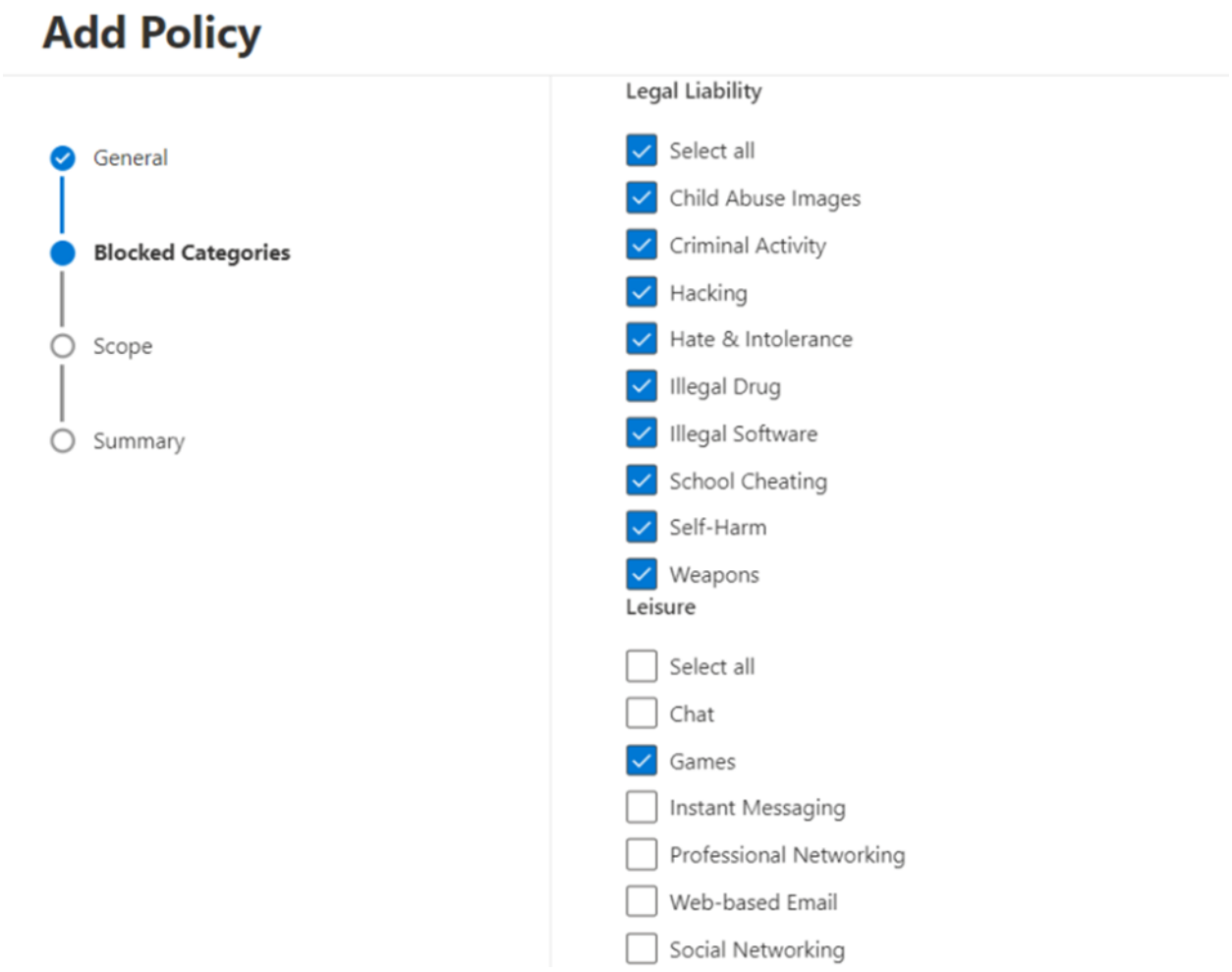
Microsoft Defender for Endpoint: Web Content Filter

Microsoft Defender for Endpoint is a holistic suite that includes risk-based vulnerability management and assessment, attack surface reduction, behavior-based and cloud-enabled next-generation protection, endpoint detection and response (EDR), automated investigation and remediation, managed hunting services, and rich APIs. is an endpoint security solution delivered by the cloud. One of its most important features is the Web Content Filter.

