



The Teaching and Learning of Print, Visual and Electronic Texts: Policy Statements, Responsibilities, Guidelines and Protocols

(For CESA staff involved with the use of texts in educational settings, including out of school hours care)

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1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to provide principals, school leaders, parents and guardians/caregivers, students, teachers and other staff* in educational settings (including out of school hours care) within Catholic Education South Australia (CESA) with a set of policy statements and procedures which guide and inform staff, in the use of *texts subject to classification by the Australian Classification Board (ACB)* - referred to subsequently in this document as *rated texts*. (Where texts not subject to rating by the ACB are to be used, and there is cause to consider degrees of impact, Principals and stakeholders will work together in exercising professional judgment in keeping with community standards). To achieve this, these policy statements, procedures, responsibilities, and protocols:

- state explicitly the legal and procedural requirements of rated texts, clearly detailing the circumstances under which various classifications can be studied and the classifications that cannot be considered under any circumstances for particular year levels and age groups
- give expression to the relationships of faith, care and support which characterise the school's vision, ethos and practice and which engage processes of critical discernment in the study of texts
- promote a genuine partnership with families in their role as the first and continuing educators of children
- provide a framework within which the school community can maintain consistency of decisions and actions related to rated texts
- provide a framework in which the school community can make consistent decisions and actions in response to the demands of current curriculum accessed by Catholic Schools: the Australian Curriculum, the South Australian Certificate of Education, the International Baccalaureate, SACSA and Crossways Religious Education Framework for SA Catholic Schools†
- make recommendations to teachers and staff involved in the use of rated texts to promote responsible, just and educationally rich use of these texts, consistent with the demands of current curriculum while taking account of and in the spirit of Catholic Education and
- make educational purposes clear and aligned with the demands of current curriculum and which support opportunities for students to develop as independent learners, critically discerning users and producers of texts.

* Other staff refers to all workers employed by Catholic Education South Australia, volunteers in Catholic Schools and individuals and organisations contracted by Catholic schools to deliver educational services.

† The Australian Curriculum: An R-12 curriculum developed by the Australian Curriculum and Assessment Reporting Authority for all students across Australia. The first four subjects to be developed include English, History, Maths and Science.

The SACE: The South Australian Certificate of Education, administered by the SACE Board, recognises and certifies:

- learning at Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the Senior Years of schooling
- subjects and courses developed by the SACE Board, sectors, TAFE, other jurisdictions, and international education authorities

The International Baccalaureate: An international certification and assessment authority offering programs of study in the Early Years, the Middle Years and the Senior Years.

SACSA: The South Australian Curriculum and Standards Accountability Framework - a broad curriculum framework, guiding curriculum design and assessment from R-12 and across 8 learning areas.

Crossways: Religious Education Framework for South Australian Catholic Schools - an integrated curriculum framework supporting the faith life and culture of students, staff and families.

2. POLICY STATEMENTS

The policy statements contained in this section and the information in the sections that follow, provide a basis for principals, school leaders, parents and caregivers, students, teachers and other staff in educational settings (including out of school hours care) in making discerning judgments in the selection and use of texts appropriate to the purposes of learning.

