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**OPEN LETTER**  
**Child with Electro-Sensitivity at School**

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Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to support the parent who has given you this letter. Their child suffers from Electro-sensitivity (ES) or Electromagnetic-hypersensitivity (EHS), also known as Microwave Sickness or Intolerance to Electromagnetic Fields. It can be a severely disabling condition, where wireless devices like Wifi and mobile phones cause a wide range of symptoms.

These symptoms have been established in the scientific literature for many decades. The UK's Department of Health and Public Health England currently state that there is no "consistent" evidence that Wifi and mobile phones have adverse health effects. This is because the health effects of Wifi and mobile phones depend on the individual health status and sensitivity of the child concerned. Individual sensitivity, of course, varies to a great extent, depending on genetic factors and autoimmune levels. Thus, international biological safety limits have a special category for those who are more sensitive to wireless radiation.

Severe allergic reactions to Wifi and mobile phones affect probably well under 1% of the general population. Therefore many schools have no child who is severely sensitive. The World Health Organization suggests that about 3.1 to 3.8% of the general population is moderately sensitive to radiation like Wifi and mobile phones, higher than the 1.3 to 1.8% of children with sensitivity to nuts, where schools typically make safeguarding provisions.

This allergy or intolerance to electromagnetic energy has been known to medical scientists since 1932. It was once limited to workers in the electricity, radio and radar industries. Since the 1980s, when mobile phones and later Wifi became common, it has spread increasingly into the general population. This physical sensitivity, which can be measured objectively, is different from electrophobia, a psychological fear which does not apply to most children.

It is straightforward to safeguard a child with this allergy or intolerance by making the "reasonable adjustments" required by the Equality Act. These typically include:

- (i) Switching off Wifi transmitters and using a wired internet network instead.
- (ii) Restricting the use of mobile phones and iPads or other wireless devices.
- (iii) It is also sometimes possible to shield a classroom and/or play area by using protective paint and netting, but the child should maintain social access.

Some relevant documents:

- (a) [IGNIR](#) and the [EUROPAEM EMF Guidelines \(2016\)](#) give biological limits. Meters to check that radiation levels meet biological safety limits cost £100-£350.

- (b) [Wireless Risk Assessment](#) provides templates suitable for schools.
- (c) A UK educational tribunal in 2018 recognised a pupil with EHS as having a health disability. The UK's [Equality Act 2010](#), based on the [United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#), requires reasonable steps to avoid discrimination against a disabled person (20.4). Countries such as Canada, Sweden and the USA already list EHS specifically as a functional disability.
- (d) The US Department of Labor [Job Accommodation Network \(JAN\)](#) in 2015 published "Accommodations for Electrosensitivity" for employers.
- (e) The [Health and Safety at Work Act 1974](#) requires a general duty of care to ensure that persons on the premises are not exposed to health and safety risks (2(1), 3), and the [Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999](#) require competent people to fulfil statutory responsibilities and risk assessments.

Wifi is the legal responsibility of the school. Wireless risks may not be covered by insurance.

- (1) The Health & Safety Executive (HSE) has stated that all schools should undertake a risk assessment before installing Wifi. The Department of Health and PHE's advice does not cover all risks from Wifi, especially long-term and for sensitive persons.
- (2) Wifi and similar radiation was classified in 2011 as a 2B possible human carcinogen by the World Health Organization's IARC, like chloroform, DDT, engine exhaust and lead. Scientists say scientific evidence now requires that it should be class 1 certain.
- (3) The World Health Organization and ICNIRP, which the UK government follows, still consider only 6-minute heating effects of electromagnetic energy, not established long-term effects like cancers, Electro-hypersensitivity (EHS), and impaired fertility, but also stated in 2002 that sensitive persons need lower limits than ICNIRP's.

Schools need to develop a Personal Health Care Plan and a School Safeguarding Plan for each child who is allergic to Wifi and mobile phones, but since it is not an educational issue a Special Educational Needs plan is not required. Such a child may also come within the Disabilities Policy agreed by the Governing Body, since in 2018 a UK educational tribunal recognised EHS as a health disability. To exclude a child from a school by discriminating against the child's disabilities is illegal. Ofsted has said that it does not judge schools by how they access the internet and schools can achieve 'excellent' with wired systems.

If a school does not address fully a child's health needs, including physical abuse with a substance toxic to the child through the imposition of Wifi or mobile phone radiation, parents can make a formal written complaint (section 29 of the Education Act 2002). This Act requires school governors to establish and publicise their complaints procedures.

Yours faithfully,

Michael Bevington  
Chair of Trustees, ElectroSensitivity UK

*Resources:*

- 1. [ES-UK Leaflet](#) on Electrosensitivity. Dr Erica Mallery-Blythe: [video lecture](#) (2015, 15 minutes).
- 2. [ES-UK Selected Studies](#) for hundreds of detailed scientific peer-reviewed studies.
- 3. <http://ssita.org.uk/>; [www.wifiinschools.org.uk/](http://www.wifiinschools.org.uk/); [Wireless Risk Assessment](#); [IGNIR](#); [Child Law Advice](#); [www.es-uk.info](http://www.es-uk.info/); [www.bioinitiative.org](http://www.bioinitiative.org/); [www.electrosensitivity.co](http://www.electrosensitivity.co/); [USA: JAN](#).
- 4. G Lean: "[As more countries ban iPads and mobile phones from the classroom, could wifi be giving our children cancer?](#)" (Daily Mail, June 22 2018); M Pall: [Wifi important threat](#) (2018).