Linewize

CASE STUDY

Aquinas College

This is the story of one school's journey to create a comprehensive cybersafety ecosystem as a Linewize Partner School.

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Kurt Kennedy, Deputy Principal
Aquinas College

Executive summary

Aquinas College is a state-integrated Catholic Year 7-13 secondary school located in Tauranga, New Zealand. The college launched a BYOD program for Year 11s in 2018, with other year levels encouraged but not required to participate. Aquinas already had a safe school network, but school leaders and parents recognised the importance of protecting students from online risks wherever devices were used - at school, at home and everywhere in between.

When its existing content management suite was due for renewal, the College opted to become a Linewize Partner School, extending protection and control of student devices with the Mobile Zone app for Years 7-12. Currently, approximately 30-40% of parents have activated their Linewize accounts and feedback has been positive and encouraging.

The problem and its context

The School

Located in Tauranga, Aquinas College is a state integrated Catholic co-educational combined intermediate and high school with a roll of 750 students. The college has been providing devices for student use and introducing the concept of BYOD over the last few years. As of 2018, Year 11 students were required to bring a device and students from other year levels encouraged to bring them if they had them.

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>
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> *Aquinas College*

The Challenge

Whilst Aquinas College had a safe school network, school leaders and the community felt that it was important to protect students from the inevitable risks of the internet, not only at school but at home and everywhere in between.

Deputy Principal Kurt Kennedy expands, "We wanted to ensure safe internet access when students are off the school network, at home, or on mobile data. Parents were also keen to have greater ability to manage how much time students spent on their devices and have some insight into what they were doing."

"We had used Linewize (School Manager) for a number of years to provide content filtering for students, and the accompanying tools to permit or limit student access to websites had been well-utilized by teachers. This gave the students freedom to safely explore the internet, but also empowered teachers to be able to manage the potential for digital distraction. We wanted to provide a similar service for parents."

The Linewize Journey

Becoming a Linewize Partner School

Aquinas' licence for the content management suite was due for renewal, "Whilst discussing our goals as a school with the company, we were offered the chance to become a Linewize Partner School and extend the protection and control provided by Linewize to our community through Mobile Zone."

Mobile Zone filters the websites and apps that students can access outside of the school network using easy to administer parental settings. Parents receive weekly reports and alerts. Kurt explains, "Parents can opt for the age-appropriate default settings provided by the cyber-safety experts who work alongside Linewize. Alternatively, they can edit the settings, or they can turn the app off. There are also clever features such as being able to limit access to certain sites or apps during periods earmarked as 'study time' and then have more liberal settings during 'playtime', and no access during 'sleep time'. It has the potential to really help students manage digital distraction."

Aquinas College set up the network so that students could not access the school internet without having Mobile Zone installed on their device, be it a laptop, tablet or phone. The College decided to roll it out to Years 7 through 12, leaving the Year 13 students to self-manage.

The College emailed caregivers, held parent information evenings and introduced the app to students during assembly and in year groups, "We are currently sitting at 30-40% of parents who have registered with Linewize. Others tell me this is a very healthy number for the first term. Uptake has been greater in the junior years, presumably because parents want to have that bit more protection for younger children, and perhaps more control over what they are accessing."

Outcomes

It is early days for Aquinas College, but Kurt has been pleased with the initial response, "Feedback from parents has been very encouraging. They understand that it is not only the school's responsibility to monitor what children are doing but the home too. The app is creating opportunities for discussion within families about device use."

> "Having these conversations is part of 21st Century parenting and Mobile Zone provides parents with a means to start those discussions about what is safe and what is healthy, and perhaps for the first time gives parents options to manage these important issues."

Kurt cites the example of a parent whose son approached her before downloading an app to argue his case for why it was appropriate, something which would never have happened before installing Mobile Zone, "Having these conversations is part of 21st Century parenting and Mobile Zone provides parents with a means to start those discussions about what is safe and what is healthy, and perhaps for the first time gives parents options to manage these important issues."

Advice on joining the Partner School Program

Successfully 'selling' Mobile Zone to the students is a critical part of the process. Kurt Kennedy, Deputy Principal at Aquinas College advises:

- Pitch the app to the parents and students at the same time to avoid students feeling that 'This is being done to us'.

- Emphasize that the app aims to make students as responsible as possible, to support and encourage sensible decision making and initiate insightful discussion at school and at home.

- Take advantage of the extensive support offered by Linewize, "The support available is far wider than the product itself. Not only did Saunil Hagler, School Relationship Manager support us technically but he led the parent information sessions and offered lots of advice around digital safety and digital citizenship."

About Linewize

Linewize is committed to making student Internet management easy, and keeping students safe online on any device, anywhere, any time.

Learn more

Email sales@linewize.io
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