



Use of non-print texts in schools

CURRICULUM USE OF NON-PRINT TEXTS

Non-print texts such as films, videos, television programs, CD-ROMs, DVDs, MP4s, computer games and other electronic texts produced by computers are important aspects of the curriculum in all learning areas. In some learning areas such as English and The Arts, non-print texts are vehicles by which the learning outcomes are achieved; in others they are valuable resources that can be used in teachers' teaching and learning programs to assist students to achieve learning outcomes.

Teachers make decisions about what to show or use based on their professional judgement, their educational goals and the students' development, but also on parental or guardian advice and the legal requirements of the *Western Australian Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Enforcement Act 1996* and the *Copyright Act 1968 (Cth)*.

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. This needs to be done in accordance with the *Exemption from Particular Classes* policy.

COMPUTER DATA OR PROGRAMS

Sections 101 and 102 of the *Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Enforcement Act 1996* state that a person must not use a computer service (a service provided by or through the facilities of a computer communication system, such as computer data or programs) to transmit an article knowing it to be objectionable material, or to transmit restricted material to a minor.

VIDEO/DVD HIRE AND RECORDING

The *Copyright Act 1968* enables teachers to show videos/DVDs in class for educational purposes. Videos and DVDs hired from video hire outlets are subject to terms of a contract between the outlet and the hirer, and this is usually for private, domestic use only.

Making copies of television transmissions and vodcasts previously transmitted from free to air channels is permitted, provided the copies are marked appropriately and they are made for educational purposes. For further information, see the Smart Copying website www.smartcopying.edu.au

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:

Advisory

- G
- PG

Legally Restricted

- MA 15+
- R 18+

— M

— X 18+

— RC

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.

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

- **(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.

Section 72 of the *Classification (Publications Films and Computer Games) Enforcement Act 1996* states that 'A person must not exhibit in a public place a film classified MA 15+ if a minor under the age of 15 years of age is present during any part of the exhibition and the minor is not accompanied by his or her parent or guardian.'

Schools are considered 'public places' under the *Classification (Publications Films and Computer Games) Enforcement Act 1996* and senior campuses and colleges are considered 'schools' under the *School Education Act 1999*.

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.

Section 71 of the *Classification (Publications Films and Computer Games) Enforcement Act 1996* states that 'A person must not exhibit in a public place a film classified R 18+ if a minor is present during any part of the exhibition.'

- **(X18+)** restricted to adults over 18 years

Materials with this classification are legally restricted. Section 69 of the *Classification (Publications Films and Computer Games) Enforcement Act 1995* states that 'A person must not exhibit in a public place a film classified X 18+.'

- **(RC) refused classification**

Under the *Classification (Publications Films and Computer Games) Enforcement Act 1995*, all films and videos must be classified. Those in the RC category have been refused classification or are unclassified because they contain elements beyond those in the above classifications. Computer games that exceed the MA 15+ classification category will also be labelled RC. Section 68 of the *Classification (Publications Films and Computer Games) Enforcement Act 1996* states that 'A person must not exhibit in any place a film classified RC.'

Under no circumstances are films or computer games with X 18+ or RC classifications to be shown in any Western Australian public school. Severe fines and penalties are outlined in the Classification Enforcement Act for infringement of these conditions.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Australian Government [Guidelines for the Classification of Films and Computer Games 2005](#)

Australian Government, [Information for Schools: Showing films and playing computer games](#)

The [Smartcopying](#) website www.smartcopying.edu.au

[Screenrights](#) website www.screenrights.org

RELATED POLICIES

Duty of Care for Students

Exemption from Particular Classes

CONTACT INFORMATION

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