

A Schools Guide to Outsourced IT Services

Schools need to be focused on teaching and learning. With an outsourced IT service provider, you can trim down your in-house computer arsenal and allow New Era Technology to do the heavy lifting.

What Are Outsourced IT Services?

Outsourced IT services are when you hire an outside company like New Era Technology to handle your IT needs. A managed service provider (MSP) can cover everything from the security of networks and the implementation of operating systems, to the installation of software and the backup of files.

Note that outsourced IT services are not just break/fix services. A break/fix technician comes to you when something is broken, charging an hourly fee to diagnose and fix the problem.

A break/fix service might seem less expensive since you only pay when you have a problem, but it's likely to be more costly in the long run. They have little to no incentive to work quickly or make a stable fix since they get paid more if it takes them a long time or multiple trips to repair something.

Unlike break/fix services, a managed IT service provider builds a partnership with your school, constantly monitoring your network for a fixed fee. MSPs are there to keep your network running smoothly, not just to fix problems, so they have more incentive to find a fast, reliable solution if something does go wrong. It's better for you and the service provider if they neutralise threats and fix issues as they happen.

There is no specific size a school needs to be in order to benefit from outsourcing their IT. Smaller schools with limited resources may find outsourcing IT services especially beneficial as they may not have the budget or staff to handle technology needs in-house. Additionally, they can have access to a broader range of technology services and solutions that they could not afford or justify maintaining in-house.

Larger schools also can benefit from outsourcing IT services as it can help them to manage the complexity and scale of their technology infrastructure, keep up with new technologies, and ensure compliance with regulations.

Benefits of Managed Service Provider

- Increased Savings
- Predictable Budget
- Holistic Expertise
- Reliable Technicians
- Qualified Service
- Active IT Experience
- Maximized Productivity
- Immediate implementation
- Improved Customer Service
- Reduced Risk

What IT Solutions Can You Outsource?

With an outsourced IT service, you can let the MSP do the heavy lifting. Outsourced IT solutions cover two broad categories:

1. Computing Infrastructure

Outsource infrastructural tasks to an MSP staffed with the most skilled computing experts in the education industry. The MSP handles all the complicated hardware on their end while your staff simply sign on with laptops and smartphones.

2. Computing Software

Some of the most troubling aspects of computing for schools have involved software, which can be confusing to upgrade and difficult to synchronise across a school's system network. Worst of all, hardware could sometimes fail to read on certain machines or require costly hardware upgrades. With outsourced IT, none of these problems occur because MSPs always equip the most high-tech computer arsenals. The MSP tests and updates software, then your team just logs on and benefits from the improved performance.

4 Commonly Outsourced IT Solutions

An MSP can handle numerous solutions within these two categories. Here are four of the most common:

1. Network Security

One of the most significant benefits of outsourced IT services is the security protections. When you hire an MSP, you have ensured network security against cyber attacks. An outsourced network security solution can help protect your school from malware, viruses, phishing attacks, hacking attempts and other online threats. Offsite IT companies specialise in this area and are always up-to-date on the latest security measures, always staying ahead of the parties that wish to attack.

With an MSP, you get the following security benefits:

- Perpetual monitoring and system reports
- Maintenance notifications and security alerts
- Proactive breach prevention

2. Network Implementation & Maintenance

For most schools, the tasks involved with the implementation and update of system programs can be time-consuming and confusing. With an MSP at your service, you do not have to worry about it. Offsite IT services specialise in the implementation of computing and mobile networks and the integration of software programs. Managed service providers handle these sorts of tasks on a daily basis and can implement programs in just a fraction of the time it would take to achieve in-house.

3. Onsite and Off-site Support

When issues do arise on-site, an outsourced IT service will walk your staff through the trouble at hand. Whether the issue involves confusion over a system update or problems with network synchronisation, your team will have access to support from IT experts who know how to solve each and every computing issue that could arise. Many MSPs also have access to a support help desk for quick off-site support.

4. Technology Strategy Development

Many school districts today require sophisticated technology solutions to run their schools and education departments effectively. Having a strategy in place is therefore very important. A MSP has the necessary expertise to guide your school in the best technology strategy for your goals. A Managed Service Provider may also help with your school's technology procurement. Finding the best technology suited to your school, within your school's budget.

Pros of Outsourced IT Services

By outsourcing your school's IT tasks, you can cut down on operating costs and allocate time and resources to more productive matters. Schools outsource IT to have vital computing tasks performed by the most skilled, qualified hands.

9 Pros to Outsourcing Your School's IT Services

1. Increased Savings

IT personnel command high pay due to the intricacy and rarity of their skill set. For schools, the costs of retaining IT staff can be prohibitive. With outsourced IT, your school can avoid the costs of hiring and retaining in-house IT staff and allocate more money toward other teaching and/or learning resources.

2. Access to specialised expertise

In the world of computing, new issues and challenges emerge every day. An isolated IT employee who has spent years in the same school will typically have a knowledge-span limited to the problems known to that school. By contrast, the staff at an MSP will be experienced in a much wider range of computing issues, having serviced schools across the education sector. MSPs take IT extremely seriously and are on-the-ball nonstop regarding all matters pertaining to the field.

