

17 April 2025

Dear ,

ATISN 24583: School Requirements for Migration to the Hwb Platform

Information requested

Thank you for your request which I received on 23 March 2025. You have requested information under the Freedom of Information Act regarding the requirements for schools to migrate to the Hwb platform. Specifically, you have asked for details on the following:

1. The technical and policy requirements for schools to migrate to the Hwb platform.
2. The mandatory features of the Hwb platform, including any tools or services that schools are required to use.
3. Whether there is a requirement for schools to migrate to cloud-based storage solutions, and if so, whether schools are required to use the Hwb platform for this purpose.
4. Whether schools can continue using their own platforms, such as school-owned Microsoft 365 tenants, and if so, any conditions or restrictions that apply.

Our response

We can confirm that the Welsh Government does not hold the information requested, as the use of Hwb is **not mandated** in Welsh schools. However, we can provide the following contextual information regarding the role of Hwb in the education sector in Wales.

Hwb is a Welsh Government funded platform, ensuring that all maintained schools in Wales have equitable access to appropriate digital services which are safe, secure and compliant for educational use.

The Welsh Government is committed to delivering a national approach that provides access to a wide range of bilingual tools, resources, and services. Through this approach, we can maximise value for money through national negotiations and eliminate duplication of expenditure on alternative or local infrastructure and systems.

Since 2019, the Welsh Government has been working collaboratively with local authorities to enable schools to maximise the transformational benefits of digital and technology in education.

At the outset of the [Hwb Programme](#), all local authorities agreed to a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with the Welsh Government. As part of this agreement, local authorities, including Cardiff, committed to supporting and championing the opportunities of education technology in their schools and working collaboratively with their schools to manage and embed key outcomes as part of a local change programme. The MoA also established the principles governing the provision of services and funding initiatives as part of the Hwb programme.

These commitments align with the strategic goal of supporting schools to adopt digital services to provide a modern, secure, and standardised digital learning environment. The MoA reinforces the [collaborative approach](#) that is critical to maximising the use of our limited resources and ensures that local authorities play an active role in promoting and managing digital transformation within schools.

To fully embrace the benefits of this national approach, local authorities across Wales have been supporting their schools to utilise the services available through Hwb to create a personalised and safe ecosystem that prepares learners to thrive in a global digital society.

Local authorities are responsible for managing and supporting their schools' education technology strategy. The decisions around migrating schools from existing, legacy or corporate systems to the national Hwb platform rests with local authorities.

What are the requirements for schools to migrate to the Hwb platform? This includes any technical, or policy requirements.

While there are no mandatory requirements for schools to migrate to the Hwb platform, local authorities are encouraged to consider the benefits of a national approach.

Local authorities, in collaboration with the Welsh Government, provide support to schools throughout the migration journey to Hwb. This considers alignment with the [Education Digital Standards](#) and includes guidance on aligning with technical and policy requirements, such as safeguarding and security considerations through to transitioning to resilient cloud-based services.

A national approach enables the Welsh Government to adhere to rigorous industry standards, which are independently verified to deliver reliable services which keep schools and learners safe. By using the Hwb platform, local authorities can benefit from the national collaboration and enable schools to focus on maximising the transformational benefits and opportunities of digital and technology in education.

More information on compliance and data security can be found in our [Trust Centre](#).

What features of the Hwb platform are mandatory for schools to use? Are there certain tools or services on the platform that schools must use?

The use of Personalised Assessments, which are a statutory element of assessment in Wales, is the only mandatory requirement for schools. Beyond this, Hwb offers a full suite of educational tools and services available at no cost to schools, ensuring equitable access to high-quality digital learning resources.

Hwb is not mandated for schools; however, the Welsh Government strongly promotes the advantages of a consistent national approach. Schools using Hwb can access a suite of tools, including:

- Microsoft 365 (Teams, One Drive, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, etc.) for collaborative digital learning and school operations. Additionally, all learners and staff can download M365 on personal devices at no cost.
- Google Workspace for Education (Google Classroom, Drive, Docs, Sheets, Meet, etc.) for collaborative digital learning and school operations.
- Adobe Express to access creative tools for multimedia projects.
- Bilingual educational resources to support the Curriculum for Wales with high-quality digital content.
- Cybersecurity and safeguarding tools managed at a national level.
- Access to professional learning resources and training resources, including digital skills/literacy and cyber resilience.

While there are no specific tools or services that schools must use, those adopting Hwb gain access to fully integrated, supported, and safeguarded digital services at no additional cost.

Is there a requirement for schools to migrate to cloud based storage solutions and if so, are schools required to use the Hwb platform?

There is no formal requirement for schools to migrate to cloud based storage solutions; however, cloud storage is encouraged as part of modern digital learning environments. Schools using Hwb can benefit from secure, centrally managed cloud storage services via Microsoft OneDrive and Google Drive. These services provide resilience, scalability, and enhanced security and cyber monitoring, ensuring users, and their data, are protected and accessible from any device.

Can schools continue to use their own platforms, such as school-owned Microsoft 365 tenants? If so, are there any conditions or restrictions attached to this?

Schools can continue using their own Microsoft 365 tenants if they prefer. However, it is important to consider the extra work and risks involved. Since Microsoft 365 is already available through Hwb at no cost to schools, using separate Microsoft 365 tenants can lead to siloed, and often unnecessary duplication support and maintenance.

By using the Microsoft 365 service provided through Hwb, schools can ensure a secure, seamless experience with easier access to all Hwb resources, while also reducing the burden of managing their own platform against increasing cyber and safeguarding threats.

The Welsh Government will continue working with local authorities to promote a joined-up approach to digital learning and encourage the adoption of Hwb services. Ensuring that learners and practitioners use Hwb services wherever possible helps maintain a secure and consistent digital learning environment across Wales, while sharing the experiences and opportunities that can be afforded to all our learners.

For further information about the Hwb platform, including guidance and support for local authorities and schools, please visit our [Support centre](#).

Should you require further clarification or assistance, please feel free to contact me.

Next steps

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at:

Information Rights Unit,
Welsh Government,
Cathays Park,
Cardiff,
CF10 3NQ

or Email: Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely