

## **GOING FOR GOLD! GLOUCESTERSHIRE SCHOOLS RECOGNISED FOR PUTTING CYBER SKILLS FIRST**

- Schools in Gloucestershire recognised for first-rate approach to cyber security teaching by the National Cyber Security Centre
- Three schools are among first in the country to attain gold status, with another eight gaining silver or bronze in new 'CyberFirst Schools' initiative
- More schools across the country will shortly be given the chance to go for gold

TRAILBLAZING local schools have proved themselves champions of cyber security by becoming the first in the country to officially receive gold, silver or bronze status.

Three tech-savvy schools in Gloucestershire have been awarded CyberFirst Gold Schools status by the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) – a part of GCHQ – as part of a new initiative which recognises excellence in cyber security education.

The [CyberFirst Schools programme](#) recognises schools and colleges that share the NCSC's passion to address the cyber skills gap and inspire young people from all backgrounds to pursue a career in the field.

The Gold schools, recognised for meeting all the judging criteria, are Cleeve School in Cheltenham, Newent Community School in Newent and Wyedean School in Sedbury. There was further recognition for eight local schools which received either Silver or Bronze awards.

Schools in Gloucestershire and Wales that applied in this first round of the programme demonstrated work ranging from an all-female competition to develop a gaming computer to a 'Mars rover' being built and sent into near space.

The schools are now being sent their plaques and applications will shortly be opened up to schools in other parts of the country.

### **Chris Ensor, NCSC Deputy Director for Cyber Growth, said:**

"I congratulate these schools on achieving CyberFirst Schools status – they are the first to do so and their award is thoroughly merited.

"It was great to see the innovative work going on in these schools and we look forward to inviting more to take part and go for gold.

"The CyberFirst Schools programme will help us set a consistent standard for cyber security education as we continue to develop a diverse and talented next generation of cyber experts."

### **Digital Infrastructure Minister Matt Warman said:**

"These trailblazing schools in Gloucestershire are being recognised for their first-rate approach to teaching cyber skills.

"It is so important that we inspire the next generation to consider a career in cyber security and become the cyber defenders of tomorrow. Through CyberFirst we're continuing to build a strong pipeline of diverse talent to protect people and businesses in the years to come."

### **Schools Minister Nick Gibb said:**

“This country is a world-leader in computing education, introducing computing to the national curriculum and giving children and young people access to innovative and important programmes such as the CyberFirst Schools initiative.

“The National Cyber Security Centre is inspiring more young people to take up a career in a discipline that is essential for our country’s safety and it is inspiring to see our schools leading the way in cyber education.”

The CyberFirst Schools programme follows [the successful Cyber Schools Hub pilot](#) in Gloucestershire and Wales, which saw more than 40 schools collaborate with local and international companies to offer cyber opportunities to more than a thousand students.

The 11 successful schools in Gloucestershire are:

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|---|--------|
| ○ Cleeve School and 6 <sup>th</sup> Form Centre of Excellence, Cheltenham | Gold   |
| ○ Newent Community School and 6 <sup>th</sup> Form College, Newent        | Gold   |
| ○ Wyedean School and 6 <sup>th</sup> Form Centre, Sedbury                 | Gold   |
| ○ Cirencester College, Cirencester  | Silver |
| ○ The Dean Academy, Lydney  | Silver |
| ○ Gloucestershire College, Gloucester                                     | Silver |
| ○ Ribston Hall High School, Gloucester                                    | Silver |
| ○ Stroud High School, Stroud  | Silver |
| ○ SGS Berkeley Green UTC, Berkeley  | Silver |
| ○ All Saints’ Academy, Cheltenham   | Bronze |
| ○ Winchcombe School, Cheltenham   | Bronze |

Examples of first-rate cyber activities included Ribston Hall High School running a competition for its female pupils to develop a high-end gaming computer and Cleeve School organising a club which saw pupils build a ‘Mars rover’ and send it into near space.

**Alwyn Richards, Executive Head of Cleeve School, said:**

"I'm delighted Cleeve School is to become one of the first CyberFirst Gold Schools in the United Kingdom. Having been involved from the beginning of the Cyber Schools Hub project, our school has developed priceless connections with the NCSC and many industrial partners, giving our learners a deep insight into cyber.

“Our students not only benefit from a much wider understanding of cyber risks, but also understand the wide range of career opportunities the subject offers. CyberFirst Gold is a welcome recognition of the work done by Cleeve School staff and students.”

