



Department for Education

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Find out what standards your school or college should meet on cyber security, user accounts and data protection.

#	Standard	Page
1	Make sure IT support helps you meet the digital and technology standards	2
2	Make sure IT support actively maintains and improves your digital technology in line with your digital strategy	4
3	Make sure your IT support is responsive and meets agreed service expectations	7
4	Review your IT support at least once a year	11
5	Make sure staff get clear guidance and training on using technology	14





Standard 1

Make sure IT support helps you meet the digital and technology standards

Why this standard is important

The Department for Education's digital and technology standards help your school or college work towards and maintain safe and reliable technology infrastructure.

Meeting the standards is a shared responsibility across your school or college. IT support contributes by making sure your technology and systems meet the necessary requirements.

All schools and colleges should be working towards meeting 6 core standards by 2030:

- [Broadband internet](#)
- [Cyber security](#)
- [Digital leadership and governance](#)
- [Filtering and monitoring](#)
- [Network switching](#)
- [Wireless network](#)

Meeting these 6 standards will create a secure and reliable foundation for your school or college's digital infrastructure. They will also help you meet the other [digital and technology standards](#).

Who needs to be involved

Your IT support team should have the necessary qualifications and experience to understand the standards and help your school or college meet them.

Your senior leadership team (SLT) digital lead should assess whether your IT support needs any relevant professional memberships or certifications – for example, an Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) certification for individuals, or [Cyber Essentials](#) certification for companies. This may depend on the scale of your school or college's support needs.

Your SLT digital lead should understand IT support's role in helping you meet the digital and technology standards. They may also include a review of your progress towards meeting the standards in your digital technology strategy review, as set out in the [digital leadership and governance standards](#), to help guide buying and decision-making.



How to meet this standard

IT support should make sure that their daily activities and planning decisions help you meet and stay compliant with the digital and technology standards.

Your SLT digital lead should make sure the requirements of the standards inform your digital technology strategy and school development plan, working with IT support to identify any technical needs or risks.

The Department for Education's free [plan technology for your school](#) service helps schools measure progress towards meeting the standards and provides actionable recommendations to help reach them.

When to meet this standard

You should already be working towards meeting the digital and technology standards.

Related standards

See the full list of [digital and technology standards for schools and colleges](#).



Standard 2

Make sure IT support actively maintains and improves your digital technology in line with your digital strategy

Why this standard is important

Effective IT support should help you:

- meet statutory duties, including data protection regulations
- understand what technology you have and how it's supported
- keep your technology working reliably, even at busy times
- plan upgrades and improvements
- support staff and students to use technology effectively in your school or college

In schools and colleges, IT support is often provided through a mix of internal staff and external contracts. This standard applies to all forms of support, helping you make sure all your technology is managed effectively.

Who needs to be involved

Your senior leadership team (SLT) digital lead should work with relevant staff, including your business manager and other SLT members to establish what IT support you need. This should include exceptional times such as the start of the academic year, exam periods or cyber security incidents.

This involves:

- reviewing the technology and services you use, including any contracts and budgets
- understanding the day-to-day technology needs of your staff and students and making sure your technology supports teaching and learning
- aligning IT support with the needs of your digital technology strategy
- considering any planned technology upgrades and improvements

Once your SLT digital lead understands what support your school or college needs, IT support should understand the requirements and provide services to meet them.



How to meet this standard

Understand your IT support needs

Start by establishing what digital technology and services you currently have, based on your existing asset and contract registers and your digital technology strategy. These are described in the standards for [digital leadership and governance](#).

This should include any technology and related services with their own support arrangements, such as your management information system (MIS) or multi-functional devices (MFDs).

Consider any other factors that affect your IT support needs – for example, working across multiple sites, sharing services with other schools or colleges, or needing cover for one-off or emergency requirements. You should also think about which systems and services are most critical, so IT support can prioritise them.

