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MailOnline

'Wi-fi networks must be removed from schools to stop children getting cancer,' teachers insist

By [Laura Clark](#)

Last updated at 8:53 AM on 9th April 2009

Wireless 'wi-fi' technology should be removed from schools to prevent millions of children suffering a heightened risk of cancer and sterility, teachers have demanded.

The Association of Teachers and Lecturers called for classroom wireless networks to be suspended immediately until research has properly considered the threat to health.

Members said they were concerned by scientific reports linking wi-fi with impaired concentration, loss of short-term memory, chromosome damage and increased incidence of cancer.



Risk: Teachers are concerned by scientific reports linking wi-fi with chromosome damage and increased incidence of cancer

But there have been no long-term studies into the health effects, they said, even though 70 per cent of secondary schools and 50 per cent of primaries have already introduced it.

Wi-fi systems use high frequency radio waves to transmit and receive data over distances of several hundred feet.

They allow users to surf the internet on demand within range of a wireless transmitter and remove the need to connect via a cable.

Colin Kinney, Cookstown High School, in Cookstown, Northern Ireland, who highlighted the issue at the ATL's annual conference, cited international experts who had called for caution when introducing wi-fi technology.

He said research from Sweden had warned about the increased cancer risk and the Government there now funds shielding agents, such as foil covered rooms and anti-radiation point.

Mr Kinney said a Government scientist from Austria had called for wi-fi to be removed from schools claiming there was evidence of 'increased symptoms as well as increased cancer rates'.

He said Sir William Stewart, chairman of the Health Protection Agency, had called for a precautionary approach when siting masts near schools.

But now this prudent course of action had been all but abandoned and attitude of the Government was to 'roll it out and don't stop until someone proves a risk', Mr Kinney added.

'Have we the right to avoid the moral warnings simply for access to a few more computers?' he told the union's annual conference in Liverpool.

'Are our pupils going to thank us in the years to come if they have become sterile or suffer from cancer, brought on by or exacerbated by the exposure to wi-fi?

'Perhaps they would just be eternally grateful that we enabled them to finish their power point presentation for geography.

'By all means let us here today as individuals use wi-fi, after all we are mature enough to make our own minds up.

'Should we force our pupils to use it without long-term safety studies being carried out? I don't believe we should.'

He added: 'Let's stick to wired computers and other wired devices for the time being.

'Ok, so teachers may have to wait a little longer for their IT suite to become available but at least we will be safeguarding health.

'Let's ask for an independent investigation taking into consideration the biological as well as thermal effects of wi-fi and for the results to be made public.'

The union pledged to lobby the Government for a full investigation into the effects of wi-fi.

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Published by Associated Newspapers Ltd

Part of the Daily Mail, The Mail on Sunday & Metro Media Group

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