Web Content Filter is a feature that helps protect an organization's network by controlling the web content users can access. Blocks malicious and inappropriate websites based on predefined categories. This can be used as a powerful tool to protect against cyber threats, increase productivity and comply with legal requirements. It runs on a Windows endpoint using the Windows SmartScreen engine.



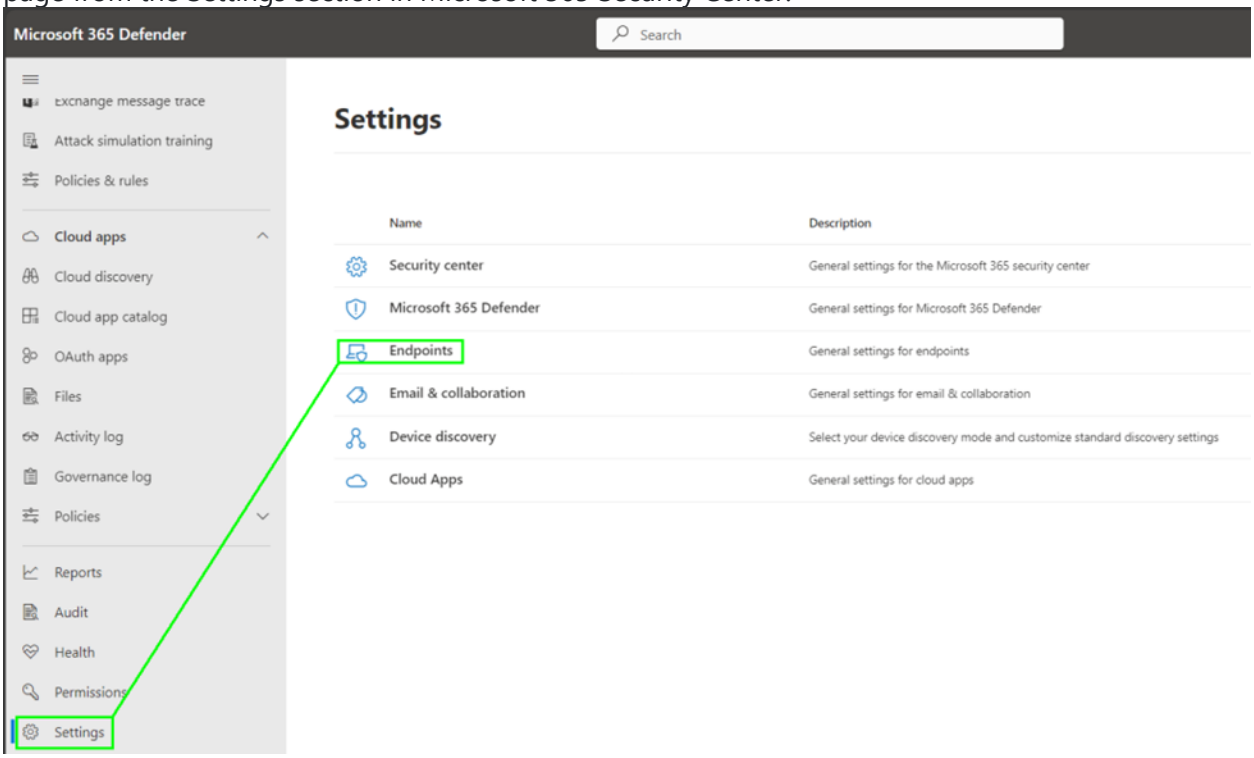
Prerequisites

To use this feature, organizations must have a Microsoft 365 E5, Microsoft 365 E5 Security or Business Premium license. Additionally, the device used must be Windows 10 Enterprise, version 1709 or higher.

