WiFi

Wireless Technology in Schools

Information for parents

Over 90% of New Zealand schools use wireless networking (WiFi) to connect to the internet – find out what this means for your child.

How schools use technology

Digital technologies can be an important part of your child's world, used to connect with others, learn new skills and pursue their interests further than has ever been possible.

New technologies mean learning can happen anywhere and anytime, with access to a huge number of online resources and tools and more engagement between schools, students, parents, whānau and communities.

Schools choose how they use technology based on what is best for their students and school community. This can range from a traditional computer suite in a separate classroom to mobile devices and wireless internet across the school.

Schools don't have to use WiFi but access to digital technologies is increasingly important to enable students to gain the skills they need to live and work in the digital world.

Helping students get the most from technology

Technology designed to support your child's specific needs, identity and culture is becoming an important part of everyday learning.

Many of the learning applications (apps) and digital tools used to achieve this require internet connectivity. WiFi enables many students with mobile devices to access the internet and use engaging online resources at the same time.

Technology is changing education

By the end of 2016 all schools will have the technology available to provide high-quality, fast internet access for teaching and learning.

This is enabling the wireless technologies, cloud-based applications and mobile devices (like tablets and laptops) to be used in classrooms and gives our students access to a wealth of online content, applications and connections to global expertise to enhance learning.

As our world changes we need to ensure our young people can be confident, creative, connected and actively involved life-long learners. Technology can help us to do this.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
TE TĀHUHU O TE MĀTAURANGA

New Zealand Government

WiFi safety in schools

Some parents have questions about the safety of WiFi in classrooms. The Ministry of Health confirms that evidence shows WiFi does not pose a risk to students.

More information is available on the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health websites (www.minedu.govt.nz and www.health.govt.nz).

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has also recently concluded that current evidence does not confirm the existence of any health consequences from exposure to low level electromagnetic fields, including WiFi.

Testing WiFi in schools

In February 2014, the Ministry of Education funded a report *Exposures to radiofrequency fields from WiFi in New Zealand schools* which found that the highest exposures found in two schools were 4,000 times below the limit, with typical exposures more than 10,000 times below the limit. These results are consistent with data published by the UK Health Protection Agency and Industry Canada.

The full report is available online, see: www.health.govt.nz/publication/snapshot-study-wifi-in-schools.

Keeping up to date with WiFi research

Scientific knowledge in this area is extensive, with over 25,000 articles published worldwide on biological effects and medical applications of non-ionizing radiation (like WiFi) over the past 30 years.

The Ministry of Education is a member of the Ministry of Health's *Interagency Committee on the Health Effects of Non-Ionising Fields* which monitors research in this area and provides advice. The Committee recently concluded that there was no new research that would lead it to propose any changes to current Ministry recommendations.

Information on the Committee and recent reviews is also available online, see: www.health.govt.nz/our-work/radiation-safety/non-ionising-radiation

Further information

Parents can talk to their principal if they have any queries regarding school use of WiFi.

School principals can contact their local Ministry of Education office if they have any queries about the use of technology in schools.

Information for parents and carers about education is available at: www.parents.education.govt.nz