies have lost tens of thousands of pounds worth of funding in making errors in this area of the Census in the past.

This year the presentation will be web based to ensure compliance with any government guidance around Covid19 at the time, it will be delivered in 2 sessions on July 14<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup> 2021.

Please follow this [LINK](#) for further details.

Should you have any queries, please contact the IT Service Desk on 01473 265555 or [ITServiceDesk@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:ITServiceDesk@suffolk.gov.uk)

## Schools' broadband service – new circuit options

*For Schools' technicians, IT managers, Business Managers*

In previous newsletters we have talked about the Suffolk Cloud Network project which is seeing the implementation of a new network infrastructure providing **fast**, highly flexible network connections to public sector sites in Suffolk. This service is continuing to be rolled out across ten towns in Suffolk with completion now set for mid-2022. Schools who are within scope of the project can access full fibre uncontended circuits with very low latency and speeds of up to 900Mbps.

We have also been working with our network provider, MLL Telecoms, to identify upgrade options for schools, specifically competitively priced FTTP options where the Suffolk Cloud Network infrastructure is not accessible. What this means is that when we provide renewal notices to schools, we will quote for the existing technology used and also provide an upgrade option. We will also provide 2-3 options where schools request quotes for upgrades to existing circuits, or new circuits.

More details of the schools broadband service are available at: [Internet and broadband services | Suffolk County Council](#)

If you would like to know what other options may be available to your school then please contact the SCC IT Service Desk on **01473 265555** or email [ITServiceDesk@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:ITServiceDesk@suffolk.gov.uk) and ask for an upgrade quotation.

## New Smoothwall certificate –



### Update required by July 2021

*For Schools' technicians, IT managers, Business Managers*

As detailed in previous IT Newsletters, schools using the Smoothwall web filtering service need to add a new Smoothwall certificate by July 2021. The new certificates have a 2-year lifespan and can be installed now and must be installed by 1 July 2021 to ensure continuation of service.

The old certificate will continue to work until this date and should **not** be removed until after the changeover has completed. There are no issues with running the certificates in parallel and it would be our recommendation to do so to ensure that you are ready for the cut-over.

The new certificate is available to download from:

[https://sccwebassets.blob.core.windows.net/public/schools/https\\_interception\\_2021-2023.crt](https://sccwebassets.blob.core.windows.net/public/schools/https_interception_2021-2023.crt)

Documentation of how to install the Smoothwall certificate is available at:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/assets/Business/IT-services-for-schools-and-academies/smoothwall-certificate-guide.pdf>

You can find more details about the Smoothwall service at:

[Smoothwall web filtering services | Suffolk County Council](#)

If you need any support with deploying the certificate, then please contact the SCC IT Service Desk on **01473 265555** or email [ITServiceDesk@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:ITServiceDesk@suffolk.gov.uk)

## Completion of infrastructure

### Smoothwall upgrades

*Schools' technicians, IT managers, Business Managers*



We have now completed the upgrade work to the Smoothwall infrastructure and appliances that are used for filtering and reporting. This has seen the introduction of six new appliances across two datacentres.

We have also installed a new reporting appliance and two new load balancers. The aim of this upgrade is to improve performance and ensure greater stability of the platform. The initial testing is very positive, and we have yet to receive a report of any issues from schools since we switched over to the new configuration at the end of May.