2.1. CESA Principles and Use of Rated Texts

- The Catholic school is an agent of the Church and through the study of texts aims to “create an educational environment which matters to students and their families and which resonates culturally and deeply for them. In each learning area, across the whole life of the school, and in partnership with families, each of us discovers the love of God which is revealed in Christ, proclaimed by the Church and lived by people of good will (CESA Strategic Plan: Vision Statement).”
- The student is at the centre of all the activities of the school.
- The ideal of students reflecting on the gospel values of social justice, equity, integrity and truth can be enacted through a discerning engagement with texts, which enable a “transformation of hearts and minds” so that:
 - “the created world is made new again(CESA Strategic Plan, 4.1)” and
 - students actively engage with global and historical issues of importance.
- The Catholic school provides positive stewardship in developing gospel values and a sense of mission which support critical discernment in the access and use of texts within and outside of scheduled lessons. This evangelisation “loses much of its force and effectiveness if it does not take into consideration the actual people it addresses, if it does not use their language, their signs and symbols, if it does not have an impact on their lives (Pope Paul VI - EN n.63).”
- Rated texts are often highly effective in engaging students in dialogue and learning that develops an open and critical attitude to the world today and leads “each learner to realize their full potential by developing a love of learning and moving into wholeness in the spiritual, intellectual, social, physical, emotional and moral domains (CESA Strategic Plan, 4.2).”
- Current curriculum frameworks demand that teachers and students engage in the discerning selection and critical analysis of traditional and contemporary texts. The study of texts in South Australian Catholic Schools needs to acknowledge changes in cultural patterns, particularly for young people, and the conditions in which texts are produced and received. This takes into consideration how “...students are influenced by global and cultural forces, including those of the mass media, internet and entertainment industry (Crossways, p .7).”
- Making decisions about which texts to use with students provides opportunities to strengthen partnerships with families and build their capacity to contribute more deeply to the educational process. As rated texts are the only texts for study requiring adult consent, it is a valuable opportunity to invite families to participate in open and reflective discussions about texts selected by teachers and students.
- The professional needs of staff and the well-being of students are important considerations in:

- “deploying technologies that enhance learning outcomes for all students(CESA Strategic Plan 6.5)” and
- “meeting our moral and legal obligations and ensuring that all our interactions are characterised by justice, sensitivity, professionalism and compassion (CESA Strategic Plan 6.7).”

2.2. Curriculum Demands and the Study of Rated Texts

The following curriculum statements and frameworks inform the education of students in Catholic Schools:

- [The Australian Curriculum](#)
- [The South Australian Certificate of Education](#)
- [The International Baccalaureate](#)
- [The SACSA](#)
- [Crossways - Religious Education Framework SA Catholic Schools](#)

Each of these curriculum statements and frameworks place contemporary demands on students, teachers and families in the selection and use of texts: this may include visual, print and performance texts accessed through a variety of formats such as film, television, book, digital games, websites, iPad applications and Web 2 technologies. Some of these texts may be subject to classification by the ACB and will need to be considered when enacting the procedures set out by this document.

Teaching and learning programs developed from these curriculum statements will need to ensure that:

- students have equity of access to the curriculum
- students are given opportunity to meet the expectations of content standards and achievement standards
- the diversity of students and families in Catholic schools is respected.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

Digital technologies seem inevitably to be bringing about fundamental shifts in patterns of communication and human relationships. The overriding principle for Principals, school leaders, teachers and other staff of Catholic Education SA (CESA), parents, care givers, guardians and students is *“that their behaviour online should reflect the standard of appropriate behaviour which is expected in all person to person interaction. Such behaviour should at all times demonstrate a Christ centred respect for the dignity of each person. Appropriate boundaries should always be observed, especially in communication with young people. The child protection protocols and policies of the Catholic Church in Australia and civil authorities must always be observed.”*[†]

[†] The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference “Social Networking Protocol for the Catholic Church in Australia”, December 2009, page 4.

http://www.catholic.org.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=frontpage&Itemid=52

In Catholic schools guidelines and codes of conduct for the care, wellbeing and protection of children and young people require honest, respectful and trusting relationships between adults, young people and children.

In line with classifications applied to rated texts the purpose, policy statements, responsibilities, protocols and procedures contained within this document apply to the use of all publications, films, television programs, and computer games, (including those advertised and made available on the internet), in Catholic schools in South Australia.

3.1. SACCS

It is the responsibility of SACCS to provide oversight of policy, procedure and practices that enhance the quality of learning and the wellbeing of all within our Catholic schools community.

SACCS should strive to provide adequate resourcing to all schools and individuals, especially those who are most disadvantaged and vulnerable.

3.2. CEO Responsibilities

The Catholic Education Office is to implement SACCS policies and procedures and to provide the appropriate consultancy services, technical advice and infrastructure support to enable Principals to make available the best teaching and learning environment possible for the wellbeing of students.

3.3. Principals

To ensure school leaders, teachers, Out of School Hours Care staff, other staff, students and families/caregivers/guardians:

- know and understand the classification criteria used by the Australian Classification Board
[Australian Classification Board](#)
- know and understand the additional requirements required of the PG, M and MA 15+ categories by Catholic Education SA as described in the synthesis of classification guidelines (contained in the section that follows)
- give no consideration to using R 18+, X18+ or RC rated material in our schools due to the specified age limit, the high 'hierarchy of impact' and the broadly held public perception of such films (see table indicating degrees of impact, in the section that follows)
- recognise that rated texts accessed through a variety of formats such as film, television, book, digital games, websites, iPad applications and Web 2 technologies can be powerful and may still have a productive and positive or disturbing or negative impact on students. Thus the choice of rated texts and how students are led to engage with these texts are important educational decisions
- monitor the sensitive transition at Year 9 and 10 where the majority of students turn 15 during the school year and seek consent when necessary and desirable

- exercise sound professional judgment when selecting texts that have been amended and re-rated for use in schools e.g. texts made available by Australian Screen [§]for the purpose of study
- make clear the relationship between the policy statements, responsibilities, protocols and procedures contained within this document and other policies which relate to communication and the use of ICT, for example, the Communications Technology Policy
- are aware of the relevant curriculum frameworks (The Australian Curriculum, The New SACE, The International Baccalaureate, SACS Learning Areas and Crossways Religious Education Framework for SA Catholic Schools) and learning demands when making appropriate selection of texts for study and other educational purposes.

3.4. School Leaders, Teachers and Other Staff

School leaders, teachers and staff in educational settings other than schools, understand and when necessary, enact the following:

- the classification of all films, television programs or computer games screened or used in schools must be taken into account before use in the curriculum or indirectly through events or activities such as school retreats, excursions, camps or after-school care. Where any student is below the age recommended by the ACB the approval of the Principal and written parental/guardian/caregiver consent must be obtained in advance of screening. This pertains to all PG, M and MA15+ texts where a student is below the relevant age
- material that is rated MA 15+ can ONLY legally be shown to persons less than 15 years of age in the presence of a parent/guardian (i.e. not a teacher) and should therefore only be considered in circumstances where students are aged 15 years and over. It is a further requirement of Catholic Education SA for M and MA15+ texts that the Principal's approval and parental consent be obtained for all students who are under 18 years of age. These categories (M, MA15+) of texts classified by the ACB may contain themes and scenes which require a mature perspective and are therefore more suited to mature audiences. Past parental concerns in this area have indicated the need for a higher level of consent than is required in the ACB guidelines
- be aware of and appreciate the demands and outcomes of relevant curriculum frameworks (The Australian Curriculum, the South Australian Certificate of Education, The International Baccalaureate, SACS Learning Areas and Crossways RE Framework for SA Catholic Schools) in relation to rated texts used in the classroom. It is expected that teachers will

[§] Australian Screen Classification Guide

As required by law, the National Film and Sound Archive (NFSA) has included the classification markings for the films to which a clip relates where that film has been previously classified.

Some of the clips included on this site have been taken from films classified as MA15+ or above as the NFSA considers that these films have considerable cultural and historical significance. While the NFSA has endeavoured to only select clips from these titles where the impact on the viewer of any of the themes, violence, sex, drug use, nudity, in the clip would be low level, there are some titles where these elements may have a moderate impact. Users of the site should therefore take care to note the classification markings of the film to which a clip relates and ensure that appropriate parental guidance is provided to minors viewing clips from films classified at a PG rating or above.

Clips displayed without classification markings have been displayed as such as they are taken from films which are exempt from classification under section 5B of the Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Act, 1995 (Cth).

- make informed and professional judgments when designing curriculum and selecting texts
- inform parents (or guardians/care givers) of the curricular demands
- clearly articulate how a selected text will support the student to achieve the desired educational outcomes
- negotiate alternative suitable texts for study, where the family does not agree with the selection of texts, in order to meet the curriculum demands placed on the student.
- at each stage of schooling, school leaders, teachers, and where appropriate, other staff be clear of a responsibility to develop student capability in the analysis and critical reading of texts. In enacting this responsibility, staff take account of:
 - curriculum demands and requirements to explore increasingly complex issues and themes
 - the value of curriculum enrichment through appropriately selected and supported rated texts
 - the enduring value of engaging students in practices of critical discernment for their reading and viewing beyond the classroom.
- teachers and where appropriate, other staff, consider the advice of the student counsellor prior to planning any study or screening of a rated text to an individual or group of students whose age is below that recommended by the ACB and the requirements of Catholic Education SA.

3.5. Families/Caregivers/Guardians

Families/Caregivers/Guardians work in partnership with the principal and teachers by:

- contributing to the educational process to support students in meeting curriculum demands which relate to the analysis and production of rated texts
- supporting the continuity of academic programs by providing consents when necessary to the study of texts
- negotiating alternative suitable texts for study, where the family does not agree with the selection of texts, in order to meet the curriculum demands placed on the student.

3.6. Students

Students work in partnership with their teachers and families by:

- keeping relevant members of their family - parents, guardians and caregivers - aware of necessary consents related to their study or other educational purposes
- selecting appropriate texts in the conduct of negotiated study e.g. investigations, research, paired text studies
- creating texts appropriate to the demands of the curriculum, and wider publication
- understanding the connections between these policy statements and procedures and other policies which relate to communication and the use of ICT.

4. AUSTRALIAN CLASSIFICATION BOARD GUIDELINES AND CESA PROTOCOLS

The principal, school leaders, teachers and staff in other educational settings, families, guardians, care givers and students are made aware of the following guidelines used by the Australian Classification Board (ACB):

Classification Guidelines

- The list and table that follow briefly summarise the criteria and “hierarchy of impact” applied to classifiable texts. For further details see the ACB website at:

[Australian Classification Board](#)

- The “hierarchy of impact” used by the ACB to classify texts relate to six classifiable elements of films and computer games:
 - Themes
 - Violence
 - Sex
 - Language
 - Drug use
 - Nudity
- A General (G) rating is for a general audience and applies when there are very mild (or nil) references or representations across all six elements. If any one of the six elements is considered mild or moderate the rating must be Parental Guidance (PG) or Mature (M).
- Although such classifications are advisory where one of the six elements is considered strong or high, the rating must be MA 15+, R 18+ or X 18+, and such classifications are legally restricted rather than advisory].

Australian Classification Board Classifications		"Hierarchy of impact"	Advice to Teachers, other Staff and OSHC Directors/Coordinators
G	General (Suitable for all ages)	Very mild	This classification is for a general audience. There may be some films in this category that are of no interest to students. Parental consent is not mandatory.
PG	Parental Guidance (Parental guidance recommended for persons under 15 years)	Mild	Some material in this classification might upset, frighten, or confuse students, and an adult may be required to provide guidance to students. Approval must be sought from the Principal and consent from parents of students under 15 years of age must be obtained.
M	Mature (Recommended for mature audiences 15 years and over)	Moderate	This classification is recommended for students who are 15 years and over. It is not against the law to show this material to younger students, however, this category is more suited to mature audiences because the films may contain themes and scenes which require a mature perspective. Approval must be sought from the Principal and consent from parents of students under 18 years of age must be obtained.

THE LEGALLY RESTRICTED CLASSIFICATIONS

MA15+	Mature accompanied (Restrictions apply to persons under the age of 15)	Strong	This classification is also suited to students who are 15 years and over. Material in this classification is stronger than the M classification. This classification is legally restricted. The restrictions apply to persons who are under 15 years. Approval must be sought from the Principal and consent from parents of students under 18 years of age. If you want to use these films with students who are under 15 years, the parents/guardians must be present at the viewing of rated texts.
R18+	Restricted to adults 18 years and over	High	The material in this classification is for adult audiences. Not to be used in schools.
X18+	Restricted to adults 18 years and over	High	Not to be used in schools.
RC	Refused Classification	Very High	Not to be used in schools.

5. CESA: TEMPLATE CONSENT FORM

Consent Form for the Viewing of Rated Texts		
1.	Name of teacher-----	
2.	Date(s)-text is being used-----	
3.	Title of rated text-----	
4.	Approval of Principal (or delegate) for PG, M or MA15+-----	
5.	Connection between the text and the curriculum, information about student activities or assessment (including examples of possible interactive homework activities).	
6.	Information about the availability of the text from the school or public facilities to enable parents (or guardians) to preview the text if they wish	
7.	Australian Classification Board rating	
8.	Reason/s for this rating	
9.	Other factors of which parents (or guardians/caregivers) should be aware (such as the consumer advice published on the jacket, at the beginning of the text or on the ACB website. In addition, teachers may wish to make note of issues that might impact on students that are not included in the consumer advice, such as suicide or portrayals of deceased indigenous persons).	
10.	Parent/Guardian/Caregiver comment	
11.	Parent/Guardian/Caregiver Consent I give consent / do not give consent (circle the relevant words) for -----to view / work with the Print/Visual/Electronic Text/s. Signed-----Date-----	
12.	If consent is not given an alternative will be negotiated with you.	

6. REFERENCES

- Australian Classification Board <http://www.classification.gov.au/www/cob/classification.nsf>
- CESA Strategic Plan
<http://online.cesanet.adl.catholic.edu.au/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-13434>
- Charter for Teachers in Catholic Schools SA
<http://online.cesanet.adl.catholic.edu.au/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-6554/Charter+for+Teachers+BROCHURE+.pdf>
- Child Protection Curriculum, Teacher Support Module for SA Catholic Schools, CEO 2009 (Contact the CEO for further details 83016600)
- Child Wise, Choose with Care, Building Safe Organisations
http://www.childwise.net/images/stories/documents/online_publications/12_Steps_to_building_child_safe_orgs.pdf
- Communications Technology Policy (containing acceptable use section)
[Home](#)➤[CESA Services](#)➤[Policies, Procedures & Guidelines](#)➤[ICT Collection](#)
- Information Sharing: Guidelines for Promoting the Safety and Wellbeing of Children, Young People and their Families, Govt of SA
<http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/InformationSharingGuideli.pdf>
- *Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum*, DECS, 2008
<http://decs.sa.gov.au/speced2/pages/childprotection/childProtectionCurric/?reFlag=1>
- MCEETYA (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs), "Contemporary Learning: learning in an online world", Victoria 2008
http://www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/_resources/ICT_LearningOnlineWorld-ContemporaryLearning.pdf
- MCEETYA (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs), "Learning Spaces Framework: learning in an online world", Victoria 2008
http://www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/_resources/ICT_LearningOnlineWorld-LearningSpacesFWork.pdf
- National Safe Schools Framework,
http://www.mceecdya.edu.au/verve/_resources/natsafeschools_file.pdf
- Policy for the Care, Wellbeing and Protection of Children and Young People 2009
<http://online.cesanet.adl.catholic.edu.au/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-13163/Policy+for+the+Care+Wellbeing+and+Protection+of+Children+and+Young+People+18+November+final.pdf>
- 'Protective Practices for Staff in their Interactions with Students - Guidelines for Schools, Preschools and Out of School Hours Care' DECS, CEO and AISSA 2009
<http://online.cesanet.adl.catholic.edu.au/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-6076/Protective+Practices+edited+April+2009+version.pdf>
- South Australian Catholic Child Protection Council Charter
<http://www.adelaide.catholic.org.au/sites/ProfessionalStandards/media/files/985.pdf>
- South Australian Catholic Child Protection Council Implementation Guidelines for the Care, Wellbeing and Protection of Children and Young People (Contact the CEO for further details 83016600)
- South Australian Catholic Child Protection Council Policy for the Care, Wellbeing and Protection of Children and Young People, 2006
<http://www.adelaide.catholic.org.au/sites/ProfessionalStandards/media/files/1031.pdf>

- South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools Vision Statement 1991 and reprinted 1996
<http://online.cesane.adl.catholic.edu.au/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-8376/SACCS+Vision+Statement.pdf>
- South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools, Duty of Care Policy 2004
<http://online.cesane.adl.catholic.edu.au/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-3015/DutyofCare.pdf>
- The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference "Social Networking Protocol for the Catholic Church in Australia", December 2009.
http://www.catholic.org.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=frontpage&Itemid=52

This document will be updated as regulatory or other matters arise.

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