



DIOCESE OF SOUTHWELL
& NOTTINGHAM

MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

SNMAT IT

User Account Security

Multi-Factor Authentication

Guidance for SLT & Governors

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TRUST TECHNICAL LEAD
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Approved by the Board of Directors July 2025

SNMAT-internal use only

Policy:	MFA Guidance for SLT & Governors
Approved by:	Board of Directors
Date:	July 2025
Review Cycle:	Annually

Versions:			
VERSION	DATE	AUTHOR	CHANGES
2024	March 2024	David Price	Version control added. Updated VPN guidance.
2025	June	Mark Hardisty	No changes required.

BACKGROUND & RATIONALE

There has been a sharp increase in cyber and ransomware criminals targeting schools, colleges and other education institutions. These attacks have compromised financial data, sensitive information and staff resources leading to devastating effects on the schools involved and have disrupted teaching and learning greatly.

In line with the SNMAT Cyber Security Policy and to meet DfE statutory guidance on Cyber Security in schools all our staff Microsoft 365 accounts are secured with Multi-Factor Authentication and Geofence limitations.

WHAT IS MULTI-FACTOR AUTHENTICATION?

Traditionally access to IT systems has been through a username with a single authentication password. Multi-factor Authentication (MFA or 2FA) adds a further authentication method and reduces the possibility of an attacker compromising an account. A second piece of authentication evidence means that even attackers with a stolen password are less likely to be able to access services.

WHAT IS GEOFENCING?

Blocking user logins based upon location adds a significant layer of security to our Microsoft 365 infrastructure. Since most cyber-attacks are traced back to countries external to the UK, and our schools operate within the UK, user logins are restricted to being able to log in from UK locations only.

WHAT ABOUT VIRTUAL PRIVATE NETWORKS?

You may have chosen to install and use a Virtual Private Network (VPN) connection for your devices that connect to the internet to encrypt your connection, protect your IP address and secure your identity online. Unfortunately, many VPNs use networks that will mean that your account potentially could be blocked as part of the access requirements for SNMAT.

HOW WILL THIS IMPACT YOU?

MULTI-FACTOR AUTHENTICATION

Whilst adding a second method of authentication may seem laborious, it is worth remembering the following points that makes using MFA less hassle:

- 1) Whilst using computers and devices on school premises, our MFA policy will recognise this and **not** request further authentication. Your sign-ins in school will only require a username and password.
- 2) Any sign-in outside of school will require MFA. However, if you use the same machine and browser regularly when out of school, you will only be prompted to use 2FA at certain intervals as the system remembers the machine and software you are using.

GEOFENCING & VPNs

Most staff will not be affected by this policy. They will continue to perform their duties within the UK and will not need access to their accounts outside of the Geofence. If you do however, go on holiday or are abroad for any reason or use a VPN that disguises your location then access to your account will be restricted.

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO DO?

The first time you log into your school account on a device outside of school you will be required to download the Microsoft Authentication App to your mobile phone.

Follow the link to learn about, and install the app:

<https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/security/mobile-authenticator-app>

Follow the video guidance to configure the app with these steps:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q8OzabuNwHI>

- 1) Select Mobile App and Use Verification Code.
- 2) When prompted in the Authenticator App, Select Work or School Account.

Further guidance can be found here:

<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/account-billing/set-up-an-authenticator-app-as-a-two-step-verification-method-2db39828-15e1-4614-b825-6e2b524e7c95>

EXTRAORDINARY ACCESS REQUESTS

Applications to use SNMAT Microsoft 365 accounts outside of the UK Geofence can be made via an extraordinary access request to the Trust's Chief Executive or Director of Operations.

HAVING ISSUES?

If you have any issues, please contact your local IT Support Team or Trust IT Support Team.