

The Enterprise-Bulletin

<http://www.theenterprisebulletin.com/ArticleDisplay.aspx?e=2863178>

Parents told to put kids back in school, or risk expulsion

Local News

By MORGAN IAN ADAMS

Posted 14 hours ago

COLLINGWOOD -- The school board has issued notices to parents keeping their kids home because of Wi-Fi concerns that either the children return to school, or risk expulsion.

Rodney Palmer, who heads up the Simcoe Safe School Committee, says he received a notice for his nine-year-old son, who hasn't gone to school since early September.

A spokesperson for the Simcoe County District School Board could not be reached for comment before presstime.

Palmer pulled both his children out of Mountain View Public School, citing that the school's Wi-Fi infrastructure was causing health-related issues such as headaches and heart palpitations.

His daughter is under the age of six, and her absences aren't subject to the school attendance requirements under the Education Act.

Palmer said the family has been picking up schoolwork from the school, and dropping off completed assignments.

Palmer and his group have had a running battle with the school board for the last year, after his son was one of several students at the school complaining of a litany of health problems.

The parents have asked several times for the system to be shut down, or for the board to at least turn off all but one of the wireless transmitter units in the school.

The board has declined the parents' request, citing Health Canada guidelines that specify the use of the technology is safe, and that it emits an electromagnetic frequency significantly lower than the average cell phone.

In an email to QMI Agency back in the spring, Health Canada stated: "Health Canada has no scientific reason to consider the use of wireless communications devices, such as cellphones, BlackBerrys, wireless laptop computers and their supporting infrastructure, dangerous to the health of the Canadian public."

Further, it stated it updates its exposure guidelines every five to 10 years.

"If future scientific evidence demonstrated that exposure to RF (radio frequency) energy levels below the current limits were harmful, the Government of Canada would take immediate action to protect the health of Canadians."

Both the provincial ministries of education and health have also backed the board's

position affirmed the Simcoe County District School Board's use of wireless technologies and confirmed the safety of these technologies for use in classrooms.

That hasn't been good enough for the parents, who cite the research of an associate professor at Trent University, that includes a Swedish study that showed human cells are affected when exposed to certain frequencies. Magda Havas has also raised alarm that the wireless transmitters operate on the same frequency of a microwave oven.

Palmer says he's not the only parent who's been told to make a decision on their child's education; he says at least three other families in Simcoe County have been told to either have their child attend school, or find alternative arrangements such as private school or home schooling.

Otherwise, they are required to provide a medical note. Palmer is not willing to do that.

"It would be fraudulent; he's perfectly healthy right now; it's just that he's reactive to microwave radiation," said Palmer, who provided the Enterprise- Bulletin with a letter from the school board outlining his options, as well as the consequences.

If Palmer doesn't comply, he could be charged under the Education Act and face a fine of \$200.

"Instead of addressing the issue, (the school board) is coercing the parents into either home schooling, or expulsion," he said. "I'm not voluntarily signing up for something I don't want to do. I'm not home schooling (my son); it's not what I want for him, and it's not what he wants."

Palmer said the school should treat the issue as how it handles children who may have peanut or other allergies. Palmer said other families have to modify their behavior to accommodate other students in the school, and therefore the school should be obligated to provide a safe environment for his son -- which means shutting down the Wi- Fi.

-with files from QMI Agency

Article ID# 2863178