IT support should also:

- maintain registers of assets, software and IT support's own activities
- provide technical information to help the business or finance team manage and update software licences and supplier contracts
- support training, guidance and documentation for staff and students
- keep user and technical documentation up to date, including system configurations for business continuity

DfE's [plan technology for your school](#) service can help you understand your school or college's technology needs and IT support's role in meeting them.

Support and maintain your technology

Once you have a clear understanding of your technology and support needs, IT support should provide services to keep your technology working reliably and securely. This includes:

- monitoring and managing your network, devices and cloud services
- maintaining your technology through activities such as security patching, updating firmware and routine health checks
- supporting your SLT digital lead to make sure critical systems are as resilient as possible against cyber attacks, and to develop and maintain disaster recovery and cyber response plans
- making sure all critical data and systems are backed up, and that backups are secure and restorable, in line with the cyber security standard '[Develop and implement a plan to back up your data and review this every year](#)'



- working with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) to keep filtering and monitoring systems effective and up to date as set out in the [filtering and monitoring standards](#).
- adding and removing user accounts, and managing policies that keep users and systems secure
- responding to and resolving day-to-day support requests from staff and students

If any of your IT support is provided by third parties, your internal IT support should coordinate their activity. If you do not have any internal IT support, your digital lead may coordinate it instead.

Keep an up-to-date record of all IT support services your school or college uses, including who provides them and what they cover. This will help you understand how your technology is supported and make more informed decisions about priorities, upgrades and investment.

Plan upgrades and improvements

IT support should work with your SLT digital lead to plan upgrades and identify where improvements are needed. They should:

- identify when technology needs replacing
- advise on the budget implications of upgrades or replacements, in line with your school or college's financial regulations and procurement policy
- help to evaluate and implement new technology and software
- stay up to date with developments in digital technology to support the digital lead's decision making

When to meet this standard

To maintain your digital technology and help you plan improvements, you should already be meeting this standard or working towards it.

Related standards

Having effective IT support helps you meet all the [digital technology standards for schools and colleges](#).



Standard 3

Make sure your IT support is responsive and meets agreed service expectations

Why this standard is important

Reliable and responsive IT support helps to keep your school or college running smoothly. It minimises disruption to learning if problems occur, protects sensitive data and gives staff and students confidence when using digital technology.

Setting clear expectations for IT support's responsiveness helps you evaluate IT support's effectiveness, plan for the future and make sure you have enough capacity for times of high demand, such as exam periods or the start of the academic year.

Who needs to be involved

Your senior leadership team (SLT) digital lead should set and agree expectations for how IT support will respond to and resolve issues.

IT support should meet these expectations so staff and students can use digital technology effectively.

How to meet this standard

Agree expectations for responsiveness

Your SLT digital lead should work with IT support to set and record clear expectations for how quickly issues will be responded to and resolved.

You should also agree:

- how support requests will be prioritised – for example, giving higher priority to issues that affect teaching and learning or core systems such as your management information system (MIS)
- how complex issues or serious incidents will be escalated – for example, to senior leadership or external suppliers

Consider how long your school or college could continue to operate if a critical system, such as your MIS or broadband network, was unavailable. Use this to inform what level of support and response time you need to ensure business continuity.

Your SLT digital lead and IT support should meet regularly to review how well the service is working, making sure it meets your needs and that any targets or expectations are realistic.



Make sure IT support offers clear support channels

IT support should provide clear, reliable ways for staff to get help.

Staff should avoid making support requests through unofficial channels, such as instant messages. These can easily go unrecorded, increase the workload for IT support staff and make it harder to spot trends or recurring problems.

To support this, your IT support should include:

- multiple ways to raise requests, such as phone, email and in person
- clear operating hours, including support during school hours and arrangements for emergency cover
- self-service options for common issues

If your IT support accepts in-person requests, make sure they are recorded and tracked formally.

If you use external suppliers for IT support, check your contract to understand the service levels they're required to provide. This will help you set realistic expectations and avoid unnecessary costs.

