

Autumn Term, 2019

Dear Head Teacher/ School ICT Technician,

Re: Electromagnetic Radiation from Wireless technologies in schools.

I feel compelled to write to you amid growing concern and increasing evidence showing the harmful effects of sustained, low-frequency EMFs (Electromagnetic fields) and specifically, on the health of children, from Wi-fi and wireless technology. The long list of effects being linked to this technology by a great many physicians and scientists across the world, and being noticed increasingly in schools and colleges, range from headaches, brain fog, nosebleeds and inability to concentrate, to mental health issues such as anxiety and depression, blood disorders, heart palpitations, fertility problems-and cancer. In 2011 [The World Health Organisation](#) graded EMF radiation as a type **2b Carcinogen** and there has since been sufficient evidence for calls for EMFR to be upgraded to a 'definite' carcinogen. (See ref 1.) *For guidance on this type of carcinogen as it relates to the workplace, please see the TUC Occupational Cancer pdf reference.)*

Many of the organisations named at the end of this letter provide comprehensive lists of the physical and mental effects of this type of radiation and the evidence for their findings.

EMF radiation (and concern about even higher levels of exposure with the rollout of 5G) has, in recent months, been the subject of several BBC radio articles (*ref 2*), and a debate in parliament, (*ref 3*.) The [Council of Europe](#) in 2011, passed a draft resolution (1815) in which they *unanimously* voted to ban wifi (and mobile phones) in schools. (*ref 4*)

Wi-fi in European schools

Internationally, most other countries have greatly reduced the use of Wi-fi and have limited exposure to EMFs in schools. France leads the way, together with Cyprus, in **banning Wi-fi** from nurseries or in some cases, all schools. I was dismayed to find that **the U.K** (and parts of the USA) have **by far the highest threshold** for exposure to wireless technologies by children, in some cases, up to **10,000 times higher!** (*ref 5*) Why is no-one in education told this?!

Duty of care.

Like yourselves and everyone who has worked with children, I care deeply about their welfare. I personally know a growing number of parents locally who have concerns about their children's exposure to EMF's whilst at school, which unlike the home environment, is not under their control. They wish for something to be done and are actively seeking schools without wi-fi, which is almost impossible, currently. Schools take great care to safeguard children in all aspects of school life. They teach Esafety, but must also include in this, safeguarding against EMF exposures.

This quote from the website '[Wiredchild](#)',

'The school's duty of care means that Wi-fi is generally inappropriate in school, where pupils and teachers are unable to choose to avoid this radiation. A wired network should be used instead. This can be practically as easy and is usually faster and more secure.'

The compulsorily Wi-fi'd environment is a situation similar to passive smoking-and just as serious. Risk assessments for EMF radiation are rarely carried out because schools have relied on the advice given by [Public Health England](#), advising schools the technology is safe. However, **tens of thousands** of papers submitted by medical doctors and scientists, together with several petitions by organisations concerned with education are calling for an urgent re-assessment of this position.

Last year, [SSITA, \(Safe Schools Information Technology Alliance\)](#), wrote an open letter to Damian Hinds, MP, (Ref 6), in which they drew the MP's attention to an important and comprehensive research study published in 2016, by Dr.Sarah Starkey,(Ref 7) a neuroscientist, in which the advice given by Public Health England is condemned as being **outdated, incorrect and misleading**. The Report also reveals that the same board members who set the current guidelines were involved in reviewing these guidelines, which seriously questions the independence of this advice. Most astonishing is that the advisory body responsible for these assessments upon which the DfE relies, known as AGNIR, (Advisory Group for Non-Ionising Radiation) no longer exists and was disbanded around the same time as the publication of Dr Starkey's report. I very much doubt schools are aware of this fact.

Taking the view that advice given to schools needs to be urgently updated in the light of the report by Dr. Starkey, SSITA questions an earlier response they received from the DfE, saying that;

"...schools must take reasonable steps to ensure that staff and pupils are not exposed to risks to their health and safety by conducting risk assessments and, if necessary, putting measures in place to minimise any known risk."

In the letter to Parliament, SSITA then makes the point;

"...For schools to be able to carry out an effective risk assessment as part of their safeguarding responsibilities in relation to the increasing cumulative exposures within the school environment, they need to be accurately informed."

This point cannot be over-emphasised; that schools have been unable to accurately assess the risk of this technology **because so much pertinent information has not been available to them**, yet schools are required by the DfE to carry out accurate risk assessments on it!

