

Halton Region Parents:

MAKE THESE REQUESTS FOR SAFER ALTERNATIVES & ACTIONS

By contacting your MP, MPP, and Trustee

a. Request a Moratorium on Use of Wi-Fi in Halton Region Schools

In Halton Schools, operation of Wi-Fi communication and data services must be prohibited until research can demonstrate with certainty that human exposure (both acute and long term) to equipment emissions within Wi-Fi coverage areas does not in any way adversely affect any students or staff. Research suggests that we take precautions whenever possible. Other countries are taking precautions to protect children: The European Parliament is recommending wireline or plug-in connections wherever possible, as is Russia and Israel. The town of Herouville St. Clair in France removed Wi-Fi from all schools and public buildings, and replaced it with fiber-optic cable. Schools in Switzerland use fiber-optic as well. Are Halton Region students not entitled to the safest schools in the world?

b. Request HDSB Conduct a Study

Reports of health and safety concerns regarding the widespread use of technology are increasing, as common use of wireless gear for voice and data communication (e.g., cell phones, Wi-Fi) produces non-ionizing electromagnetic radiation that at some level is already proven with certainty to be hazardous to human health. We have learned from experience with other environmental contaminants, such as cigarette smoke and asbestos, that health effects of unprecedented long term exposure to this radiation may not be epidemiologically evident for some time. As such, HDSB must provide a thorough, independent study of all that is known about the impact of non-ionizing electromagnetic radiation, review the possible implications for schools and children, and make recommendations to the HDSB Health/Wellness and Safety Department and make findings publicly available on the HDSB website.

c. Request Protocol and Enforcement of Regular Shut-off Capability (On/Off Switches)

To reduce needless exposure of children and staff to radiofrequency electromagnetic radiation, Wi-Fi networks and features must be off by default. The Principal and all staff must be provided with clear instructions and access to turn Wi-Fi on in a specific room for the duration that is required for each class' use. At all other times, the Wi-Fi network and Wi-Fi features of personal and class use devices are to be turned off. This status must be strictly monitored and maintained by school staff.

d. Request Wireless Consent Form from Parents and Make Wired Technology Available

Halton Region schools currently have numerous wireline computers. These computers must be maintained and must be the preferred choice for internet connectivity. If schools choose to utilize wireless devices, all parents must be required to sign consent for their child(ren) to be exposed to Wi-Fi emissions and consent for their child(ren) to use wireless devices. Students whose parents have not provided consent to their child's exposure or use must be accommodated by providing parents with timely notice of when Wi-Fi/wireless activities will occur, so that alternative arrangements may be made. These accommodations must be in consultation with the school Principal and parents to ensure equity of education for all Halton Region students.

e. Request Signage at Wi-Fi Areas

Students, staff and visitors must be able to identify which schools have Wi-Fi by signage at the main entrance of the school. Any areas of the school where Wi-Fi is on throughout the school day must be clearly identified with visual signs for students, staff and visitors. Wi-Fi On/Off switches must be clearly labeled. A delineated map of the school routers and wireless lab and other network equipment and use locations must be prominently displayed in the main office and copies of this map provided to parents upon request to the Principal.

f. Request Regular Monitoring of Radiation Levels

The Board must monitor radiation levels semi-annually (or more often) and record all actual measurements on individual school websites, under the "About Us" tab. Measurements must be conducted by a trained, independent technician during periods of peak Wi-Fi utilization.

g. Request Staff Training on Safer Use of Wireless Devices

The Board must require a safety policy that ensures all staff are adequately trained in safer use of wireless devices (e.g., mobile phones, tablets, laptops, etc.). This training must include, but is not limited to, the safer use of wireless devices in keeping with the instruction manuals provided by the manufacturers and how to disable wireless networks (and other RF transmitters) on their wireless-enabled devices when not required for direct use. If the manufacturers operating instructions are not followed, the manufacturers do not guarantee the safety of their device. The Board's safety policy must be reviewed each school year with all staff.

h. Request Emission Sources are at Maximum Distance and Minimum Output

Location of the Wi-Fi routers in classroom settings must maximize the distance between routers and students (keeping in mind that physical barriers such as walls, ceilings and floors are not always barriers to emissions). The Board's Wi-Fi system, CISCO 3600 series manuals state "[Health Canada] recommends that if you are interested in further reducing your exposure you can easily do so by reorienting antennas away from the user, placing the antennas at a greater distance than recommended, or lowering the transmitter output". Network equipment often has adjustable output and output must be as low as reasonably achievable (ALARA).

i. Request HDSB Accommodate Sensitive Students in a Timely Manner

Currently our schools are smoke-free and nut-free regardless of how small the minority in the population is affected. Environmental Sensitivities, including electro-hypersensitivity, is recognized as a disability under the Canadian Human Rights Code as well as the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). As such, HDSB has a duty to accommodate children who experience environmental sensitivities. These accommodations must be in consultation with the Principal and parents to ensure equity of education for all Halton Region students. HDSB must record the number of students for whom accommodations are requested and required and make this information available to Halton Region Trustees for annual review. Full disclosure to staff and parents must be made available through the HDSB websites.

INFORM OTHER PARENTS & ENCOURAGE THEM TO MAKE THESE REQUESTS
