



REPORT TO

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND WELL BEING, CATHOLIC EDUCATION AND HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

EMF ASSESSMENT PLAN FOR ST GREGORY CATHOLIC SCHOOL

“The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance.”
2 Peter 3:9

Created, Draft	First Tabling	Review
December 20, 2019	February 6, 2020	Click here to enter a date.

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INFORMATION REPORT

Vision:

At Toronto Catholic we transform the world through witness, faith, innovation and action.

Mission:

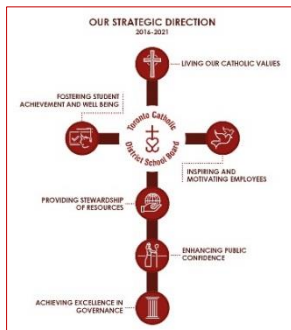
The Toronto Catholic District School Board is an inclusive learning community uniting home, parish and school and rooted in the love of Christ.

We educate students to grow in grace and knowledge to lead lives of faith, hope and charity.

Rory McGuckin
Director of Education

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Associate Director of Academic Affairs

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Associate Director of Facilities, Business and Community Development, and Chief Financial Officer



A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of the City of Toronto's Telecommunications Notice Protocol, the community in the neighbourhood of 122 Rathburn Road was provided notice, dated August 20, 2019, of the proposed Freedom Mobile cellular antenna installations on that property. The proposed installation is on the St. Gregory Parish property.

The school community has raised concerns about the impact of electromagnetic fields on the community of St. Gregory Catholic School due to the proposed cell towers. School community members delegated at the November 7, 2019 and December 5, 2019 Student Achievement Committee meetings to request that an electromagnetic field (EMF) assessment be conducted on St. Gregory CS building and property to ascertain current EMF exposure levels.

At the December meeting, a trustee motion was passed and referred to staff for information on whether electromagnetic field exposure is within safe levels at schools for students and staff and specifically at St. Gregory CS.

The St. Gregory CS building is a workplace for teachers, support staff and school administrators therefore the assessment process needs to follow workplace regulations. This report provides information and estimated timelines to conduct an EMF assessment of the St. Gregory CS building and property.

Additional reports may be issued once the results of the EMF assessment is complete.

The cumulative staff time required to prepare this report was 20 hours.

B. PURPOSE

1. This report addresses a (trustee) motion from the Student Achievement meeting on December 5, 2019 requesting information to ensure electromagnetic field (EMF) exposure is within safe levels at schools for students and staff and specifically at St. Gregory CS.
2. This report will outline the approach of the installation and use of wireless technology in schools within safety regulations.

3. Outline of the process to perform an assessment of the EMF within the school building of St. Gregory CS.

C. BACKGROUND

1. In accordance with the City of Toronto's Telecommunications Notice protocol, a notice, dated August 20, 2019, was issued to the community regarding the Freedom Mobile proposal to build a cellular antenna tower on the St. Gregory Parish property, 122 Rathburn Road. A copy of the notice is attached as Appendix A.
2. The local Trustee, Superintendent, school staff and parents were provided the notice via email on September 13, 2019.
3. An open public meeting hosted by Freedom Mobile was held on September 24, 2019 at Rosethorn Jr. PS. The local Trustee, TCDSB Planning and Facilities staff and members of the school community were in attendance.
4. Throughout October, staff responded to several enquiries from concerned parents via email, including responding with information from Toronto Public Health regarding the effects of WiFi on public health.
5. At the November 7, 2019 Student Achievement meeting a delegation from the St. Gregory school community presented concerns regarding construction of cellular antenna towers on the St. Gregory Parish property and its potential effect to students in the school. At the December 5, 2019 Student Achievement meeting one of the previous delegates presented again.
6. A motion was deferred by Trustees from the November 7, 2019 Student Achievement meeting and passed at the December 5, 2019 Student Achievement meeting. The approved motion was as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED: That the Board write a letter to The Honourable Navdeep Bains, MP and Canadian Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development requesting that the regulations governing the licensing of the cell towers on St. Gregory Church property are fully compliant with all Federal regulations;

BE IT RESOLVED: That the Board write to the Archdiocese of Toronto requesting that open and public consultations with the St. Gregory community commence quickly; and

BE IT RESOLVED: That a report be issued by TCDSB technical staff to outline what measures are taken by staff to ensure that students and teaching staff are not exposed to harmful levels of radiation either by proximity to Cell towers or the use or overuse of wireless technology in TCDSB schools and more specifically at St. Gregory Catholic School.

D. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS

1. The availability of WiFi networks is commonly found in both public and private spaces. The use of WiFi networks is prevalent in offices, retail stores, malls, libraries, schools, residential housing spaces, etc. In today's classroom, devices using WiFi are commonly used for both administrative and instructional purposes.
2. TCDSB school buildings and administrative offices were provisioned with WiFi networking to allow connectivity of wireless enabled devices used in the classroom and administrative office spaces by students, teachers, support staff and school administrators.
3. Electromagnetic fields are present in our environment from natural and manmade sources. Lightning and cosmic matter are examples of natural sources that emit radio waves. WiFi devices, cell phones, cell towers, cordless phones, microwaves, Bluetooth, radar, electrical equipment, radio and TV broadcasts are manmade sources, which generate fields in the radio frequency (RF) part of the electromagnetic spectrum.
4. Electronic networking equipment including WiFi devices are required to conform to various electrical and safety standards including RF emission safety limits of local authorities, e.g. CSA (Canadian Standards Association) and Health Canada's Safety Code 6.
5. The construction of the TCDSB networking infrastructure is composed of networking equipment and WiFi components from various manufacturers, which are compliant with local Canadian certification standards and safety regulations.
6. The planning and design of the WiFi networks within TCDSB school buildings and administrative offices is performed utilizing a professional planning tool that considers the physical building and room layout, material structure of the building and WiFi equipment functionality. The final build and layout of the WiFi equipment is designed to meet the requirements for classroom and administrative use and is compliant with local regulations.
7. The process outlined above was followed when the WiFi network at St. Gregory Catholic School was constructed in January 2016.

E. ACTION PLAN

8. The process to address the request for an EMF (Electromagnetic Field) assessment within the building of St. Gregory CS needs to be conducted in accordance with workplace regulations. The building is also a workplace for teachers, support staff and school administrators; as such, provisions in the Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act and collective agreement apply. The TECT and CUPE unions represent the staff.
9. The regulations under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, requires the Board to consult with our Joint Health and Safety Committees prior to conducting the testing. Failure to comply with the provisions would subject the TCDSB to possible charges and fines from the Ontario Ministry of Labour as well as grievances from the unions.
10. The EMF assessment will measure the effect of all sources of EMF. In order to determine the effect of the new cell towers and existing WiFi network, the assessment will be conducted with the WiFi network disabled (off) and enabled (on) and before and after the new cell towers are activated. The process to be followed to conduct this assessment is outlined in the table below:

Action	Est. Timeline
Request directed to the Board's Occupational Health and & Safety (OHS) Dept.	Completed
The OHS Dept. has approached the Radiation Safety Institute of Canada to provide an EMF testing proposal for St. Gregory CS for review.	Jan. 2020
The accepted proposal will be placed on the agenda for consultation at the next meeting of the Elementary Teachers' and Support Staff Joint Health and Safety Committees (JHSC) scheduled for February 12 and February 18, 2020 respectively. Feedback received on the EMF testing strategy from the JHSCs will be considered.	Feb. 12 and Feb. 18, 2020
Schedule EMF assessment for St. Gregory CS building and invite representatives from the parent community, and Health and Safety representatives from TECT and CUPE to observe.	Early Mar. 2020
Conduct EMF assessment at St. Gregory CS	Mar. 2020

Final report from EMF Assessment received from third party consultant and copy provided to Principal.	Apr. 2020
Principal to share report and findings with school community. OHS Department will arrange for a community meeting at St. Gregory CS for the third party consultant to provide scientific information on EMFs and to discuss the results.	Apr. 2020
Report and findings from EMF assessment at St. Gregory CS on next agenda of JHSCs.	April 22 and April 30, 2020

11. Should the assessment find any safety concerns with the EMF levels are at St Gregory’s staff will review and develop remediation plan in consultation with school staff and community.

F. CONCLUDING STATEMENT

This report is for the consideration of the Board.