

Advice and guidance

Email threats and spam



The **Education & Skills Funding Agency** has issued some measured and helpful guidance about how to respond to a range of email threats, including the recent bomb-hoax emails that were sent to thousands of UK schools. It says:

Information: advice for schools on cyber attacks

You may be aware of recent bomb hoax emails being sent to a large number of schools. These emails are suspected to have been sent by an online group calling themselves Apophis Squad and that this group is linked to other cyber activity, including Ransomware and Denial-of-service attacks.

We would suggest you are extra vigilant when dealing with emails. Do not open emails if you are unsure about the source or open attachments within emails, unless you are sure it comes from a trusted source.

If you suspect you have been contacted by Apophis Squad in any form, report this to [Action Fraud](#).

You can find further information including best practice for protection on the [National Cyber Security Centre](#) website.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/esfa-e-bulletin-24-may-2018-issue-221/esfa-e-bulletin-for-schools-colleges-local-authorities-and-other-16-to-19-providers-24-may-2018#information-advice-for-schools-on-cyber-attacks>)

Their advice usefully reminds us that any unsolicited emails can pose threats or cause inconvenience and that we all need to be diligent in using email. It also helpfully reminds us that we need to have proportionate responses to risks and threats.

Where Solihull Council supports schools, systems are in place to start blocking emails as soon as it becomes clear that a particular email is nothing more than spam. Indeed, in the recent events, a number of Solihull schools did not receive the offending email as the system we are implementing started to identify it as spam – as it became apparent that the email was being sent to large numbers of schools across the UK.

If you would like more information about what we do to protect schools' information and systems, or have any concerns about using email safely, please contact the Solihull Council IT service desk.