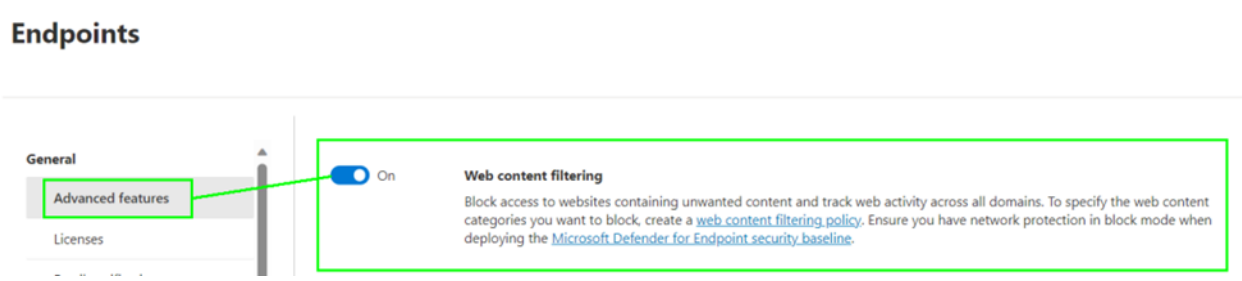
web con	Microsoft 365 Business	Microsoft 365 Frontline		Microsoft 365 Enterprise		Microsoft 365 Education	
Feature	**Premium**	**F5 Security**	**F5 Sec+Comp**	**E5 Security**	**E5**	**A5 Security**	**A5**
Office 365					**E5**		**A5**
Enterprise Mobility + Security					**E5**		**A5**
Windows	**Business**				**E5**		**A5**
> Web Content Filtering	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Activating the Web Content Filter

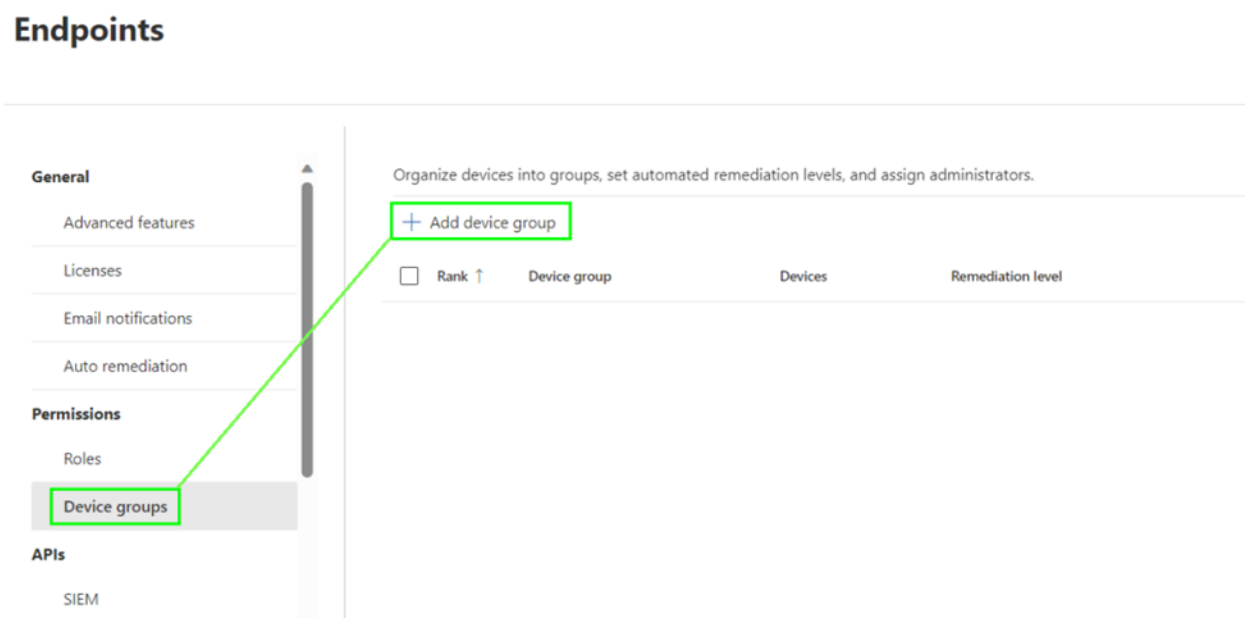
To enable Web Content Filter, we log in to https://security.microsoft.com/ and enter the Endpoint page from the Settings section in Microsoft 365 Security Center:



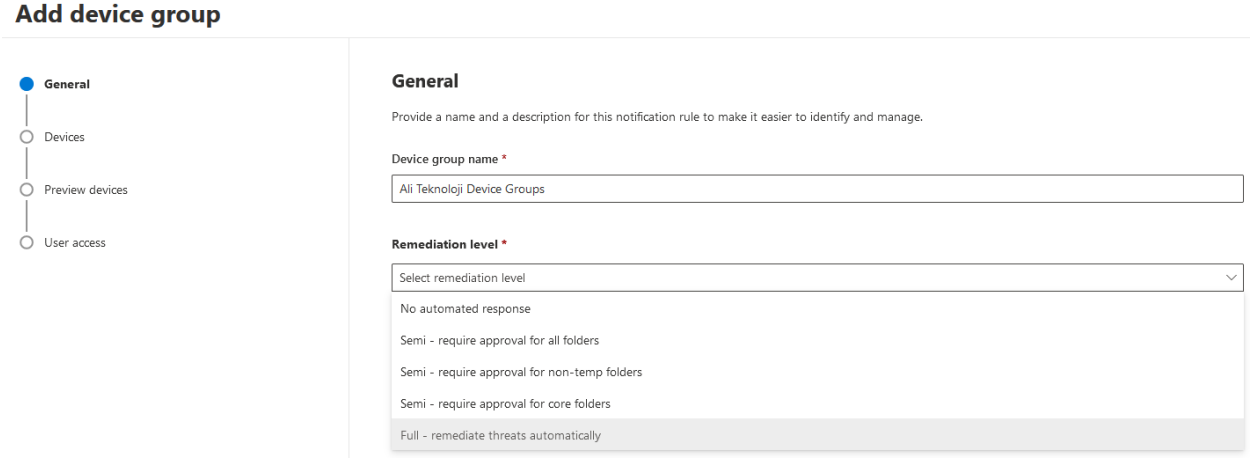
First, we activate the Web Content Filter feature under the Advanced Features tab.



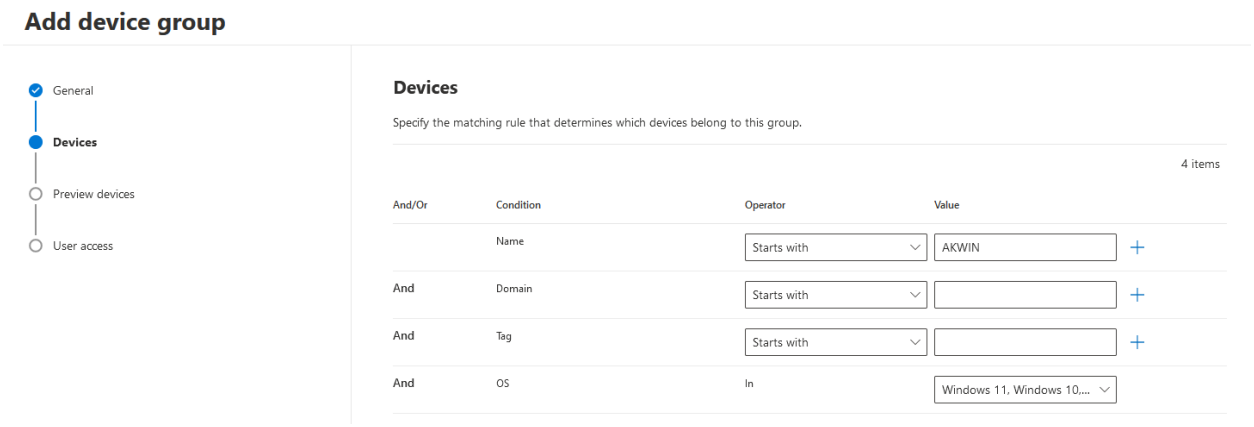
Now we need to define a device group to cover the policy. Unfortunately, Security Center does not use existing Entra ID groups; instead, you must create device groups to extend policies to a group of devices.