If you do have any issues, then please contact the SCC IT Service Desk on **01473 265555** or email [ITServiceDesk@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:ITServiceDesk@suffolk.gov.uk)

## Smoothwall reporting improvements

**smoothwall®**

*For Schools technicians, IT managers and safeguarding leads*

We have been working with Smoothwall on a review of the platform and specifically the reporting functionality. As part of this review a number of new reports have been created and added to the portal, under the Portal Reports folder. These reports are available now and we would appreciate your feedback on them, which will then enable us to make further amendments with Smoothwall. The names and details of the reports are as follows:

- Daily executive summary - summarised overview of amount of time, searches, domains and URLs visited. This report is meant for short time periods up to 24 hours. There are 2 versions, one for IP and another for username.
- Weekly executive summary - summarised overview of amount of time, searches, categories and domains visited. This report is meant for time periods of 1 to 2 weeks. There are 2 versions, one for IP and another for username.
- Audit trail - a detailed log extract. This report is meant for shorter time periods up to 24 hours. There are 2 versions, one for IP and another for username.
- Top categories by hits and bandwidth - A report with multiple options available. Results can be seen by group, IP, user or if the status was allowed or blocked.

The reports have two versions to support the different deployments used by schools; username where the IDEX client is used and IP address where it is not. Where a user has not been authenticated then the IP address approach will be needed.

When running reports, the general recommendation is to initially run for shorter periods of time, days, not weeks due to the large amounts of data that may be requested. If these reports run quickly then the period can be extended if you are not getting the data you need.

If you have any questions about Smoothwall reporting, then please raise a service request with the SCC IT Service Desk by calling **01473 265555** or emailing [ITServiceDesk@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:ITServiceDesk@suffolk.gov.uk)

## New cyber-security service and cyber-security survey

*For Schools Business Managers, IT Managers & IT Technicians*

As we mentioned in last month's IT newsletter, we will shortly be launching the first of our new cyber-security services for Suffolk schools. Working with colleagues in the CYP education team it is clear how big a challenge cyber security is for schools in Suffolk. We are aware of three major attacks on schools this year (Ransomware and Distributed Denial of Service -DDoS) and the disruption they caused to the education of students and the general running of the school.

Where these incidents happen, there is an opportunity to share details of the experience and lessons learned. With this in mind, we are planning to run a cyber-security survey to coincide with the release of the first of our new cyber security services for schools. We plan to launch this survey in July and run it for a couple of months. The aim of the survey is to collect and then share knowledge, experiences and lessons learnt, between all schools in Suffolk.

The new bronze schools' cyber-security service will launch in July at a cost of £100.00 pa but will be included at no additional charge for the first 12 months for all schools that purchase a schools' broadband circuit from Suffolk County Council. The new service has four security and information management features, which we have grouped together to help protect schools and educate staff. With two of these features we monitor threats and advise schools of issues:

**NCSC - Early warning system reports, Webcheck & Mailcheck** – An email service to individual schools to warn of threats as they are identified using the National Cyber Security Centre services, Early warning system reports, Webcheck and Mailcheck.

- Early Warning helps organisations investigate cyber-attacks on their network by notifying them of malicious activity that has been detected in information feeds.
- Web Check checks your websites for common web vulnerabilities and misconfigurations.
- Mail Check assesses email security compliance. It helps you to setup and maintain good DMARC, SPF, DKIM and TLS configurations. It also collects, processes and analyses DMARC reports.

**Weekly Cyber News** – A weekly cyber security email containing the latest threats, vulnerabilities and news, providing a means of notification of new and emerging threats, recently discovered vulnerabilities and zero-day exploits and news from the cyber security world.

Although we have yet to formally release our new cyber-security service, we are happy to help advise schools where they have issues, and do now proactively contact schools where threats and vulnerabilities are identified as part of the work we do to protect Suffolk County Council IT systems.

If you have any issues with cyber security or would like some general advice, then please raise a service request with the SCC IT Service Desk by calling **01473 265555** or emailing [ITServiceDesk@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:ITServiceDesk@suffolk.gov.uk).



## How to contact us

You should continue to raise all standard incidents and service requests via the IT Service Desk on 01473 265555 or via [itservicedesk@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:itservicedesk@suffolk.gov.uk), our offices are open 08:30-17:00, Monday-Friday.

We have setup a new mailbox for non-standard queries, e.g. enquiring about a new service, please email us at [SchoolsITservices@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:SchoolsITservices@suffolk.gov.uk)