High grades for cybersecurity at Goulburn Valley Grammar School

Australian school gains advanced cybersecurity protection and frees IT staff to focus on cybersecurity remediation

THE CHALLENGE

As laptops, tablets, and other devices become more available to teachers and students, ransomware incidents in education also have accelerated. One of the cybersecurity challenges facing schools is that students, teachers, and administrative staff are not typically on premises during evenings, weekends, holidays, and school vacations throughout the year.

Goulburn Valley Grammar School (GVGS) was becoming increasingly concerned about this gap in coverage. A longtime user of Bitdefender GravityZone endpoint detection and response (EDR), GVGS decided that adding a 24x7 security monitoring layer was critical to protection. After considering solutions from Bitdefender, Crowdstrike, Darktrace, and Trend Micro, GVGS selected Bitdefender Managed Detection and Response (MDR) Premium..

Trevor Pye, Head of Information Systems, Goulburn Valley Grammar School, reflects, "For six years, Bitdefender GravityZone has successfully blocked numerous nasty malware incidents. With ransomware incidents on the rise, we grew more concerned we didn't have the cybersecurity resources to monitor alerts and activity 24x7. Bitdefender MDR is a perfect fit with Bitdefender's highly skilled security experts and global intelligence networks monitoring our activity around the clock. Plus, since we are happy with Bitdefender GravityZone and Bitdefender support, we didn't see any reason to change."

THE SOLUTION

Bitdefender MDR delivers around-the-clock cybersecurity monitoring and remediation services to Goulburn Valley Grammar School. With Bitdefender MDR, GVGS gains access to industry-leading Bitdefender security technologies that provide comprehensive protection for endpoints, network and security analytics, and custom incident response actions. In addition, the solution is further supported by the threat-hunting expertise of a Bitdefender security operations center fully staffed by highly experienced security analysts.

Bitdefender MDR protects 1,200 endpoints at GVGS, including Windows workstations and servers, as well as virtual servers running VMware ESXi and Microsoft Hyper-V. Application environments at GVGS protected by Bitdefender include Microsoft Active Directory, Microsoft Exchange, Microsoft SQL Server, and Synergetic, among others.

Goulburn Valley Grammar School is an independent, co-educational educational institution with approximately 700 students from grade five through grade 12. Operating since 1982, GVGS draws students from across Australia's Goulburn Valley and Northern Victoria.

Industry
Education

Headquarters
Shepparton, Victoria Australia

Employees
134 employees (IT staff, 4)

Results
- 24x7 monitoring and remediation by global cybersecurity intelligence networks and expert teams
- Cybersecurity management time reduced by 50 percent
- Increased staff time available to focus on cybersecurity remediation
- Cost of building internal SOC estimated to be four to five times higher

THE RESULTS

The IT team at GVGS breathed a big sigh of relief when Bitdefender MDR prevented an especially insidious malware attempt.

"Outside of school hours, a student unknowingly downloaded some malicious software that captures keystrokes and exposes passwords," recalls Pye. "Almost immediately, Bitdefender MDR detected the issue and isolated the device. The next day, we reimaged the student's notebook and reset their password. Had it been a teacher's device, then highly confidential student records would have been in jeopardy. Bitdefender MDR watching our back and giving us access to their security experts and knowledge have been fantastic."

Pye adds, "Before, we didn't have the resources to properly use all the EDR data generated by GravityZone or always know where to look. Because Bitdefender MDR monitors activity globally, Bitdefender is better able to detect patterns that may be preludes to attacks."

With Bitdefender MDR, the IT team has reduced time spent on cybersecurity management by 50 percent. More security-related time is available for remediation rather than endlessly sifting through EDR intelligence.

"Bitdefender MDR has been a massive time-saver," Pye emphasizes. "Instead of chasing potential security issues, IT can respond to maintenance requests for our 1,200 endpoints more quickly. I now spend more time on vulnerabilities identified in the MDR portal and areas outside of endpoint security, such as penetration testing and multi-factor authentication."

To build and operate an internal security operations center (SOC), Pye estimates the cost would be four to five times higher than Bitdefender MDR. Pye also notes that Bitdefender MDR would still provide a greater degree of continuous monitoring and global intelligence than an internal SOC.

Another highlight for GVGS has been the people at Bitdefender, according to Pye: "The quality of support and services we receive from Bitdefender has been brilliant. We have worked with other security vendors and the relationships never lasted more than one or two years. By comparison, we are about to embark on year seven with Bitdefender and are looking forward to continuing."

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Trevor Pye, Head of Information Systems, Goulburn Valley Grammar School

Bitdefender Footprint
- Managed Detection and Response Premium

IT Environment
- Microsoft Active Directory
- Microsoft Exchange
- Microsoft SQL Server
- Synergetic

Operating Systems
- Microsoft Windows