

# SCHOOL BASED POLICY SELECTION OF APPROPRIATE TEXTS AT MATER DEI COLLEGE

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## RATIONALE

Mater Dei College as a Catholic school, aims to help students to integrate culture, faith and life. Culture is valued and Mater Dei College promotes discussion and critical thought. The values and attitudes at Mater Dei College are founded upon the teaching of Jesus Christ. Therefore, the selection of texts is a rigorous and careful process.

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## PRINCIPLES

1. Texts are used to:
    - support and develop the desired outcomes of schooling
    - address student diversities in culture, gender, special learning needs and socio-economic background
    - provide students with learning experiences which access a wide, range of knowledge, understandings and skills.
  2. Texts enable students to:
    - develop their unique potential – physical, emotional, creative, spiritual, intellectual, moral and social
    - develop a critical understanding of the diversity of beliefs and values found in society and in human experiences
    - deepen their understanding of the values of Christ including absolute values such as the sacredness of human life and the dignity of the human person.
  3. Some texts enable students, with assistance, to challenge dominant societal ideas, particularly stereotypes and undesirable models of human behaviour.
  4. Texts dealing with controversial topics or challenging situations need to be selected with sensitivity to community expectations.
  5. Texts containing gratuitous or extreme violence, or pornographic material, have no place in a Catholic school.
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## DEFINITIONS

1. The term 'text' refers to any form of written, spoken or visual communication involving language (Curriculum Framework, 1998, p.82).
  2. The term 'non-print texts' includes:  
*advertising, artifacts, CD ROMs, documentaries, feature film, radio broadcasts, recorded music, short film and television programmes.*
  3. The term 'print texts' includes:  
*advertising, CD ROMs, comics, current affairs cartoons, diaries, encyclopedias, essays, feature articles, instruction manuals, journals, letters, magazines, newspapers, novels, novellas, picture books, photo essays, plays, poetry, posters, prayers, short stories, signs, song lyrics, sourcebooks, speeches, story boards, textbooks, transcripts, web pages and any printed fiction or non-fiction material.*
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## PROCEDURES

1. Texts which are made available to students at Mater Dei College are all previewed and evaluated prior to their selection and use. In particular, recommended curriculum materials or syllabus texts still need to be extensively reviewed before inclusion in the library or used in classes.
2. The Principal and/or Teacher Librarian are the first persons to consult for advice on the selection of texts and the Office of Film and Literature Classification Guidelines for non-print texts. The document, *Guidelines*

For *The Classification of Films and Videotapes* document is available in the Library. It should be noted, however, that these guidelines must work within the framework of this document, which forms part of the ethos of a Catholic school.

3. In selecting a documentary, feature film, television program, animated film or short film, the guidelines set by the Office of Film and Literature Classification apply:

<b>G</b>	<b>GENERAL</b> - Suitable for all ages. Suitable for Years K-12
<b>PG</b>	<b>PARENTAL GUIDANCE</b> - Parental guidance recommended for persons under 15 years. Suitable for Years 8-12.
<b>M</b>	
<b>MA 15+</b>	<b>15+and over MATURE</b> - Recommended for mature audiences 15 years and over. Suitable for Years 10-12.
<b>R 18+</b>	<b>MATURE ACCOMPANIED</b> – Restrictions apply to persons under the age of 15. The MA category is legally restricted. Children under 15 will not be allowed to see MA films or hire them on video unless in the company of a parent or adult guardian. Some may be suitable for Years 11 and 12.
<b>X 18+</b>	<b>RESTRICTED</b> - Restricted to adults 18 years and over. The R category is legally restricted to adults. Material, which is given a restricted classification, is unsuitable for those under 18 years of age. Material classified R deals with issues or contains depictions that require an adult perspective. Not suitable for high school students.
	<b>RESTRICTED</b> - Restricted to adults 18 years and over. Not suitable for high school students.

4. This set of guidelines is to be used for any incursions or excursions involving non-print texts.
5. Where the class teacher and a member of the Leadership Team consider the text suitable (e.g. a documentary on the Holocaust which may contain graphic footage) but its rating is above the recommended age group, then permission must be sought from the parent or guardian by letter and reply slip. If a parent or guardian declines consent, then where possible the student will be provided with an alternative text covering the same concepts.
6. It is not the policy of Mater Dei College to abridge a text and no text will be censored by the removal of pages or editing of footage because this contravenes the Copyright Act.
7. If a parent or guardian makes a complaint about the relevance or suitability of a text, the following procedures should apply:
  - 7.1 Ascertain the nature of the complaint:
    - content
    - language
    - concepts
    - relevance
    - religious / ideological concerns
  - 7.2 Refer the matter to a member of the Leadership Team.

- 7.3 The teacher and/or member of the Leadership Team shall meet the parent or guardian to discuss the complaint where every attempt will be made to address their concerns
8. Mater Dei College will remove a text from its lists if there are sufficient grounds for its removal. If appropriate, the relevant authorities at the Catholic Education Office (CEO) and the Curriculum Council will be consulted, after the complaints have been examined. The Principal will have the final say on the removal of a text. In the case of a text having a number of different complaints brought against it, each complaint will be examined independently.
9. If a member of the general community makes a complaint, the nature of the complaint should be ascertained. The matter should be reported to the Principal.
10. Mater Dei College has Internet safeguards to prevent students accessing materials that are of a dubious nature, inappropriate, offensive or irrelevant.