Record and track all support requests

Make sure all IT support requests are recorded and tracked until they are resolved. This helps to resolve issues quickly, understand root causes and identify potential improvements or training opportunities.

For each request, you should record:

- a description of the issue
- the date and time the request was made
- the requester's name and the approver if required
- the issue's priority level
- actions taken to investigate and resolve the issue

Consider using a case management or helpdesk system to record and track requests, making sure it's set up to record these details. If this is not available, ask your IT support how they can best record and track support requests and provide reports when required.

IT support should make sure that staff are able to check the status of their requests and see whether they need to take any further actions, such as confirming that the issue has been resolved. IT support should also redirect staff if the issue is outside their responsibility or needs further approval.



Your SLT digital lead should use these records to monitor how IT support is meeting demand and responding to issues. This should be reported to governors or trust leaders as part of the yearly review set out in IT support standard, [‘Review your IT support at least once a year’](#).

Your SLT digital lead can also use the records to identify recurring problems, highlight outdated technology that may need replacing, and plan improvements or training.

Make the best use of IT support’s capacity

Determine whether IT support has the capacity and resource to meet your day-to-day needs and support your digital strategy.

If your current IT support capacity is not adequate, consider whether it’s feasible to increase it or make more efficient use of your existing resources. Records of support requests can help with this – for example, if a particular type of technology generates repeated requests, it may be more efficient to replace it.

Your SLT digital lead should:

- review support records to see how well demand is being handled
- check whether support meets the needs of students and staff and that issues are resolved quickly
- provide extra training if recurring issues are caused by user error or lack of knowledge
- plan additional support for times of high demand, such as the start of the academic year or exam periods
- take account of any planned changes, such as new technology, that might affect demand
- ask IT support whether there are simple solutions to help reduce their workload, such as allowing staff to reset their own passwords or automating repetitive processes
- consider adjusting staffing levels or making changes when contracts are renewed
- consider a hybrid approach where your existing IT support is supplemented by specialist providers for complex or occasional needs, such as cyber security or network upgrades

This will help you get the best value from the resources you have, while making sure IT support can meet your school or college’s priorities.



When to meet this standard

To maintain your digital technology and help you plan improvements, you should already be meeting this standard or working towards it.

When to meet this standard

Having effective IT support helps you meet all the [digital technology standards for schools and colleges](#).



Standard 4

Review your IT support at least once a year

Why this standard is important

This annual review is an important part of your school or college's digital strategy review, as set out in the digital leadership and governance standard '[Have a digital technology strategy that is reviewed every year](#)'.

Reviewing your IT support arrangements each year will help you to:

- assess how well IT support helps you meet the digital and technology standards
- check your IT support meets your needs and supports your digital strategy
- make sure IT support has the right skills and capacity, reducing risks from gaps in knowledge or support
- confirm that IT support offers value for money
- plan upgrades and improvements that support your digital technology strategy
- give leaders evidence to make informed decisions about contracts and investment

Who needs to be involved

Your senior leadership team (SLT) digital lead should lead this review. They should work with your:

- IT support staff or provider, to review how IT support is performing and highlight technical or staffing needs
- staff, to gather feedback on what's working well and any risks, gaps, or curriculum needs that need further IT support
- business manager and headteacher, to confirm annual and longer-term budgets for planned investments and make sure procurement follows guidance and gives value for money
- school governors or trust board, to consider the findings and approve any major decisions, like changes to contracts



How to meet this standard

Your SLT digital lead should lead a formal review of your IT support at least once a year. This review should check what support you have, how well it's performing, and whether contracts and resources still offer value for money.

