

## APPROPRIATE SELECTION OF TEXTS POLICY

**Updated: 2020**  
**Review: 2024**

### Rationale

Our Lady of Mercy College 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. Careful selection and use of texts is, therefore, important at Our Lady of Mercy College.

### Definitions

- Texts can be written, spoken or multi-modal and in print or digital/online forms. Multi-modal texts combine language with other systems for communication such as print text, visual images, soundtrack and spoken word, as in film or computer presentation media
- The term visual text includes but is not limited to: Film, video, static images
- The term written text includes but is not limited to: essays, articles, newspapers, magazines, brochures, books, letters, manuals, transcripts, novels, short stories and poems
- The term 'audio text' includes but is not limited to: speeches, radio broadcasts, songs, recited prayers and poems
- The term 'multi-modal' includes but is not limited to: webpages and e-books

### Principles

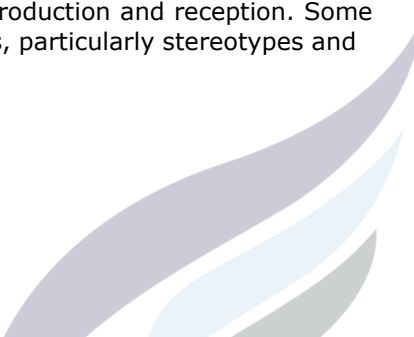
Texts are used to:

- support and develop the desired outcomes of schooling including the love and appreciation of texts
- 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

Texts enable students to:

- 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
- develop a critical understanding of the diversity of beliefs and values found in society and in human experiences
- develop their unique potential – physical, emotional, creative, spiritual, intellectual, moral and social

Texts are not studied in isolation and are related to the contexts of their production and reception. Some texts enable students, with assistance, to challenge dominant societal ideas, particularly stereotypes and undesirable models of human behaviour.



Texts dealing with controversial topics or challenging situations need to be selected with sensitivity to community expectations.

Texts containing gratuitous or extreme violence, or pornographic material, have no place at Our Lady of Mercy College.

## Procedures

1. Texts, which are made available to students at Our Lady of Mercy College, are previewed and evaluated prior to their selection and use.

The Principal and/or the Director of Teaching and Learning and/or the Heads of Learning Areas 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.

In selecting a non-print text, the guidelines set by the Australian Government: Department of Communications and the Arts should be adhered to.

## Advisory Categories

General (G)



The content is very mild in impact. The G classification is suitable for everyone.

Parental Guidance (PG)



The content is mild in impact.

Mature (M)



The content is moderate in impact. Films and computer games classified M (Mature) contain content of a moderate impact and are recommended for teenagers aged 15 years and over. Children under 15 may legally access this material because it is an advisory category.

## Restricted Categories

Mature Accompanied (MA 15+)



The content is strong in impact. MA 15+ classified material contains strong content and is legally restricted to persons 15 years and over.

Restricted (R 18+)



The content is high in impact. R 18+ material is restricted to adults.

This set of guidelines is to be used for any incursions or excursions involving non-print texts. Where the class teacher and the Head of Learning Area 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 written permission must be sought from the parent/guardian. If a parent/guardian declines consent, then, where possible, the student will be provided with an alternative text covering the same concepts

2. It is not the policy of Our Lady of Mercy 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.
3. If a parent/guardian makes a complaint about the relevance or suitability of a text, the following procedures should apply:

Ascertain the nature of the complaint:

- Content
- Language
- Concepts
- Relevance
- Religious / ideological concerns

Refer the matter to the relevant Head of Learning Area.

The teacher and Head of Learning Area will meet the parent/guardian to discuss the complaint where every attempt will be made to address the concerns.

4. Our Lady of Mercy 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 Western Australia Limited (CEWA Limited) and the School Curriculum and Standards Authority (SCSA) 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.

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.

5. Our Lady of Mercy College has Internet safeguards to prevent students accessing materials that are of a dubious nature, inappropriate, offensive or irrelevant.