



**DONCASTER**  
SECONDARY COLLEGE

## **SELECTING TEACHING & LEARNING RESOURCES POLICY**

College council will review this policy every three years or as directed by DET

**Date approved:** November 2019

**Date of next review:** 2022

### **PURPOSE**

To provide guidance to ensure that schools respond reasonably and respectfully to objections about the use of specific curriculum resources.

### **GUIDELINES**

Teachers and principals in liaison with school councils need to ensure that the selection of teaching and learning resources:

- considers the expected student learning outcomes and standards described in the VCAA curriculum frameworks
- considers the particular needs of its students
- does not expose students to highly offensive or obscene materials or themes
- ensures that curriculum resources are suitable for the age group using them
- considers the words, behaviour, images or themes of the resources in terms of the:
  - context
  - impact on the audience age group
  - literary, artistic or educational merit of the material
  - intention of the author and general character of the material
  - how parents might react to their children being exposed to this content
  - standards of morality, decency, and propriety generally accepted by adults
  - impact on persons from different ethnic, religious, social and cultural backgrounds.

Principals must ensure that:

- the school implements the policies and procedures that comply with these Departmental guidelines
- the school community is informed to possible controversial texts and that students and their parents have a right to object to teaching and learning resources under the provision of the Department's guidelines.

## Selection guidelines

### Questions to ask

In selecting teaching and learning resources, teachers in liaison with principals and school councils need to consider the following questions:

Are the proposed	If so, then
materials/themes within the resource likely to be regarded as offensive or obscene by the school community?	the resource cannot be used irrespective of any possible educational value.
materials/themes within the resource controversial or likely to be regarded as inappropriate by some students or their parents?	<p>alternative texts and study arrangements should be selected for students who may be involved in objections to the proposed materials on the grounds that they are inappropriate.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> If objections to materials on the grounds that they are inappropriate are anticipated, the school must inform the relevant students and their parents of the controversial nature of the resource and inform them that an alternative is available if students or parents hold a genuine and reasonable objection. Parents and students should be informed that they have a right to object.</p> <p>In the event of individual students being given alternative materials or activities, teachers should endeavour to integrate the alternative study or activity into the classroom program and ensure that the student is supported in his or her position and not isolated from other classmates.</p>

### Film or Computer Games classified as:

<b>X or R ?</b>	The resource cannot be used
<b>M ?</b>	Parental permission must be obtained for students under 15 years of age
<b>MA 15 ?</b>	<p>This material can only be seen if the student is 15 years or older; or if the student is under 15 years they must be accompanied by a parent or guardian</p> <p><b>Note:</b> In all cases the classification rating must be followed see: Australian Government Attorney-General's Classification website for the <a href="#">Information for Schools – showing films and playing computer games fact sheet</a>. Television classifications and warnings must also be heeded for example warnings about disturbing images, sexual references.</p> <p><b>Important:</b> Schools must obtain a licence to play films for non-educational purposes. See: <a href="#">S283-2011 The Co-Curricular Licence for Screening - A Licence to Screen Films for Non-Educational Purposes</a></p>
<b>Material is prescribed or suggested VCE text by the VCAA ?</b>	<p>These materials are appropriate for students studying VCE subjects.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> It is important, however, that selection procedures should include consideration of the appropriateness of VCE materials when they are proposed for use by students in the years/age groups preceding VCE studies.</p>

## Staging public events or school performances

For the whole school community

Public events staged by schools and open to the school community (including small children in family groups) must be suitable for general exhibition. Where there is a doubt as to the suitability of public performances, the principal should consult teachers and the school council and consider whether the material is suitable to be performed or displayed before audiences of any age.

If the material is considered unsuitable for some age groups, the principal in liaison with the school council may either:

- not permit the performance, event or display, or
- consider recommending restricted entry.

For a particular age group

Some materials or themes may be considered to be an appropriate focus of study for some students, for example, Year 11 and 12 students, but inappropriate for others. In this event, the principal, in consultation with teachers and the school council, may approve the staging of the performance, display or event provided that:

- the school community is informed well in advance of the event that the material is inappropriate for some age groups
- the warning is repeated immediately prior to the performance, display or event.

Warnings, if required, should explain the reason for the restriction in general terms, for example, 'inappropriate language', 'sexual references', 'violence'.

## Controversial Topics

Controversial topics will often be appropriate and important subjects of study in schools and, at times, cannot be avoided in the context of teaching and learning.

However, the contexts of controversial topics or themes about which objections can be anticipated include:

- themes related to magic or fantasy
- racial and religious themes
- sexual activity, nudity and related themes
- drug misuse or addiction
- crime, violence and cruelty
- suicide and excessively bleak scenarios
- the depiction of revolting or abhorrent phenomena
- satirical or comparative perspectives on race, religion or gender.

## Related Guidelines

- [Resolving Issues Concerning Objections](#)
- [Using Technology to Support Teaching](#)

## Department Resources

For more information:

- see: [Learning and Teaching Resources](#)
- on the use of controversial material or resources see: Executive Memorandum No. 98/048 Offensive materials or themes (located within EduLibrary/Schools/Official Memorandum, Circulars & Notices/Executive memorandum/1998).