



Birmingham Metropolitan College

Birmingham Metropolitan College (BMet) is a Further and Higher Education institution consisting of 10 campuses located in the West Midlands, UK.

Created in 2009 as an amalgamation of Matthew Boulton College and Sutton Coldfield College, BMet now has 6,500 students aged 16-18 and 20,000 students aged 18+.

The college's safeguarding requirements are managed by Kim Vaughan, Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The Challenge

Kim explained why the college was looking for a new monitoring solution, "the old monitoring system would send alerts based solely on the use of keywords/phrases and didn't monitor behaviour overtime, therefore the alerts weren't specific enough. It quickly became unmanageable as we'd get thousands of alerts every week that weren't relevant."

Commenting on their search for a new solution, Kim said, "we looked at three monitoring solutions in total and Smoothwall Monitor stood out as the only one to provide an effective monitoring service. Compared with the other solutions, it was apparent that Smoothwall's was the only one to look at the context of an incident meaning we would only be alerted to something of genuine concern."

The Outcome

Kim explained the college's experience of Smoothwall Monitor, "this solution is very specific as it looks for a pattern of activity and not just words or phrases. It's also saved me significant time each week because I don't have to filter through thousands of alerts trying to identify ones of actual concern."

Explaining how an alert is dealt with, Kim commented, "having the online portal is useful because when I receive an alert, I'm able to see the student's previous activity. Having visibility to this allows me to assess the situation in full and ensure I see the student within an appropriate time frame, for example if it was a high level alert with concerning previous activity, I'd see them as soon as possible. We can then provide the appropriate support and sign post the individual to any external support services."

Commenting on the alerts, Kim said, "Smoothwall Monitor has alerted and helped us identify a range of safeguarding incidents, from students typing inappropriate language to searching for harmful content online."

Kim explained how the college uses the email alerts when talking to students, "we also use the solution as a teaching

tool to educate the students on what is and isn't appropriate to do online. The majority of pupils think that typing something on a computer is anonymous, so the email alerts are a good tool for us to use to highlight this issue. I also use the risk grading when speaking with the students because it emphasises the seriousness of the issue."

"One recent incident occurred when a young female left her computer logged on during break and a group of students repeatedly typed foul language into this computer. In this instance I was able to reinforce how important is it to be online safety and cyber security savvy, skills which are vital in today's society."

Kim comments, "young people will open up more and ask questions online that they wouldn't necessarily ask to another person. Having Smoothwall Monitor in place means we can provide individuals with support that they're not confident in asking for directly."

To summarise, Kim said, "Smoothwall Monitor is the best digital monitoring solution I've come across! I would definitely, and actively do recommend it, especially to other FE and HE institutions!"



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Kim Vaughan


Designated Safeguarding Lead


Smoothwall is a leading provider of digital safeguarding solutions. For more information, visit our website or get in touch with our team of experts.


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