



CASE STUDY

Strathalbyn Christian College

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



Strathalbyn

CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

Learning God's Way

"We're now looking at a change in policy from 'We highly recommend that you put Mobile Zone on your own device' to saying 'It is now College policy that this app needs to be installed on your device before you come to school.'"

*Gavin Hirschhausen, Principal
Strathalbyn Christian College*



Executive summary

Strathalbyn Christian College is a K-12 co-educational day school with an enrolment of 403, located in the coastal town of Geraldton, Western Australia, 400 km north of Perth.

A BYOD program was launched in 2010, and is presently in effect for Years 7-12. But the explosion in mobile technology and the rise of social media eventually challenged the school's capacity to keep students safe.

Cyberbullying outside of school hours - but on school-mandated devices - was becoming a serious problem, and concerned parents were increasingly pressing for a solution.

The decision was taken to provide Mobile Zone licenses to all families, free of charge, to protect BYOD devices.

The program was rolled out in March 2018. By August, the school estimated that cyberbullying had declined by 75-80%.

A change in policy from optional to mandatory Mobile Zone protection on all student devices is now under serious consideration.

The problem and its context

The School

Strathalbyn Christian College is a K-12 co-educational day school with an enrolment of 403, located in the small coastal community of Geraldton, Western Australia, 400 km north of Perth.

SCC prides itself on delivering education, character development and skills within a Christian, Bible-based context. Staff are committed Christians who, in the words of Principal Gavin Hirschhausen, aim to “impact students with the reality of a living faith.” The school places a particular emphasis on relationship, community and partnering with parents.

The staff at Strathalbyn Christian College take seriously the challenge of partnering with parents in the task of educating the whole child, whatever their innate abilities and talents might be.

The Principal's message, SCC website

The Challenge

SCC introduced a BYOD program in 2010. At that point, a firewall on the school network provided adequate protection for students. Eventually, the school moved to “whitelist”-type filtering (i.e., allowing a small number of approved sites rather than blocking undesirable ones).

But the explosion in mobile technology and the rise of social media eventually challenged the school’s capacity to keep students safe. Cyberbullying outside of school hours was becoming an intractable issue.

“We were having a lot of cyberbullying issues, and they’d been happening for awhile. We had kids accessing social media well below the recommended ages - kids aged 9, 10, 11 and 12 using Snapchat and a range of social media platforms to communicate with each other. And parents were either not aware of it or didn’t really know it wasn’t good for them to be doing that, until there was an incident. And then they contacted the College saying ‘Please help!’”

*Gavin Hirschhausen, Principal
Strathalbyn Christian College*

Parents felt the school needed to provide a solution - and the school agreed.

“They are personal devices, but kids are required to own them by the school. So in that situation, we did feel that the school had some responsibility for these issues that were occurring at home. We’d asked parents to bring these devices into their home.”

*Stephen Rice, ICT Support
Strathalbyn Christian College*

The Linewize Journey

So when we started to investigate Linewize, we thought oh, this is terrific!

*Gavin Hirschhausen, Principal
Strathalbyn Christian College*

A decision was taken to provide all families with Mobile Zone licenses, free of charge, to ensure students' BYOD learning devices were protected from inappropriate use outside of school hours too - whether at home or out and about.

"A major concern ... is how our children's brains are being re-wired by high exposure to the internet and access to pornography. As a response to this, SCC has engaged Linewize for use in the College, also offering the service free of charge for families to use at home in 2018. Of primary importance is that we, as a community, respond to the culture around us in an informed manner."

SCC Newsletter, Term 1, Week 7

Parent cyber safety education was recognised as a priority.

We selected Linewize because:

Cyber Experts: Linewize is the platform of choice for Australia's leading cyber safety experts and educators certified by the Australian Government's eSafety Commission.

Broad suite of network and device services: Linewize offers the school a broad suite of services to enable us to deliver digital citizenship programs and manage our access policies across the school network and on student devices.

School community features: Linewize offers both school and parent features allowing our school community to work together.

SCC Newsletter, Term 1, Week 9

To launch the Mobile Zone solution, a parent education night was held in Term One, presented by the school's chosen cyber expert, Pete Brown of Cyber Safe Teacher.

Pass on to Gavin and the team our appreciation for last night's function.... The Linewize presentation was excellent and a great investment by the school.

Tom Mwangi, SCC parent

Outcomes

By August, approximately 50% of families in the target group had activated their accounts - and found Mobile Zone to be the ideal solution for managing screen-time and filtering inappropriate content on BYOD devices outside of school hours.

Principal Gavin Hirschhausen notes that only “those parents who are highly engaged and realise it’s a problem” have opted to participate - not surprising, he says, given that the school has done little follow-up or prompting.

But the school is acutely aware of what Hirschhausen calls “the passive smoking effect” - basically, that students can be put at risk by even a small number of unprotected devices.

“The passive smoking effect means a parent could have all the most amazing controls on their child’s device and can sleep well at night knowing that that device is not going to access inappropriate material - but they don’t have control over what other parents’ and children’s realities are in terms of what they’re accessing, and what they’re sharing and showing in a private setting when kids go and visit other people’s houses. And then other kids will be impacted by talking about what they’ve accessed and what they’ve viewed.”

*Gavin Hirschhausen, Principal
Strathalbyn Christian College*

That recognition has led school leaders to consider seriously moving from optional to a mandatory Mobile Zone deployment for every student device brought on campus as a matter of College policy.

Nevertheless, even under the present opt-in program, cyberbullying incidence has declined by 75% to 80%.

“Our deputy principal has had to deal with only one major incident since we launched Mobile Zone. Last year, it was four or five.”

*Gavin Hirschhausen, Principal
Strathalbyn Christian College*

Future prospects

Strathalbyn will be launching Linewize's new School Manager solution over the next few months, featuring enhanced visibility and reporting of student internet activity in real time. These new tools will allow pastoral care staff to identify at-risk students and launch appropriate interventions to prevent incidents before they happen.

College teaching staff are especially excited about the Linewize Classwize feature: a simple dashboard that displays the websites and applications that each student is using. Live visibility over classroom internet use allows teachers to identify which students are engaged with the lesson and those who are distracted or offline - and more importantly, to redirect attention by controlling access.

“Teachers will also be able to see, hang on, I’ve got 17 kids here but only 14 devices are showing up. It provides another mechanism for ensuring that students are protected. And if they’re not, they can be picked up and their parents contacted.”

*Gavin Hirschhausen, Principal
Strathalbyn Christian College*

“Very excited about Linewize Classwize. That’s going to be really awesome!”

*Stephen Rice, ICT Support
Strathalbyn Christian College*



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
Visit us at linewize.io