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| **Aiming High** | **Showing Respect** | **Being Safe** | **Valuing Community** |

**Movie, Text Selection and Video Game Policy**

## Purpose

To explain to our school community Manor Lakes P12 College’s policy requirements, and expectations regarding the safe and appropriate selection of movies, texts and video games.

## Scope

This policy applies to:

1. All staff and students at Manor Lakes P12 College

## Definitions

**Classification of films and computer games (NOTE: in this policy staff should classify written texts using the movie classification guidelines):**

The National Classification Scheme (NCS) is a cooperative arrangement under which a Classification Board classifies films (including videos and DVDs), computer games and certain publications on behalf of the States and Territories. The Scheme commenced in 1996 and administrative support is provided by the Commonwealth Attorney-General’s Department.

Under the National Classification Scheme, the States and Territories are responsible for the enforcement of classification decisions. Each State and Territory has classification enforcement legislation to complement the Commonwealth Classification Act. The New South Wales legislation is the [*Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Enforcement Act 1995*](http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/viewtop/inforce/act+63+1995+cd+0+N/?autoquery=(Content%3D((%22classification%22%20AND%20%22films%22)))%20AND%20((Type%3D%22act%22%20AND%20Repealed%3D%22N%22)%20OR%20(Type%3D%22subordleg%22%20AND%20Repealed%3D%22N%22))&dq=D) and associated amendment acts.

In general, films and computer games are classified as G, PG, M and MA 15+. Films may also be classified R 18+ or X 18+. G, PG and M are **advisory classifications** recommending the appropriate audience. MA 15+, R 18+ and X 18+ are **legally restricted classifications.**

Details of the classifications are to be found on the [Commonwealth’s Classification website](http://www.classification.gov.au/). Information for schools is also provided from the [Attorney-General’s website](http://www.ag.gov.au/www/agd/agd.nsf/Page/Classificationpolicy_Classificationcategoriesandmarkings) and includes [fact sheets](http://www.ag.gov.au/www/agd/agd.nsf/Page/Classificationpolicy_Classificationcategoriesandmarkings#c10) for schools, teachers, students and libraries.

**Classification of television material (other than films)**

The [*Broadcasting Services Act 1992*](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/consol_act/bsa1992214/) provides the framework legislation for television and radio broadcasts. While films that may appear on television are generally covered under the National Classification Board guidelines, television programs are classified using Television Classification Guidelines, included in the [*Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice*](http://www.acma.gov.au/webwr/aba/contentreg/codes/television/documents/2010-commercial_tv_industry_code_of_practice.pdf) coordinated by the [Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA).](http://www.acma.gov.au/WEB/HOMEPAGE/pc=HOME)

Classification systems for television are similar to those used in the National Classification System and include C, P, G, PG, M, MA 15+, AV 15+and details are available from the [*Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice*](http://www.acma.gov.au/webwr/aba/contentreg/codes/television/documents/2010-commercial_tv_industry_code_of_practice.pdf)*.*

## Policy

This policy provides advice for teachers and Curriculum Area Teams with regard to the use of audio-visual material including written texts, films, videos, DVDs, internet content and computer games classified by the Classification Board and Classification Review Board in relation to the [*Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Act 1995*](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/consol_act/cfacga1995489/) and the [*Broadcasting Services Act 1992*](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/consol_act/bsa1992214/).

**Directions for Staff at the College:**

1. All text, audio-visual materials and computer games must be previewed by teachers prior to use with students. The reviewer (the teacher nominated to review the text) should give particular consideration to the suitability of the material in the educational context and the age and maturity of the intended audience.

Consumer advice found adjacent to classification marking may assist schools when previewing materials. Schools should also be sensitive to cultural protocols that may be relevant to certain members of intended audiences when previewing materials.

1. The use of classified films, texts classified by the reviewer, programs and computer games in schools requires the approval of the Principal. The Principal may delegate the approval of the use of **C**, **P**,G, PG and **M** material to an executive member of staff but must not delegate approval relating to use of **MA 15+** material.
2. Material classified **G** is classified for general viewing. There may be some material in this category that is of no interest to students.
3. Material classified **PG** should only be used with students after careful consideration by teaching staff and approved in accordance with point 2 above. Texts which do not have an official classification but are deemed by the teaching reviewer to be PG can be taught 7-12.
4. Material classified **M** should only be considered for students who are **15 years and over**, in Years 10-12. An “Opt-Out” Permission Note for movies – will be sent out to Year 10 parents, and alternative work will be provided for families who opt-out. Staff are also able to check the Multiple Permissions List at the Burley Griffin Administration Building.

Material in this classification may contain themes and scenes which require a mature perspective. The material should have particular relevance to the course of study and should only be considered when other related resource material is limited.

Decisions about whether the use of M classified films, television materials and computer games in the school will be approved must be made by the Principal. The Principal may delegate the task of previewing the material to an appropriate member of the teaching staff who will advise the Principal as to suitability for students 15 years and over.

Written texts deemed by the teaching reviewer to be M - can be taught 10-12.

1. **Material classified MA 15+** should only be considered for students who are **15 years and over**. This classification is legally restricted. The material should have particular relevance to the course of study and should only be considered when other related resource material is unavailable.

Decisions about whether the use of MA 15+ classified films, television materials and computer games in the school will be approved, must be made by the Principal. The Principal may delegate the task of previewing the material to an appropriate member of the teaching staff who will advise the Principal as to suitability.

Parents are to be informed in writing in advance of presentation of the content and classification of the material. Parents’ written approval will be required for their child’s participation in viewing this material. Students who are 18 years or older and living apart from their parents may sign their own approval. Principals should refer to Section 7 of the department’s [Family Law Guidelines](http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/schoolsweb/gotoschool/familylaw/familylawguide.pdf) in circumstances where students under 18 may be living independently.

1. Regardless of the students’ ages, films classified **R 18+ and X 18+** must not be shown to school students under any circumstances.

Principals and teachers should note that this advice should also be applied to any approved school excursions that may involve visits to cinemas, video game venues, associated coach/air travel or other related activity that may involve film screenings or television viewing.

Schools must ensure that no breaches of copyright eventuate in screening any material considered suitable following review within the conditions outlined above. Schools can play films for educational instruction by way of an exemption in copyright law provided the audience is limited to persons who are receiving the educational instruction or are otherwise directly connected with the place where the instruction is given.

**Enquiries and further information can be obtained from:**

Classification Board and Classification Review Board: Website: [www.classification.gov.au](http://www.classification.gov.au)

**REVIEW PERIOD**

This policy was last updated in October 2019 and is scheduled for review in October 2022

**RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES**

**Information sheet for teachers**

This information sheet is designed to help teachers decide what type of entertainment media is suitable for their students by providing a summary of the various classification categories for films, computer games and publications. This information sheet may not be relevant to students aged 18 and over, for example university students.

## What is suitable for your students to see, play and read at school?

Various films, computer games and publications may be held in schools as part of their educational resources for students.

Whether a particular film, computer game or publication is suitable for your students will depend on the age of the student and the individual school’s policies in relation to the availability of various types of entertainment media.

The classification markings (indicating the classification category of the material) and consumer advice may be used to assist teachers in determining what material is suitable for their students. The classification of a film, computer game or publication may be searched on the Classification Database at [www.classification.gov.au](http://www.classification.gov.au).

### Films and Computer Games

Educational films and computer games that are exempt under the *Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Act 1995* may be suitable for students to see and play at school.

The G classification is suitable for everyone. However, some G classified films or computer games may contain content that is not of interest to your students.

The impact of PG classified (parental guidance) films and computer games should be no higher than mild, but they may contain content that your students find confusing or upsetting. PG classified material is not recommended for viewing or playing by persons under 15 without guidance from guardians.

Films and computer games classified M (Mature) contain content of a moderate impact and are recommended for teenagers aged 15 years and over. School students under 15 may legally access this material because it is an advisory category. However, M classified films and computer games may include content that may be unsuitable for persons under 15.

MA 15+ classified material contains strong content and is legally restricted to persons 15 years and over. Anyone under the age of 15 may not legally buy or hire MA 15+ classified material unless they are in the company of a parent or adult guardian. The content in MA 15+ films and computer games is strong.

R 18+ films are restricted to persons aged 18 years and over.

### Publications

Most publications, such as magazines, do not need to be classified and may be legally bought and read by school students inside and outside of school. Only ‘submittable publications’, that is publications which may be refused classification or restricted to adults, require classification. All classified publications will carry a label indicating the classification of the publication. However, the type of content in publications is broad. As such, it may be useful for schools and libraries to find out more about the publication’s content to determine if the material is suitable for their students to read at school.

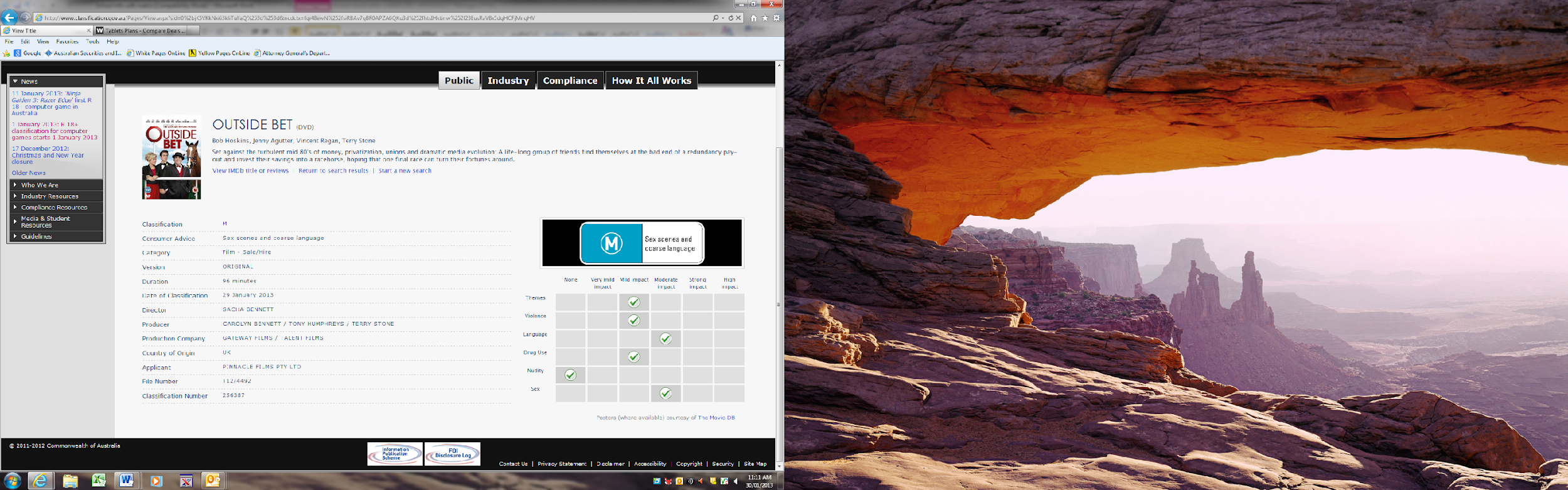
Some ‘unrestricted’ classified publications may contain content that is not recommended for children under 15. These publications will carry a classification label that reads ‘Unrestricted M (Mature)’.

Publications classified Category 1—Restricted and Category 2—Restricted can only be sold to persons aged 18 years and over.

# Information for teachers—showing films and playing computer games in schools

This information sheet is provided to help teachers choose content that is appropriate for their students. Teachers should check their school or departmental policy for viewing films and playing computer games.

## Classifications and consumer advice



Generally films and computer games are required to be classified before they can be sold, hired, exhibited or demonstrated. You can check the classification of a film or computer game on the national classification database via [www.classification.gov.au](http://www.classification.gov.au).

Classification markings displayed on films and computer games include the classification and the consumer advice. The consumer advice gives an indication of the content with the highest impact. The classifiable elements are: themes, violence, sex, language, drug use and nudity.

For films and computer games classified after June 2012, the classification database includes a matrix that shows the classifiable elements which the film or computer game contains and their impact level.

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|  | **None** |  | **Very mild impact** | **Mild impact** | **Moderate impact** | **Strong impact** | **High impact** |
| Themes |  |  |  | ✔ |  |  |  |
| Violence |  |  |  | ✔ |  |  |  |
| Language |  |  |  |  | ✔ |  |  |
| Drug use |  |  |  | ✔ |  |  |  |
| Nudity | ✔ |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Sex |  |  |  |  | ✔ |  |  |

## Films and computer games exempt from classification

Some films and computer games are exempt from classification if they are mild in content (would be G or PG if classified) and fall within certain categories. Some of the categories include:

* **Educational**A film or software whose main purpose is for training instruction or reference, as a manual, a lesson an encyclopaedia or a guide.
* **Current affairs**A film wholly comprising news reports or information about, or analysis of current issues or events of public interest or importance.
* **Scientific**A film or software for use pursuant to a branch of knowledge conducted on objective principles involving the systemised observation of, and experiment with phenomena.
* **Sporting**A film wholly comprising a documentary record of a sporting event.
* **Musical**A film wholly comprising a musical presentation.
* **Religious**A film wholly comprising a documentary record of a religious event or activity.
* **Community/cultural**A film wholly comprising a documentary record of a community or cultural activity or event.

## Classification categories

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| **Advisory classifications** | **G, PG and M** |
| G rating: General. | The content is very mild in impact.  G films and computer games are for general viewing. |
| PG rating: parental guidance recommended. | The content is mild in impact.  PG films and computer games contain material that a parent or carer might need to explain to younger children. |
| M rating: recommended for mature audiences. | The content is moderate in impact.  M films and computer games are not recommended for people aged under 15. |

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| **Age restricted classifications** | **MA 15+ and R 18+** |
| **MA 15+ restricted: not suitable for people under 15. Under 15s must be accompanied by a parent or adult guardian.** | The content is **strong** in impact.  People under 15 must be accompanied by a parent or adult guardian to hire or buy these films or games or to see these films in a cinema\*. These games cannot be demonstrated in a public place.  A guardian is a person who is exercising “parental control” over the person under 15 years of age. The guardian must be 18 years or over. |
| **Rating: R18+. Restricted to 18 and over.** | The content is **high** in impact.  People under 18 are not permitted to buy or hire these films or games or to see these films in a cinema. These games cannot be demonstrated in a public place. |

## More information

For more information about the National Classification Scheme or to check the classification of a film or computer game visit [www.classification.gov.au](http://www.classification.gov.au) or contact (02) 9289 7100 or [cls@classifiaction.gov.au](mailto:cls@classifiaction.gov.au).

\* In Queensland, the minor must be accompanied by an adult aged 18 or over.