



## Frederick Gough School



### How Frederick Gough School stabilised their network and regained control over their web filtering.

#### The Challenge

Frederick Gough School is a community secondary school based in Scunthorpe, North Lincolnshire. It is the biggest council-led secondary school in the county with over 1200 students aged between 11–16 years.

The school had been experiencing several challenges with its web filtering. It was a basic solution provided by the Local Authority, controlled by a central server and shared across several other schools. Cost effective in principle. But less so in reality. There was no ability to create custom categories

so overblocking was becoming an issue. If another school created a filter rule, it would apply to all schools. Reporting was also very limited.

The school was becoming concerned about meeting its statutory obligations.

One of the school's biggest requirements was for more in-depth filtering - far more than just the blocking of a URL. The school's Senior IT Technician, Matthew Snell, tells us why:

"We use a lot of YouTube videos for educational purposes, but we had to block YouTube because of the volume of explicit and inappropriate material on there. We wanted a solution that could release those educational videos but block the rest."

Matthew and his team were tasked with finding a new solution that would supply the school with the functionality needed.

## The Solution

They wasted no time in doing a whole market review. Smoothwall's pioneering Filter was top of the list. Matthew explains:

"We looked at all the leading solutions but the Smoothwall Filter suited our requirements exactly. On our old system, we only had top level reporting which we couldn't control. With Smoothwall we could filter from the top-level right down to the student and device being used. So we could see what was being blocked and why."

Continued Matthew: "It also had the safeguarding part to it which was a big focus area for the school. For the safeguarding lead to be able to access information on the risks being captured, this was one of the biggest features we saw and thought we need that."

The Smoothwall team took the school through various online demonstrations to explain how it would work. Smoothwall's architects also listened to their previous challenges and needs and helped them customise the solution to meet them head on.

The school initially decided to purchase Smoothwall Filter virtually as it meant they could take advantage of all the great features, without going over budget.

Matthew says:

"It needed to be cost effective. The different options available to purchase Smoothwall, like for example the virtual machine vs. physical appliance, meant we could save money and yet still receive the full working software making it viable."

## The Outcome

Filtering is now a very different function within the school. Using the Who, What, Where, When feature means they can now block and allow content at different times during the day, and across different departments and locations, including offsite. This includes being able to remove access within certain areas such as isolation spaces, while still allowing access to the rest of the school. This has had a big impact on teaching and learning.

Digital safety is also now much higher on the school's agenda. Staff and students receive training to understand risks and how to overcome them. The Smoothwall filtering and safeguarding portal allows them to see students who may need extra training as well as assess trends. All the intelligence feeds directly into lessons.

Matthew concluded:

"Smoothwall is working brilliantly. It is very clever and will see risks we haven't actually blocked and alert us to them. It's hard to imagine how we used to cope before."



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**Matthew Snell**

Senior IT Technician


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