Surrey school turns to Lightspeed Systems to keep students safe online

Overview

Magna Carta School in Surrey is a mainstream state school with 1,200 11 to 16 year old students. The school teaches a wide-ranging curriculum and encourages its students to think independently in order to achieve their personal best and support the school motto ‘Respect...Learn...Aspire...Achieve’.

For the past two years, the school has enlisted the services of educational e-safety experts, Lightspeed Systems to ensure that students are empowered to develop their own online research skills in a safe, secure environment. Anthony Jorge, Network Manager at the school explains his reasons for selecting Lightspeed Systems’ Collaborative Filter as a long-term e-safety system:

“The internet is used a lot more in schools these days, it is part of daily life. There is not one day that a student goes into a lesson and doesn’t use the internet, and so it is vital that our teachers can use it as a tool without interruption, and students can use it safely with minimal disruption.”

The Solution

Rather than having an aggressive blocking policy, Magna Carta School wanted to adopt a system that would facilitate a greater level of flexibility to provide teachers with the ability to instantly allow access to websites and online content that was previously blocked. Anthony continues:

“In the past, we had filtering systems which enabled us to block and allow various websites, however we wanted to give more control to our teachers and encourage them to unblock content that would be relevant to their lessons. This approach has sped up the filtering process and allows teachers to spend more time teaching and engaging with the students rather than asking us, the administration team, to make changes to the web filter.”

Using Lightspeed Systems’ online collaborative learning platform, My Big Campus, the school also has access to a plethora of educational content within the online resource library, as well as access to YouTube videos. Anthony comments:

“My Big Campus is a safe social networking site that allows students to talk to other students, to teachers and to other schools both in the UK and across the globe. Alongside the many unique features, the system has an ever expanding online resource library with videos, files and educational website links that our teachers and students can utilise to help with the learning process.”

Touching on the access to YouTube My Big Campus provides, Anthony says:

“Before we took on Lightspeed Systems, YouTube was blocked completely in our school, except for allowing staff access. Using Lightspeed Systems, we enable open access to YouTube Education and, through My Big Campus, teachers can take videos from the normal YouTube website and upload them into the online resource library for students to access in and out of lessons. There’s greater access to YouTube now than there ever was before.”

“Teachers are confident to unblock content where appropriate and this has meant I can spend more time servicing the environment.”

Anthony Jorge, Network Manager, Magna Carta School
Conclusion

Student safety is paramount for a system that enables access to the internet, especially when using content such as YouTube which may have inappropriate comments, adverts or subtitles. The award-winning Lightspeed Systems Collaborative Filter has been designed to meet the challenges brought by the constantly changing landscape of the education sector; from increased bandwidths to mobile learning programs, ensuring that a balance is reached between learning and safety. The company believes that filtering is not as straightforward as it once was and that in certain circumstances, previously blocked websites may be required in lessons. As Lightspeed Systems Collaborative Filter enables teachers to take ownership of filtering content, it has freed up the network managers and ICT technicians to focus on other aspects of their job.

Talking about how the system has changed his role, Anthony adds:

"In the past, we definitely had more people asking for things to be unblocked, whereas now that is not so much the case. Teachers are confident to unblock content where appropriate and this has meant I can spend more time servicing the environment so that we can provide a better experience for everyone."

Since 1999, Lightspeed Systems has been supporting staff in schools to help make day-to-day tasks more manageable and educational goals reachable. Today, the company’s solutions are used globally, reaching more than 9 million students and winning numerous awards. To learn more about Lightspeed Systems, click here.

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Using the My Big Campus resource Library, staff and students at Magna Carta can have access to educational videos and resources in a safe environment.