



# Our Lady of Mt Carmel School Mullewa

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## SELECTION OF APPROPRIATE TEXTS IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

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Originally released: 2003

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Due for Review: 2008

### RATIONALE

Our Lady of Mount Carmel School aims to help students integrate culture, faith and life. It values culture and fosters its critical transmission. Underlying its approach will be absolute values founded upon the teaching of Jesus Christ. Therefore, careful selection of texts (print and non-print) is important at Our Lady of Mount Carmel School.

### PRINCIPLES

1. Materials shall be selected which support and develop the educational objectives of the school.
2. Consideration shall be given to selecting material suitable to the level of the intellectual, spiritual, emotional and social development of the student.
3. Selection of texts shall address student diversities of: culture, gender, special learning needs, and socio-economic background.
4. Students shall be offered a range of texts that enable them to develop critical understanding of the diversity of beliefs and values found in society and in human experiences. Some texts will be selected which will enable the student, with assistance, to challenge dominant ideas in texts, particularly stereotypes and undesirable models of human behaviour.
5. Texts shall include appropriate content, be stimulating, adaptable and have sound language and visual quality.
6. The selection of texts shall be guided by the learning outcomes which the teacher wants the student to achieve.
7. Texts shall be considered in light of the whole school curriculum, keeping in mind the values and ethos of our school and the expectations of the parent community.
8. Some texts, such as those, which contain gratuitous or extreme violence, or pornographic material, have no place in the Catholic school.
9. Teachers shall be sensitive to the use of texts that deal with controversial topics or challenging situations and carefully consider the suitability of such texts for use in schools.

## PROCEDURES

1. Texts, which are to be made available to students in Our Lady of Mount Carmel School, are all previewed and evaluated prior to their selection and use. In particular, recommended curriculum materials or syllabus texts need to be extensively reviewed before inclusion in libraries, or used in classes.
2. The Principal, Senior Teacher and/or the School Librarian (when appropriate) are the first persons to consult for advice on the selection texts and the Office of Film and Literature Classification Guidelines for non-print texts. The document, Guidelines for the Classification of Films and Videotapes is available in the Teacher Resource Shelf in the Staffroom. These guidelines must work within the framework of this policy, 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>15+and over MATURE</b> – Recommended for mature audiences 15 years and over. Suitable for Years 10-12
<b>MA 15+</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 maybe suitable for Years 11 and 12.
<b>R 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>X 18+</b>	<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 (eg. 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. Texts concerned with Aboriginal studies shall be referred to the Aboriginal Teaching Assistants and the Aboriginal Studies Coordinator from CEO where necessary to ensure culturally sensitive suitability is maintained.
7. It is not the policy of Our Lady of Mount Carmel School 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.
8. If a parent or guardian makes a complaint about the relevance or suitability of a text, the following procedures should apply:

- 8.1 Ascertain the nature of the complaint
    - content
    - language
    - concepts
    - relevance
    - religious/ideological concerns
  - 8.2 Refer the matter to a member of the Leadership Team
  - 8.3 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.
9. Our Lady of Mount Carmel School 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.
  10. If a member of the general community makes a complaint, the nature of the complaint shall be ascertained. The matter should be reported to the Principal.
  11. Our Lady of Mount Carmel has Internet safeguards to prevent students accessing materials that are of a dubious nature, inappropriate, offensive or irrelevant.
  12. Our Lady of Mount Carmel School also has mechanisms in place for preventing access to inappropriate and irrelevant material through the school library. The automated library system has a ban in place which prevents access to students loaning teacher resource material.