



# EDUCATION

## CASE STUDY

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# Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta

This is the story of a large educational institution deploying a flexible and scalable cybersafety solution to protect their students and improve learning outcomes.



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## Executive summary

In response to the COVID-19 emergency, The Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta (CEDP) took swift action to pivot to remote learning for the 43,000+ students in its care. But in doing so, this vast school community faced two urgent challenges: maintaining learning equity and ensuring online safety. To provide every student with equal access to digital resources, thousands of learning devices were provided for home use across the Diocese's 80 schools. To ensure online safety and block distractions, the CEDP partnered with Family Zone Education in a record-breaking roll-out to protect every school-supplied device, with optional protection provided to parents for their BYO devices.





## The problem and its context

A leading education provider in New South Wales, the CEPD is a community of Catholic schools in Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains, providing quality, faith-centred teaching and learning in 80 schools and five early learning centres.

Faced with the COVID-19 crisis, the Diocese moved decisively to remote learning to safeguard the health of students, staff and parents, deploying a range of strategies to ensure continuity with existing learning programs.

But, given the scale of this school community - numbering some 43,000 primary and secondary students - and the pace of the outbreak, school leaders were faced with a number of daunting challenges.

## Equitable Access to Learning

The first was the problem of learning equity. Not every family across this vast and socio-economically diverse community had home access to digital devices suitable to support remote learning.

“It is not a level playing field and these challenges affect our families so profoundly.”

*Maura Manning, Director of Learning  
Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta*

The obvious solution was to supply devices to students who needed them - and that’s exactly what the Diocese did, quickly dispatching 13,000 school-owned Chromebooks and iPads for home use.

But this solution presented a new difficulty: how to keep those devices cyber-safe and optimised for learning.

Under normal classroom conditions, when learning devices are connected to the school’s central network, they are protected by Diocesan filtering policies to block inappropriate and distracting content.

But once off that network, school-owned devices used at home would be unprotected, allowing students to be exposed to a range of potential learning risks, from explicit images to unlimited access to games, social media and streaming content.

## Supporting the Parent Community

With children at home for schooling, the Diocese recognised that parents would find themselves having to play a much more active role in their children’s education. Never before had the burden of responsibility between schools and parents been shared in this way.

The problem confronting parents was that while children were at home and using BYO devices, they had unfettered access to digital distractions, literally at their fingertips the entire day. Parents were tasked with ensuring children willingly educate themselves using the same device they use for gaming, social media, watching Netflix etc. Keeping children focussed, often while juggling their own working commitments, was always going to be a huge task for parents. The Diocese wished to take a leadership position for their community, supporting parents during this challenging time by providing them with options to help keep children focussed on BYO devices and provide much needed relief.

## The Family Zone Solution

An approach to Family Zone Education was made and a partnership forged to roll out Family Zone technology to protect CEPD's entire remote-learning community, and all 13,000 school-supplied devices.

Using Family Zone's tools and resources, Diocesan filtering settings - the same ones that protected students on the central school network - could now be applied to every learning device used at home during school hours. Delivered via Family Zone's cloud-based solution, protection was provided on the 13,000 devices within 24 hours of the partnership being formed.

What's more, Family Zone was able to support parents during remote learning by extending protection to include family-owned BYOD devices, helping parents manage the simultaneous challenges of working from home and guiding their children's remote learning. To protect their child's device, parents simply activated a specially created online account, which extended the school's filtering policies during class hours. This ensured the devices were both protected from online harm and focussed on learning. Furthermore, parents had access to Family Zone's wealth of cyber safety content from their teams of cyber experts, empowering them with knowledge to help guide their children's online journeys.



## Outcomes

The solution offered by Family Zone Education enabled the Diocese to take a leadership role at a difficult time, allowing a smooth transition to remote learning, ensuring equity for a highly diverse community, and maintaining the highest level of duty of care.

“We are committed to delivering remote learning equitably and safely” said Greg Whitby, Executive Director, Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta. “This partnership means a safer online learning environment for our students.”

CEDP Director of Learning Maura Manning noted the successful response by CEDP to the COVID-19 pandemic, with strategies to provide support and tools to ensure continuity of learning.

“What we have seen has been amazing,” Manning said. “Students have just run with the online learning, and adapted to become more independent in their learning.”

Thanks to the partnership with Family Zone Education, they have been able to do so equitably, safely, quickly and at scale.





