

From: Tom Lonergan <tomlonergan@pdst.ie>

Fri 01/12/2017 13:16

To: Máire Costello;

1 attachments (122 KB)

Response from DCCAIE on wifi.doc;

Dear Máire,

Here is the updated (Dec 2017) response from Robert Doyle, Environmental Radiation Policy Section, Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment (DCCAIE).

As their position is unchanged from 2013, it is quite similar to the previous position.

In summary it states that **'The Department sees no reason at this time, based on existing scientific research, why WiFi should not continue to be used in schools. This view is widely shared by, among others, the HPA (UK) and Health Canada.'**

Best Regards

Tom Lonergan,

National Coordinator - Technology Integration

PDST Technology in Education,

Dublin City University (DCU),

Glasnevin, Dublin 9

Direct Line: 01-7005608

www.pdsttechnologyineducation.ie/Technology

From: Tom Lonergan [mailto:tomlonergan@pdst.ie]

Sent: 29 November 2017 16:07

To: 'Máire Costello' :

Subject: RE: Electromagnetic Fields in the Irish Context - Wifi

Hi Máire,

Thank you for your response and I appreciate that you require further clarification on the matter.

I will email the DCCAIE and seek this clarification, as they have responsibility for this area.

When I receive it, I will of course pass it on to you.

Best Regards

Tom Lonergan,

National Coordinator - Technology Integration

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From: Máire Costello

Sent: 29 November 2017 14:10

To: tomlonergan@pdst.ie

Subject: RE: Electromagnetic Fields in the Irish Context - Wifi

Dear Tom.

Thank you for your response.

My initial query was about the Department of Education position on the use of WiFi in schools specifically regarding any possible adverse health effects on students.

The RIVM report that you sent me and the note from the Department of Communications specifically focus on electromagnetic fields from high-voltage overhead power lines and from base stations for mobile telecommunications.

The section of the RIVM report that you directed me to discusses the policies adopted in five European countries in respect of RF signals but does not mention the position in this country.

I don't know what EMF's and RF fields are, and have no idea how or if they relate to WiFi in my school.

However, I now have a situation in my school where a parent of one of my students has said if we don't turn off the WiFi he will go to the wider community and to the media to highlight how the WiFi in the school is damaging children's health.

If this happens and I have to defend our use of WiFi I will need a clear and unambiguous statement of the Department of Education position on the use of WiFi in schools specifically regarding any possible adverse health effects on students.

It would appear that in 2013 a similar situation arose and the PDST issued a statement that said "DECLG sees no reason at this time, based on existing scientific research, why WiFi should not continue to be used in schools." Ref: <http://www.pdsttechnologyineducation.ie/en/Technology/Wi-Fi-in-Schools/Wifi-in-Schools-10-1-2013-.pdf>

Can you even confirm that that this is still the position of DECLG and PDST?

Apologies for this but I trust you understand the predicament I am in.

Le gach dea ghúí,

Máire

From: Tom Lonergan [<mailto:tomlonergan@pdst.ie>]

Sent: 28 November 2017 12:48

To: Máire Costello

Subject: Electromagnetic Fields in the Irish Context - Wifi

Dear Máire,

Thank you for your query in relation to wifi in schools.

The Department who has responsibility for this area in the **Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment**.

The note below and attached report is the most recent position that we have received from them, 'the report re-affirms the overall conclusion of the 2007 report'.

The updated RIVM report (from 2015) is attached.

Also the current Digital Strategy for Schools (2015-2020) states that 'the rollout of Wireless networks or wifi in schools is a key Government priority' (page 42).

Best Regards

Tom Lonergan,
National Coordinator - Technology Integration
PDST Technology in Education

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Electromagnetic Fields in the Irish Context.

The Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, in collaboration with the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (as it was then) commissioned the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment of the Netherlands (RIVM) to prepare a report on the current scientific knowledge on the possible health effects of exposure to electromagnetic fields and to examine how a sample of five other countries (France, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Sweden and the United Kingdom) deal with this matter.

The RIVM Report, which is an update of the assessment of the 2007 report commissioned by the DCMNR, examined and synthesised existing peer-reviewed research into key, clear points with particular focus on the potential health effects of electric and magnetic fields arising from high voltage power lines and electromagnetic fields from base stations for mobile communication. The report re-affirms the overall conclusion of the 2007 report-**Health Effects of Electromagnetic Fields-** in that there is insufficient evidence to establish a causal relationship between exposure to low-frequency electromagnetic fields and cancers.

Please find attached a copy of the RIVM Report and I refer you to pages 53 to 57 which deals specifically with mobile communication.

Best regards
Emmet Fahy

Emmet Fahy Higher Executive Officer | Air Quality & Environmental Radiation Policy

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From: Máire Costello
Sent: 27 November 2017 09:31
To: ictadvice@pdst.ie
Subject: Internet Safety

To whom it concerns,

I am the Principal of St. Brigids NS in Greystones, Co Wicklow, roll number 16573N.

A parent of one of our pupils has raised an issue concerning the use of WiFi in the school. Specifically, he says that exposure to WiFi has adverse affects on pupil's health and is suggesting that the location of a WiFi access point in the classroom might be the cause of his son feeling unwell at school.

I note from your website that in 2013 you issued clarification on this point. This document stated that "WiFi systems have not been shown to produce adverse human health effects" and

"DECLG sees no reason at this time, based on existing scientific research, why WiFi should not continue to be used in schools".

Ref: <http://www.pdsttechnologyineducation.ie/en/Technology/Wi-Fi-in-Schools/Wifi-in-Schools-10-1-2013-.pdf>

As the health and safety of our pupils is of paramount importance to us, can you confirm if this is still the current position of the Department of Education and Skills and the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government regarding the use of WiFi in primary schools?

Your assistance in this matter will be greatly appreciated.

Kind regards, Máire Costello