

AUDIOVISUAL MATERIAL IN SCHOOLS – PROCEDURES FOR USE

**MEMORANDUM TO:
ALL SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
SCHOOL EDUCATION DIRECTORS
REGIONAL DIRECTORS**

This memorandum provides advice for schools with regard to the use of audiovisual material including 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](#) and the [Broadcasting Services Act 1992](#).

This memorandum replaces the Deputy Director-General's Memorandum to Principals *Films, Videos, DVDs and Computer Games in Schools Procedures for Use* (DN/07/00003), dated 14 June 2007 and has been developed as a consequence in changes to regulatory authorities, some levels of classification and copyright licences.

Classification of films and computer games

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](#) 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](#). Information for schools is also provided from the [Attorney-General's website](#) and includes [fact sheets](#) for schools, teachers, students and libraries.

Classification of television material (other than films)

The [Broadcasting Services Act 1992](#) 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](#) coordinated by the [Australian Communications and Media Authority \(ACMA\)](#).

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](#).

Directions for Schools

1. All audiovisual materials and computer games must be previewed by teachers prior to use with students. The reviewer 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.

2. The use of classified films, 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**, and **PG** material to an executive member of staff but must not delegate approval relating to use of **M** and **MA 15+** material.
3. Material classified **G** is classified for general viewing. There may be some material in this category that is of no interest to students.
4. Material classified **PG** should only be used with students after careful consideration by teaching staff and approval in accordance with point 2 above, given that material in this classification might upset, frighten or confuse some students and an adult may be required to provide guidance to students. Staff may wish to inform parents in advance of the presentation of this material to allow parents the opportunity to withdraw their child from the viewing.
5. Material classified **M** should only be considered for students who are **15 years and over**. 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.

Parents are to be informed in advance of presentation so that they have the opportunity to withdraw their child from the viewing. For students in Years 11 and

12, informing parents in advance may take the form of a notification to parents at the beginning of the course that material classified M may be shown during the course.

6. **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](#) in circumstances where students under 18 may be living independently.

7. 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.

However this exemption does not cover playing film for non-educational purposes. Principals are reminded that **schools are directly responsible for purchase of a Co-curricular Licence**, to cover copyright provisions for screening of any video material on excursion bus travel, school camps, sport rainy day or lunchtime activities and other similar events. More information is available in a [Side by Side article](#) that can be found at <https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/news/sbs/teachlearn/yr2010/jul/film-licence.htm>.

Enquiries and further information can be obtained from:

Classification Board and Classification Review Board:

Phone: (02) 92897100 Fax: (02) 9289 7101 Website: www.classification.gov.au

Des Gorman

A/DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL, SCHOOLS

9 November 2010