**Richard Brand, Head of The Dean Academy, said:**

“We are delighted to be awarded Silver recognition with the CyberFirst programme, and we aim to further enhance our provision and engagement with industry, so that we become a Gold standard school.

“This programme has helped us raise awareness of how important the cyber/ computing sector has now become in our local area, and allowed us to make our young people aware of the full range of opportunities that are available within this sector in Gloucestershire.”

When applications re-open in the next phase, schools in Gloucestershire and Wales can still apply for CyberFirst Schools certification – including those which applied before but were unsuccessful, or did not receive a Gold or Silver certification.

More information about the [CyberFirst Schools programme](#) can be found on the NCSC website.

## ENDS

### Notes to editors:

- The 13 CyberFirst Schools in Gloucestershire and Wales as of Sept 2020 are:
  - Bridgend College, Bridgend Gold
  - Cleeve School and 6<sup>th</sup> Form Centre of Excellence, Cheltenham Gold
  - Coleg Gwent, Newport Gold
  - Newent Community School and 6<sup>th</sup> Form College, Newent Gold
  - Wyedean School and 6<sup>th</sup> Form Centre, Sedbury Gold
  - Cirencester College, Cirencester Silver
  - The Dean Academy, Lydney Silver
  - Gloucestershire College, Gloucester Silver
  - Ribston Hall High School, Gloucester Silver
  - Stroud High School, Stroud Silver
  - SGS Berkeley Green UTC, Berkeley Silver
  - All Saints' Academy, Cheltenham Bronze
  - Winchcombe School, Cheltenham Bronze
- CyberFirst is a vital part of the National Cyber Security Programme, helping to develop the next generation of cyber security professionals. It is led by the NCSC and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).
- As part of the wider CyberFirst programme, a range of opportunities are available this autumn to inspire the next generation of talent, including:
  - Empower Digital Cyber Week (9<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> November), where students can watch and join online cyber sessions given by speakers in academia, industry and government.
  - The [annual CyberFirst Girls competition](#), open to teams of girls aged 12-13 who want a fun, challenging opportunity to test their cyber skills in a bid to be crowned the UK's top codebreakers. Registrations for this year's competition open on 30<sup>th</sup> November. More details can be found on the NCSC's [website](#).
  - The government's online cyber skills platform Cyber Discovery, for 13-18 year olds, is a free and fun way for teens to develop cyber security skills. Students can register to join here: <https://joincyberdiscovery.com/>.

### About the NCSC

- The UK government is fully committed to defending against cyber threats and set up the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) as part of GCHQ.
- The NCSC was created as part of the five-year National Cyber Security Strategy in 2016, supported through £1.9 billion transformative investment
- The NCSC is the UK's lead technical authority on cyber security and offers unrivalled real-time threat analysis, defence against national cyber attacks and tailored advice to victims when incidents do happen
- If you have any additional questions, please contact [pressoffice@ncsc.gov.uk](mailto:pressoffice@ncsc.gov.uk).

## **Additional quotes from successful CyberFirst Schools**

### **Gwennan Jeremiah, Principal of Wyedean School and Sixth Form Centre, said:**

“We’re delighted to have received the Gold CyberFirst Schools award. It is a huge achievement for Wyedean School and Sixth Form Centre as we passionately believe that Cyber plays a key role in education and preparing students for the future. We are extremely proud of the combined efforts of our students and teachers who have enabled the school to be recognised as a Gold standard school.

“This recognition is the culmination of a focussed effort over the last two years to promote computer science, combined with extra-curriculum activities on cyber security concepts. We have strived not only to develop a rich range of activities to promote cyber security education within the school, but have worked hard to support schools across the country by sharing the ideas and resources we have developed. We are thankful to the huge range of companies that have supported our students, bringing their learning to life and connecting students to the world of cyber.

“Our students have benefited from not only getting to know the various job roles within cyber security, but have been mentored and supported by the staff within them, who have become inspirational role models. We are thrilled that we can continue to develop the most exciting and innovative learning for students.”

### **Alan Johnson, Principle of Newent Community School and Sixth Form College, said:**

“It was fantastic news to be recognised by the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) as a Gold Standard school for cyber security. This prestigious award is built on the success of our ground-breaking work as a CyberHub School and demonstrates our ongoing commitment to Cyber Security Education.

“The safety and cyber safety of our students in our digitally connected world is paramount. The opportunities available for young people in this rapidly expanding sector are simply amazing and Newent Community School and Sixth Form Centre will be at the heart of those opportunities.”