3. Flexibility

Outsourced IT services can be customised to meet the specific needs of a school, and can be adjusted or expanded as those needs change over time. Managed Service Providers have different agreements for schools that enable solutions suited to a schools specific requirements. For example, if a school has a particular project that needs to be completed, the MSP, knowing the school environment, can quickly offer a solution.

4. Compliance:

Some of the more troubling aspects of computing technology involve compliance issues and changing laws and regulations at the national and international levels. Part of the job for an MSP is to keep on top of these developments to ensure that you are always in compliance. Some MSP have lots of experience working with other New Zealand schools, and so are up to date with the Ministry of Education guidelines and changes. This means that your school does not have to spend time ensuring that you comply with all the constantly changing regulations.

5. Maximise Productivity

Outsourced IT service providers can help schools to streamline their technology infrastructure and use technology more effectively to support teaching and learning. Even if you have local IT personnel, an MSP can handle the heavy lifting and allow your computing staff to focus on more immediate concerns, free of maintenance troubles.

6. Scalability

Outsourced IT services can be scaled up or down as needed to accommodate changes in the school's technology infrastructure, usage, and budget. If wanting to scale down it is a more difficult process if a school has their own IT resource. If a school increases in size and requires more support, hiring new staff can be timely and costly. With an array of technical expertise, a MSP can quickly scale up their services.

7. Immediate Implementation

Whenever your school needs to have a program implemented, a MSP can perform the task instantly and have the whole thing up and running with network-wide compatibility. If you keep these tasks in-house, the steps that involve program implementation and network adaptability could leave your operations in limbo for weeks on end. With outsourced IT, you don't have to pause your regular operations waiting for implementations.

8. Improved Customer Service

An MSP works behind the scenes from an external location to service you on an ongoing basis. As this is happening, your school could regularly witness improved customer satisfaction thanks to the virtual elimination of service interruptions and downtime. With outsourced IT, your school will rarely, if ever, be beset with problems such as downed customer-support lines and unresponsive online school portals.

9. Reduced Risk

When you have an MSP working behind the scenes on your side, you virtually eliminate the possibility of downtime or cyber attacks. The problems that could set a school back and damage its reputation, such as long periods of website inoperability or breaches of student and staff information, are taken off the table when you outsource IT to third-party specialists.

When to Outsource Your IT?

Now that you know why you might want to outsource your school's IT, you may be wondering how you know when it's the right time to make the switch. If your school has had cost concerns and downtime due to hardware and software issues, now is the time to outsource your IT.

- **If You Lack In-House IT**

If your school is too small to hire dedicated IT personnel, or you just wish to save money and forego an IT staff, an MSP is a perfect solution. With outsourced IT, the tasks that the in-house department would handle in exchange for high salaries can instead be handled externally on a monthly subscription basis. Best of all, the service is superior to what you'd typically find among a string of IT applicants.

- **If You Have In-House IT**

Outsourced IT solutions can benefit your school even if you do have an in-house IT department and don't want to forego your staff. An MSP exists to handle IT functions on an ongoing basis day in, day out. While your in-house team focuses on computer operation, the outsourced IT service can act as a back-up in case things go wrong. You can use their services as and when you require it.

- **You Want to Save Money**

Computing aside, some of the most significant benefits of outsourcing IT services fall into the financial category. With outsourced IT, you can allocate in-house resources to tackle better the daily needs of your school. The services of an MSP cost less on a monthly basis than the salaries commanded by most in-house IT employees. This is because MSPs handle nothing but IT for a vast range of clients large and small, whereas an in-house IT employee would rely solely on you for his or her income.

- **You Want the Best Support Technologies**

Outsourced IT services experienced in the education industry are knowledgeable about the best technologies for the school environment. They can procure high grade devices for your school that meets your school requirements and budget. Best of all, your in-house staff does not even need to learn the more complicated aspects of hardware operation and software installation because the MSP handles all such tasks. Not only will a MSP focus on computer operation, they will also handle all the tasks involving software updates, security patches, security warnings, file protection and regulatory compliance.

Learn More About New Era's IT Services

The Leading IT Managed Service Provider in the NZ Education Industry

New Era Technology has managed service agreements to suit schools that need a little bit of help or schools that want us to do everything.

New Era Technology has delivered ICT assistance and services to schools in New Zealand for over 25 years. Our team of technicians and education experts ensure our customers get the best technical skills and advice available.

Our managed service agreements can cater to those with in-house ICT departments that want assurance of back-up when required, schools that need an additional hand throughout the year, and schools that want someone to look after their ICT for them.



As you need it



Hands on support

Your back-up in case things go wrong.

- As you need engineering time
- As you need strategic planning
- As you need service desk
- Access to security and BYOD services

A helping hand throughout the year.

- Regular onsite visits
- Strategic planning
- Regular technician support
- Service desk support

Let us do the heavy lifting.

- Fulltime technician onsite
- Annual strategic plan
- Service desk support
- Included project hours

Find Out More

Contact our team to find out what plan might be best suited to your school.

neweratech.com/nz/contact