We determine the name of the group and the Remediation level. The remediation level we determine here tells us the level of action it will take.

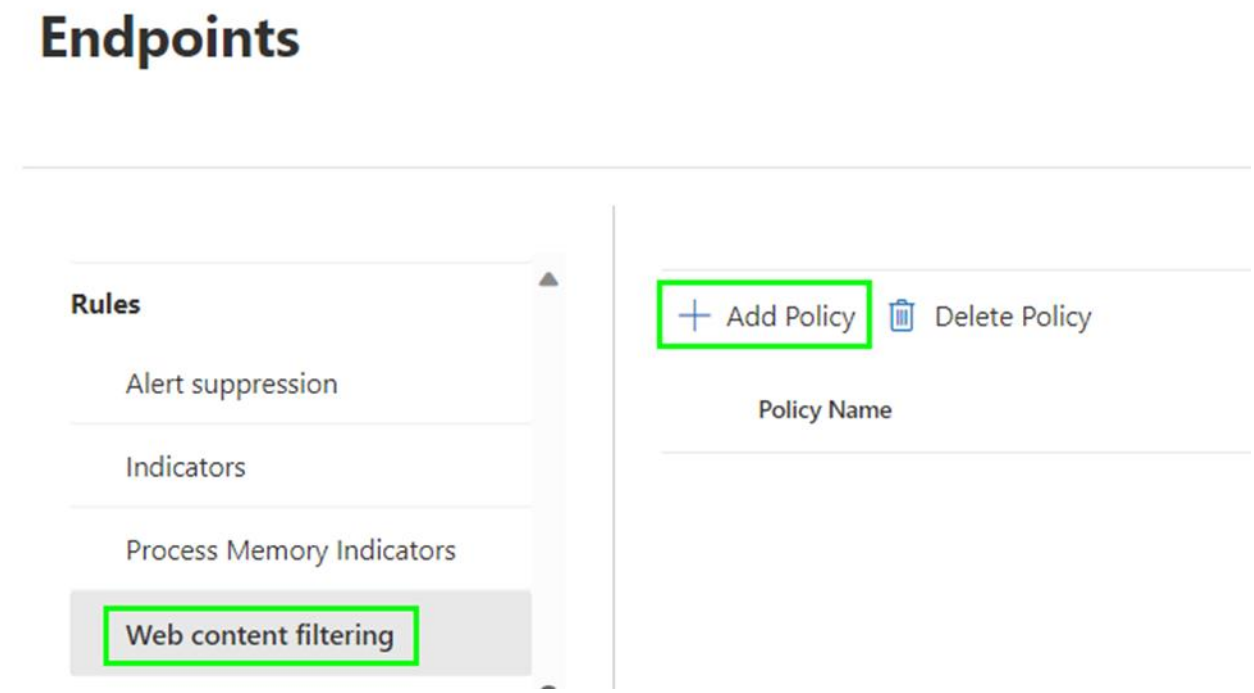


We need to add filters to get devices under a certain scope. In this example, we set the filter to apply to every device where the PC name starts with “AKWIN” and the operating system must be Windows 10/11/AVD.

