POLICY ON THE USE OF NON-PRINT TEXTS IN CLASS

Teachers need to clearly establish the curriculum purpose and educational benefits for the use of non-print texts, and also address duty of care responsibilities. The use of non-print texts without a curriculum purpose may breach copyright regulations. The use of non-print texts in schools is to be consistent with the legal and duty of care requirements outlined in this document. Schools may develop proformas for advising parents and seeking their permission to show or use non-print texts.

DUTY OF CARE

Teachers need to determine the suitability of non-print texts prior to them being used in a classroom context and obtain parental or guardian permission to use non-print texts when students are under the recommended age or where there is any doubt as to the suitability of the non-print text.

It is recommended that the following information be provided when seeking parental or guardian permission:
• a short statement about the item;
• the educational benefits of using the item; and
• its place in the teaching and learning program.

Receiving permission to use a non-print text does not absolve teaching staff from their responsibility to make a judgment about the appropriateness of items to be shown or used with students in class. Teachers should be aware of community sensibilities whilst providing the best possible opportunity for student learning.

Parents and guardians have the right to apply to withdraw their children from a particular viewing.

CLASSIFICATIONS OF MATERIALS

Classification categories for films and computer games are prescribed under the Australian Government’s Classification (Publications Films and Computer Games) Act 1995. Classifications apply to the text in entirety, meaning that the classification will apply even for the playing of scenes or segments. These classifications are divided into two categories, Advisory and Legally Restricted:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advisory</th>
<th>Legally Restricted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>— G</td>
<td>— MA 15+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— PG</td>
<td>— R 18+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— M</td>
<td>— X 18+</td>
</tr>
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<td>— RC</td>
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Note: R 18+ and X 18+ apply to films only.
Advisory classifications

• (G) General
Materials with this classification are suitable for a general audience, but may not be of interest to children. The core understanding of this classification is that parents or guardians should be able to have complete confidence that their children can view the material classified at this level. Teachers should view the video/DVD to ascertain its suitability for the audience for whom it is intended. If there is any doubt about its suitability, a teacher should not use the material unless or until such doubt is removed.

Parents may need to be informed, or their permission granted before materials with this classification are used in a classroom.

• (PG) Parental Guidance
Materials with this classification may require parental guidance for students under 15 years of age, as they might upset, frighten or confuse students.

Teachers are not the parents or guardians, and as such, parents should be notified of a teacher’s intent to use PG material in an educational program. Within a primary school context, parent permission should always be obtained prior to the use of each PG rated non print text.

• (M) Mature
Materials with this classification are recommended for mature audiences 15 years and over.

It is not against the law to show materials with this classification to younger students, however, such materials are more suited to mature audiences as they may contain stronger themes and scenes which require a mature perspective.

If all educational considerations have been made and it is deemed necessary to use M-rated materials with students under 15 years, parental or guardian permission is required.

Teachers should inform parents or guardians of students over 15 years of their intention to use materials with this classification.

Restricted classifications

• (MA 15+) Mature Accompanied
Materials with this classification are legally restricted. The restrictions apply to persons who are under 15 years of age.

If all educational considerations have been made and it is deemed necessary to use MA 15+ materials with students over 15 years, parental or guardian permission should be gained and allowances made for withdrawal before showing or using materials with this classification. If any child in a class group is under 15 years, MA15+ materials are not to be used.
• (R 18+) Restricted to adults 18 years and over
Materials with this classification are legally restricted. The restrictions apply to persons who are under 18 years of age.

If teaching staff have any doubts about materials with any of these classifications, they should inform parents or guardians of all students of their intention to use the materials, regardless of the age of the child.