The letter also mentions an earlier response from Ofsted, in which a spokesperson for Ofsted confirmed their position on Wi-fi , that it is not in their remit and further, that SSITA could even '*consider legal action*' against an individual school, to which SSITA's response was;

*"...I did not believe that there was a Headteacher who would willingly expose the children in his or her care to serious risk, if he or she had been provided with **full** knowledge of those risks."*

A key failing of the advice given is that tests that have been carried out are for **thermal** radiation effects only, not the low-frequency pulsed, (non-ionising) radiation present in Wi-fi, (also smart meters, baby monitors, Fitbit watches, other 'wearables' and cordless phones) technology. However, it is this type of exposure which, over time, has a **greater disruptive effect** on physical systems of the human body, especially in the young, who have less well-developed defences. (Ref 8)

A particular feature of schools, is the **cumulative effect** of ceiling routers, SMART boards and overlapping radiation fields from several devices, inside closed spaces, (classrooms,) which increases the accumulation of EMFs. Current advice, as well as not being relevant to this type of radiation, also fails to take into account the length of time children and staff spend in this environment on a daily basis.

SSITA's letter to government makes clear Ofsted's stance, that it is NOT a requirement for schools to have Wi-fi. Steiner schools, Brighton Waldorf included, restrict use to localised areas, the offices for example. The London Acorn school in Morden, who achieved 'outstanding' by Ofsted, is wi-fi free and restricts the use of computers.

I want to thank you for your time in reading this, and urge you, if possible, to carry out your own research on its contents. I appreciate how ubiquitous mobile and wireless technology has become in our society. However, in order for schools to be able to say they are doing everything in their power to protect children's health and wellbeing, something must be done immediately to limit or stop exposures to EMFR by children (and staff) by restricting the use of, or removing Wi-fi from our schools.

One last point, I, and many others, are concerned that if schools remain unaware of the dangers to health of EMFs from wireless technologies, then they are more likely to accept without resistance, pressure or financial incentives to place masts with 5G capability on their schools*. This technology, (indeed all mobile technology,) is untested by the telecoms industry and uninsurable, because not one insurer is satisfied there are no risks to humans or the environment. If allowed, children in particular, would be 'guinea pigs' in this experiment.

**as was the case of a school in Haringey this year. Thankfully, they resisted.*

Yours faithfully,

A concerned local teacher,

In association with 5G Action West Sussex.

(For further info, please contact 5Gaction-westsussex@protonmail.com)

For a quick overview of some of the issues raised in this letter, and findings regarding the impact on cognitive development of these technologies, I recommend reading the extracts attached from the article '[Shallow Minds: How the Internet and Wi-fi in schools can affect learning](#)'.

References:

1. WHO: I.A.R.C. (International Agency for Research on Cancer) https://www.iarc.fr/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/pr208_E.pdf
TUC –Occupational Cancer leaflet;
<https://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/occupationalcancer>
2. Most recently, Jeremy Vine, BBC Radio 2, 14th August 2019.
3. Hansard-transcript, Antoniazzi 25 June 2019 (*Electro-magnetic fields: Health Effects.*)
4. Council of Europe 2011 Draft Resolution 1815- (Quoted in letter sent by SSITA and various references in publications and websites listed.)
5. Comparison of world exposure limits, PHIRE website, (See below)
6. Open Letter to Damian Hinds MP, Secretary of State for Education, 20 Great Smith Street, Westminster, London, SW1P 3BT. (SSITA website, <https://www.ssita.org.uk>, 'letters to government' section, item 8.)
7. 'Inaccurate official assessment of radiofrequency safety by the Advisory Group on Non-Ionising Radiation'- Dr Sarah Starkey 2016,
<https://www.degruyter.com/view/j/reveh.2016.31.issue-4/reveh-2016-0060/reveh-2016-0060.xml?format=INT>
8. PHIRE website, (wirelessriskassessment.org) among others.

Some other sources of information:

[Wiredchild- \(protecting children from wireless technology\)](#) website- with section for schools and education.

[SSITA – Safe School Information Technology Alliance \(https://www.ssita.org.uk\)](https://www.ssita.org.uk)

wifiinschools.org.uk , wirelessriskassessment.org – Focus on Esafety in schools and world initiatives.

[The Environmental Health Trust. \(https://ehtrust.org\)](https://ehtrust.org) /[cyprus-launches-wireless-radiation-awareness-campaign/](#)

[PHIRE \(Physicians & Health Initiative for Radiation & Environment,\)](#) created by Dr Erica Mallery-Blythe of the Radiation Trust, with information and resources for schools, (<https://phiremedical.org>) [IGNIR](#)-New recommended guidelines in light of evidence of non-thermal effects.