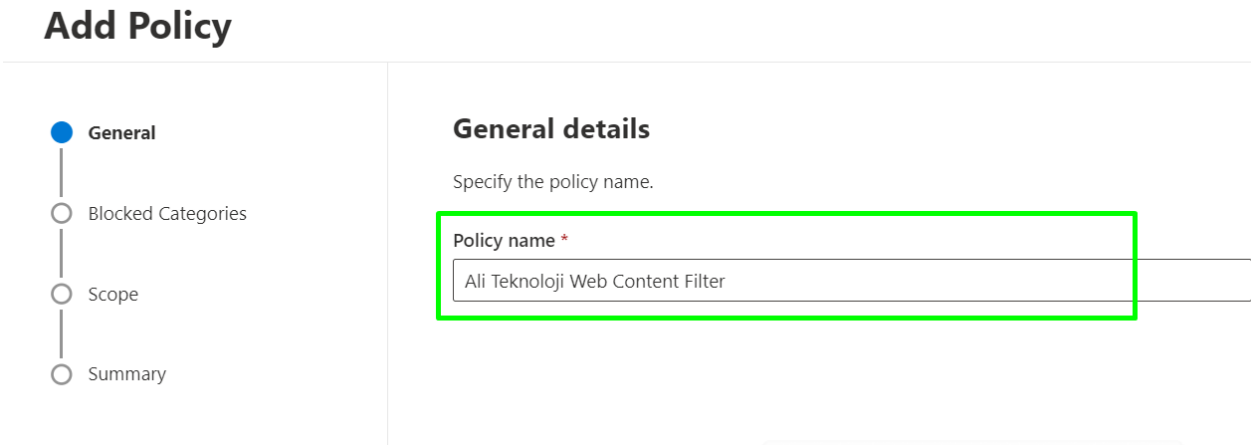


We created the device group.

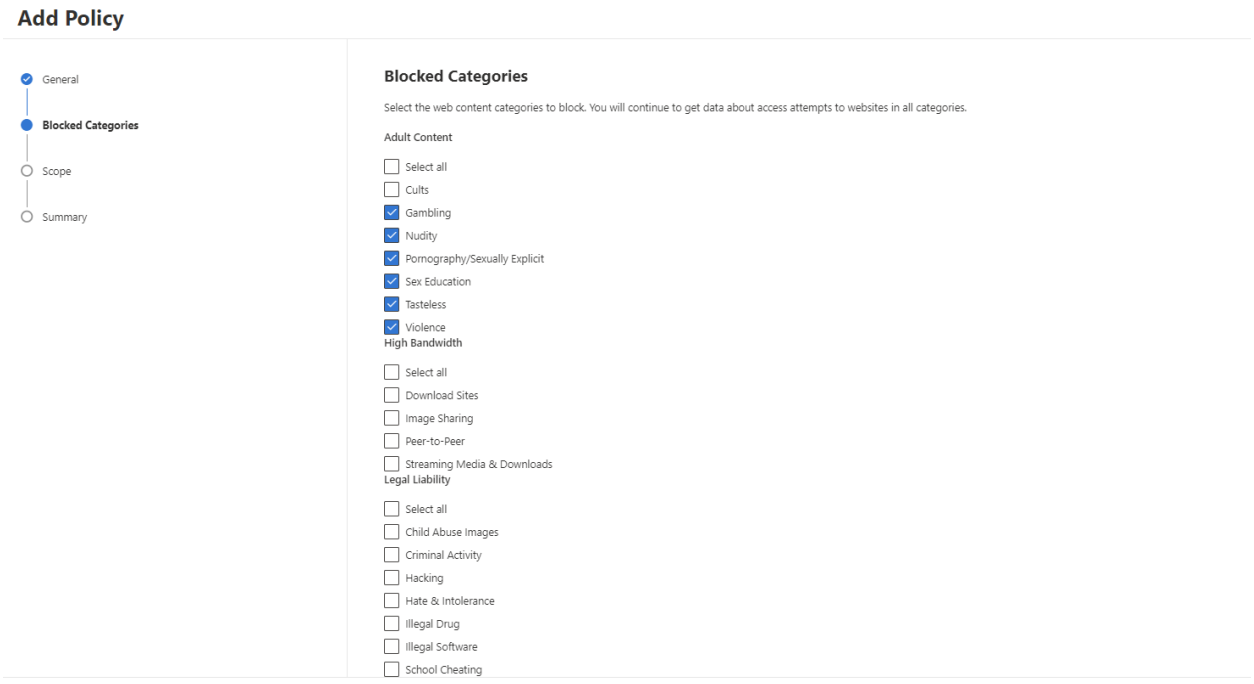
Next, we need to create a category list in which we define which categories of web content should be blocked. Therefore, from the “Rules” section on the left menu, we select “Web Content Filter” and select the Add Policy option.