Understand what support you have and whether it still meets your needs

To make sure your current IT support meets your needs, the digital lead should work with others to review:

- the type of IT support you currently have and how well it supports your digital strategy
- whether your record of your IT support services is up to date
- new or upcoming needs, such as new devices or curriculum changes
- whether IT support has the right skills and capacity to meet current and planned needs, and whether they need any new training
- whether resources and budget are sufficient for the year ahead

Check how well IT support is performing

Use your IT support request records and any user feedback to assess how well IT support is performing. Look for:

- times of high demand, such as the start of the academic year or exam periods
- any technologies or systems causing a high volume of requests that may need further investigation
- any training needs for both IT support staff and general users

Review contracts, procurement and value for money

Your review should also include:

- contracts for any external IT support, including how well it's performing and any informal arrangements that may need review
- whether procurement stayed within budget for the previous year
- whether the support you receive offers good value for money

Value for money does not necessarily mean the lowest cost. Check whether the support you receive is adequate for your needs, reliable during busy periods and fits your budget. As part of this, check whether other suppliers could offer better value.



If your governing body or trust board has assigned a digital link role, involve them in reviewing procurement and investment decisions to make sure they align with your digital strategy.

You can use the Department for Education (DfE) [get help buying for schools](#) service to get impartial help and advice from DfE procurement specialists. There is also guidance on procurement in the [academy trust handbook](#).

Report the findings

Your SLT digital lead should summarise the review findings in writing. Share this with your SLT, business manager and governors or trust board to help them check progress against your digital strategy and make decisions about contracts, procurement and investment in IT support.

When to meet this standard

Carry out this review each year alongside your school or college's wider digital strategy review.

Related standards

This standard contributes to the digital leadership and governance standard '[Have a digital technology strategy that is reviewed every year](#)'.

It also supports the standard '[Make sure your IT support is reliable and responsive](#)' by helping you check whether your IT support arrangements are meeting expectations.



Standard 5

Make sure staff get clear guidance and training on using technology

Why this standard is important

Training staff to use technology safely, securely and effectively helps them make better use of it to support teaching, learning and school management.

Having clear documentation and guidance supports training, reduces reliance on IT support for simple queries, and helps staff use technology with confidence.

Without adequate training and guidance materials, technology may be underused or misused. Inadequate training or guidance can also create safeguarding and data protection risks.

Who needs to be involved

Your senior leadership team (SLT) digital lead should:

- take overall responsibility for staff training on digital technology, with IT support contributing as needed
- make sure IT support are regularly briefed and, where appropriate, trained on cyber security and your business continuity plans
- make sure training and guidance materials are kept up to date and aligned with your digital technology strategy

IT support should:

- help identify training needs based on trends in support requests
- help train staff on essential systems and processes
- develop and maintain clear documentation and self-service guidance for staff

How to meet this standard

Training

All new staff should receive induction training when they join or change roles, followed by regular refresher training. This should cover essential systems like your management information system (MIS), safeguarding and behaviour platforms and parental communication tools. It should also include the cyber security awareness training set out in the [digital and technology standards on cyber security](#).



Update training and guidance materials whenever new technologies or processes are introduced, such as generative AI tools to support teaching and learning or school management

Training for staff may be provided by IT support, other technically qualified staff, third-party providers, or through online resources that staff can access at a convenient time.

IT support staff should also receive regular training to keep their skills and knowledge up to date.

Guidance, documentation and policies

IT support should develop clear and accessible written guidance for common systems and procedures, such as:

- logging in
- resetting passwords
- solving common problems
- raising support requests

This should be written in plain English, kept up to date and published in an easily accessible place, such as your intranet.

IT support should maintain technical documentation for your systems and network to support your business continuity and disaster recovery plans.

They should also help your SLT digital lead develop and maintain technology-related policies, such as those on data protection, cyber security and acceptable use.

When to meet the standard

You should already have training and guidance in place. Review them regularly to reflect new technology and other changing needs. This can be part of your annual digital technology review.

Related Standards

Having effective training and guidance helps you meet many of the other digital and technology standards, including those on:

- [cyber security](#)
- [digital leadership and governance](#)
- [filtering and monitoring](#)