# Edinburgh council resets pupils’ passwords after targeted education cyber attack before exams



Parents in Edinburgh received notifications that their children's digital passwords had been reset as a precaution following a targeted cyber attack on the council's education department. The incident occurred just before crucial exam periods, leaving many pupils with limited access to their vital revision materials. School staff first identified a suspicious meeting invitation that was later confirmed as a "spear-phishing" attempt—an attack method designed to trick recipients through the guise of a trusted source.

To mitigate the risks posed by the attack, the council promptly initiated a password reset for all users within the education service. Consequently, students found themselves locked out of essential resources during a critical time for revision. In light of this disruption, parents were informed that their children could retrieve new passwords directly from their schools. Councillor James Dalgleish, the education and children's convener for Edinburgh Council, acknowledged the operational challenge created by the cyber attack, stressing that it was a "difficult but necessary" move to protect the integrity of the educational infrastructure.

The quick identification of the phishing threat allowed for swift action, with affected networks being shut down immediately to prevent further compromise. Speaking about the incident, Councillor Dalgleish assured the public that no personal or sensitive data had been accessed, a reassurance echoed by other experts in cybersecurity who highlighted the importance of training staff to recognise such threats. Investigations into the attack are ongoing, with collaboration between the council, Police Scotland, and the Scottish Government intensifying.

This cyber event comes on the heels of a separate but similar crisis affecting West Lothian Council, where 86 schools were targeted by a ransomware attack just days earlier. In that instance, schools were forced to adopt contingency measures, although, like in Edinburgh, no personal data was believed to have been compromised.

The ramifications of these attacks extend beyond immediate security concerns, impacting students during a particularly sensitive time in their academic calendars. Discussions among pupils revealed frustration; many expressed that the restrictions on their access to resources made effective preparation for upcoming exams more challenging. A student named Jack described the situation as a "nightmare," particularly emphasising the reliance on online platforms like Microsoft Teams for his studies. His sister Libby echoed these sentiments, noting that the travel required to acquire new passwords further exacerbated their time constraints.

Meanwhile, the council has taken steps to ensure that all affected pupils have access to revisory materials through alternate means. Information has been posted on the council’s website, and officials remain hopeful that normalcy will return by the following Monday. The quick response and strategy employed by Edinburgh Council has underscored the significance of robust cybersecurity measures in today’s educational environments.

As schools adopt technology as an integral part of learning through initiatives like the Empowered Learning programme, the prevalence of cyber threats has become a pressing concern. The Scottish Qualifications Authority has also been informed of the situation, with a priority on addressing any student concerns that may arise from this sudden disruption.

In a rapidly evolving digital landscape, the incidents at both Edinburgh and West Lothian highlight the vulnerabilities that educational institutions face and the need for continuous vigilance and preparedness against cyber threats.

### Reference Map

1. Core narrative focusing on Edinburgh's cyber attack.
2. Background on West Lothian's attack.
3. Details on the impact on pupils and responses.
4. Insights into the importance of cybersecurity in education.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.aol.com/news/pupil-passwords-reset-council-cyber-211516332.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.edinburghnews.scotsman.com/news/criminal-investigation-into-cyberattack-affecting-86-west-lothian-schools-continues-5118769> - A criminal investigation is ongoing into a suspected ransomware cyberattack that has affected 86 West Lothian schools. The attack was detected on May 6, 2025, and all schools, including 68 primary, 13 secondary, and five special needs schools, are impacted. The council is collaborating with Police Scotland and the Scottish Government to mitigate the impact, and initial assessments show no personal or sensitive data has been accessed. All schools remain open, and exams are not affected. ([edinburghnews.scotsman.com](https://www.edinburghnews.scotsman.com/news/criminal-investigation-into-cyberattack-affecting-86-west-lothian-schools-continues-5118769?utm_source=openai))
3. <https://www.independent.co.uk/tech/scottish-government-edinburgh-schools-police-scotland-uk-government-b2748563.html> - Thousands of pupils in Edinburgh attended schools on Saturday to reset their IT network passwords after a phishing attack left them locked out of learning materials. The attack was detected on Friday, May 9, 2025, when unusual email activity was noticed on the city's schools and early years IT network. As a precaution, the council reset passwords across the network, including those of learners and students. Secondary schools opened on Saturday to allow students with upcoming exams to obtain new passwords. The council assured that no data was compromised and is working with the Scottish Government and Police Scotland to address the issue. ([independent.co.uk](https://www.independent.co.uk/tech/scottish-government-edinburgh-schools-police-scotland-uk-government-b2748563.html?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/13416078.thousands-email-addresses-stolen-cyber-attack-edinburgh-council/> - A cyberattack on Edinburgh City Council resulted in the theft of email addresses of over 13,000 individuals. The breach occurred when the council's website service provider was targeted by hackers. The council assured that no other personal details were accessed and advised those affected to monitor their bank and credit card statements for unusual transactions. The incident was reported to the Information Commissioner's Office, and additional security measures were implemented. ([heraldscotland.com](https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/13416078.thousands-email-addresses-stolen-cyber-attack-edinburgh-council/?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/news/article/14204/targeted-phishing-attack-on-schools-and-early-years-network> - Edinburgh City Council reported a targeted phishing attack on its schools and early years IT network on May 9, 2025. The council noticed unusual email activity and, as a precaution, reset passwords across the network, including those of students. Secondary schools were opened on Saturday, May 10, to allow students with upcoming exams to obtain new passwords. The council assured that no data was compromised and is working with the Scottish Government and Police Scotland to address the issue. ([edinburgh.gov.uk](https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/news/article/14204/targeted-phishing-attack-on-schools-and-early-years-network?utm_source=openai))
6. <https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/news/article/14206/update-on-suspected-targeted-phishing-attack-on-schools-and-early-years-network> - An update from Edinburgh City Council on May 10, 2025, regarding the suspected targeted phishing attack on its schools and early years IT network. Approximately 2,500 students attended secondary schools to reset their passwords, minimizing the impact on exam preparations. The council expressed gratitude to staff for their quick response and is keeping the Scottish Government and Police Scotland updated. The council continues to monitor the situation closely. ([edinburgh.gov.uk](https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/news/article/14206/update-on-suspected-targeted-phishing-attack-on-schools-and-early-years-network?utm_source=openai))
7. <https://www.edinburghnews.scotsman.com/news/edinburgh-schools-cyber-attack-city-schools-targeted-in-phishing-scam-ahead-of-exams-5122134> - Edinburgh schools were targeted in a phishing scam ahead of exams, leading to the resetting of passwords across the council's schools and early years network. The council noticed unusual email activity on May 9, 2025, and took immediate action to reset passwords, including those of learners and students. Secondary schools opened on Saturday, May 10, to allow students with upcoming exams to obtain new passwords. The council assured that no data was compromised and is working with the Scottish Government and Police Scotland to address the issue. ([edinburghnews.scotsman.com](https://www.edinburghnews.scotsman.com/news/edinburgh-schools-cyber-attack-city-schools-targeted-in-phishing-scam-ahead-of-exams-5122134?utm_source=openai))