



CASE STUDY

Seamless backup and restore supports Zero Trust for thriving UK schools group

Barracuda backs up Microsoft 365 and Entra ID data to build resilience and free-up time for frontline IT staff

Customer

[Spencer Academies Trust](#) is a UK schools group based in the East Midlands region. The non-profit educates over 18,000 students between the ages of 3 to 18 across 28 academies.

Challenges

- Limited time for IT team
- Security threats to identity and other school data
- Regular accidental deletion of data by users

Solutions

- Cloud-to-Cloud Backup
- Entra ID Premium

Results

- Huge time savings (hours per day) mean better IT support for frontline staff
- Peace of mind data is backed up in the event of an attack
- Helps compliance with industry standards
- Empowers IT team to demonstrate value to school leadership



Identity is the new perimeter. As organizations migrate more critical services to the cloud, they are starting to realize that the old ways of doing cybersecurity are fast-becoming obsolete. Threat actors are relentlessly targeting credentials as a result, compromising an estimated 3.2 billion in 2024. This is where Zero Trust offers a fantastic opportunity to build resilience and reduce breach risk.

But tools that support this approach, like Entra ID, are also a target for threat actors. So when [Spencer Academies Trust](#) went all-in on cloud two years ago, it knew it needed a comprehensive backup strategy. With Barracuda Cloud-to-Cloud Backup and Entra ID Backup Premium, it now has one.

“It’s just the path we jumped on very early, and we’re on it in full,” says the schools group’s Director of Strategic IT and Infrastructure, Matthew Taylor. “So the fact Barracuda does back Entra ID up has been a massive part of that journey.”

The road to digital

The digital transformation journey the non-profit went through back in 2022 involved ditching all of its Active Directory servers for Entra ID, and other on-premises infrastructure in favor of Microsoft 365. That means everything from teaching materials and school financials, to staff, student and parents’ personally identifiable information (PII) are stored in SharePoint and OneDrive. Highly sensitive identity and access management (IAM) data is stored Entra ID, while 6,000 school devices are managed via Microsoft Intune.

Mindful of Microsoft’s limited native backup for these platforms, Matthew knew he needed powerful, easy-to-use solutions designed to mitigate the risk of user error and threat actor activity. “Security is something we’re always worried about, and it’s something the government is pushing in the new Cyber Security and Resilience Bill,” he explains. The Trust was also keen to follow the requirements of the Department for Education (DfE) [Digital Standards](#), which promote Zero Trust, among other elements.

Matthew was drawn to Barracuda’s backup offerings by their usability, breadth of coverage, and extremely competitive price point, which includes free licenses for student accounts.

“Barracuda is the go-to when anyone asks what you’re going to back up when you go to the cloud,” he continues. “But the big push for us was the unlimited retention it offers. That is phenomenal for the offering you’re getting.”

As easy as three clicks

Although the Trust took a look at other products, it settled on Barracuda Cloud-to-Cloud Backup and Barracuda Entra ID Backup Premium — having already invested in Barracuda Email Protection.

[Barracuda Cloud-to-Cloud Backup](#) offers highly flexible, cloud-native, encrypted backups for all Microsoft 365 data. Point-in-time retrieval, and scheduled and on-demand backup, offer granular data protection, while immutable storage guards against unintended modification or removal of that data. There’s MFA and role-based access controls, plus malware detection on restores for extra peace of mind. Backed up data resides in Azure, but is stored in Barracuda Cloud Storage, which is air-gapped from customers’ live Microsoft 365 production environment, for extra protection against ransomware.

[Barracuda Entra ID Backup Premium](#), which can be purchased alongside Cloud-to-Cloud Backup, offers backups of highly sensitive IAM information to protect against accidental or malicious data loss. That supports cyber resilience and rapid recovery to a known-good state in the event of a serious breach.

The products couldn’t have been easier to deploy. “It was as simple as enabling the connector and starting it backing up,” says Matthew. “We moved all 119TBs of data in about three clicks. It’s fantastic.”

“We moved all 119 terabytes of our data in about three clicks with Barracuda.”

Matthew Taylor, Director of Strategic IT and Infrastructure
Spencer Academies Trust



A game-changing UI

Over the past two years using Barracuda, the IT team at Spencer Academies Trust, has been able to save time, improve cyber resilience, and ultimately enhance the overall teaching and learning experience for staff and students. Matthew is particularly excited about the continuous innovation which powers Barracuda technology. He describes an updated UI as the biggest “game changer,” with all email, Microsoft 365 and Entra ID Backups now manageable from the centralized BarracudaONE portal.

“Before, if you were trying to restore something, you’d have to search day by day. But now when you go in, it gives you all the files, and when they were deleted,” he says. “It has saved hours per day on the time it takes to restore a file. Just that one change has been unreal.”

Given that IT is called on to restore data a few times a week, this is a major productivity boost. Ultimately, it helps Matthew and his team provide better support for staff and students, which leads to better outcomes all round. “We have 26 IT staff supporting 22,000 users, which is nearly a ratio of 1 to 1,000. This means anything that saves us time goes a long way,” he says. “It means we can do more frontline support, which is ultimately what we want to do for teachers and students.”

Barracuda Cloud-to-Cloud Backup continues to work quietly in the background, and has even been used by Spencer Academies Trust in pilot projects. “Barracuda helped us there, because we’ve been able to report to the board about what we’re backing up, and what that looks like,” Matthew explains.

Entra ID Backup Premium has added an extra layer of resilience to the schools’ IT environment, especially in the face of mounting ransomware attacks on the sector, while supporting its Zero Trust journey. “It’s a nice reassurance to have,” he says. “It just worked. We turned it on, enabled it, it’s backed up, and we’re happy.”

As Matthew and his team continue on their journey to meet the exacting standards of the DfE, Barracuda will be there to support in any way we can.

“Entra ID Backup Premium just worked. We turned it on, enabled it, it’s backed up, and we’re happy.”

Matthew Taylor, Director of Strategic IT and Infrastructure
Spencer Academies Trust



Learn more

Cloud-to-Cloud Backup

[Barracuda Cloud-to-Cloud Backup](#) is an easy-to-use, cloud-first SaaS product that protects your Microsoft 365 data, making deployment fast and daily management simple. It safeguards your business with encrypted, cloud-native backups, role-based access, and an intuitive interface that gets you up and running in minutes, it delivers secure, dependable protection that's simple to manage day-to-day.

Entra ID Backup Premium

[Barracuda Entra ID Backup Premium](#) is part of the Cloud-to-Cloud Backup suite and is an easy-to-use, cloud-first SaaS product that protects all critical Microsoft Entra ID components—including policies, devices, logs, app registrations, and BitLocker keys—Like Cloud-to-Cloud Backup it enables fast, reliable recovery from accidental changes or cyberattacks. With encrypted, cloud-native backups, role-based access, and an intuitive interface that gets you up and running in minutes, it delivers secure, dependable protection that's simple to manage day-to-day.

About Barracuda

Barracuda is a leading global cybersecurity company providing complete protection against complex threats for all sized businesses. Our AI-powered BarracudaONE platform secures email, data, applications, and networks with innovative solutions, managed XDR and a centralized dashboard to maximize protection and strengthen cyber resilience. Trusted by hundreds of thousands of IT professionals and managed service providers worldwide, Barracuda delivers powerful defenses that are easy to buy, deploy and use.