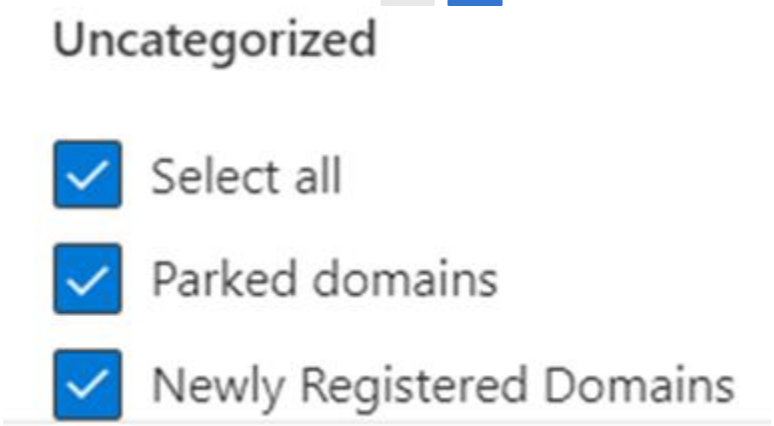


We determine the name of the policy.



Now we determine which categories we want to filter by policy.





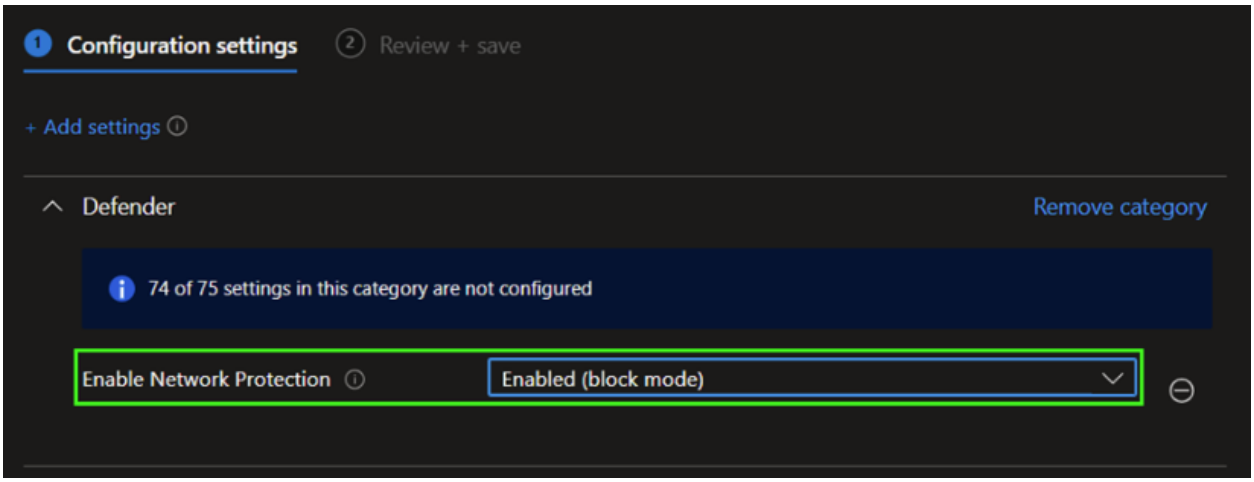
Once we have selected all the categories that need to be blocked, we go ahead and assign the policy to the device group created earlier.

You have now configured everything necessary in Microsoft Security Center.

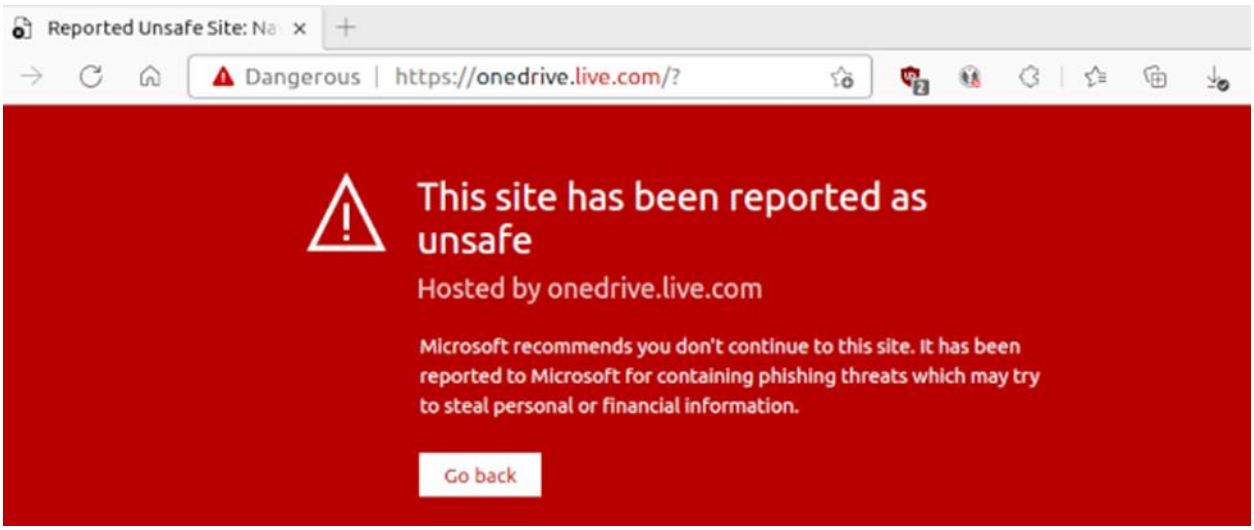
We activate the Network Protection feature with the Device Configuration Profile.

To create a Device Configuration Profile, go to [https://endpoint.microsoft.com > Devices > Configuration Profile > Create profile from the Settings catalog.](https://endpoint.microsoft.com) Then you can type "Network Protection" in the search field.

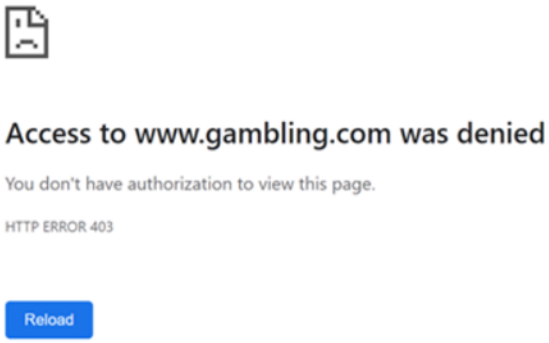
For "Network Protection", enable the feature in block mode as in the screenshot below:



The resulting profile must be registered after being assigned to the device group.
Once all the configuration has been created, a user trying to EDGE access a blocked url will see the following SmartScreen warning:



The user who tries to access with a different browser will see the following "Access Denied" warning;



The Web Content Filter feature is also an enableable feature on iOS, Android and macOS devices. We will also examine the study on this in a different article.