

Suitable text and media resources in schools – guidelines

Curriculum, assessment, reporting and certification: early childhood to year 12 policy statement

The Northern Territory Board of Studies (NTBOS) approved policy sets out the legislative foundation for the provision of school education in the Northern Territory (NT) relating to curriculum, assessment, reporting and certification.

The Department of Education's (the department) Curriculum, assessment, reporting and certification: early childhood to year 12 policy informs department staff, that is school, regional, and corporate staff, about the actions they must undertake to be compliant with legislation, the NTBOS policy and the department's strategic direction.

These guidelines provide information on the use of text and media resources in all NT Government schools in all contexts including early childhood learning programs, outside school hours care and holiday care programs run at schools.

Policy

When using text and media resources in teaching and learning programs and in other school activities, school staff must adhere to the [Classification \(Publication, Films and Computer Games\) Act 1995](#) (Cth), its regulations and the National Classification Code.

School staff must ensure that teaching and learning resources balance the need to provide challenging and engaging learning programs, with the use of resources that do not offend learners or the community due to objectionable, overly controversial or obscene content.

School staff must ensure that text and media resources are accessible and inclusive to all learners, including those:

- with varying levels of hearing, movement, sight and cognitive ability
- that use assistive technology
- from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

For information and resources that support inclusive practice go to the [Students with disability guidelines](#).

Roles and responsibilities

Teaching and Learning Services as the policy owner is responsible for:

- communicating and reviewing these guidelines
- providing advice about suitable text and media resources for use in schools.

The school principal as the instructional leader of the school is responsible for:

- implementing these guidelines
- reviewing and making decisions on controversial resources that may cause objections from learners or parents, or giving this authority to an assistant principal or appropriate senior teacher
- ensuring that parents are informed of possible controversial resources, their right to object, resolving any objections where possible and escalating objections to the Senior Director Education as necessary
- reassessing resources and removing them from learning programs if found to be highly offensive regardless of educational value
- facilitating access to teacher resources that meet the accessibility needs of all learners.

Teachers are responsible for:

- consulting broadly with the school community, including Aboriginal staff and educators, about the appropriateness of resources based on cultural sensitivities
- identifying and reviewing resources as part of the curriculum and program scope and sequencing process and, where required, obtaining principal approval and parental permissions at the earliest possible stage
- resolving objections with the learner or the parent in the first instance and escalating objections that cannot be resolved to the principal
- reporting details of objections to relevant teachers, coordinators and the principal
- ensuring resources are accessible to all learners.

Guidelines

Text and media resources include, but are not limited to: books, film, television, plays, radio, music, computer games, the internet and digital media. Computer games, internet and digital media use carry additional cyber safety risks to learners. Refer to the [Suitable text and media resources in schools decision making guide](#) on eLearn to find out more about cyber safety.

Teachers and teaching teams will use the curriculum and program mapping process to identify appropriate resources and to refer resources that may cause objections to the principal for approval. All resources must be reviewed in consideration of the words, behaviour, images and themes contained within the resource.

Controversial topics or themes

Controversial topics will often be appropriate and important subjects of study and at times cannot be avoided in the teaching and learning context. Teachers should use the [Suitable text and media resources in schools decision making guide](#) to inform their use of text and media resources in school. The Suitable text and media guide is available on eLearn. It is important to consult with school communities about text and media resources to be used in teaching and learning programs as Aboriginal and other cultures may have different views of what is offensive.

Text and media resources likely to be regarded as offensive by the school community must not be used in schools. Resources with an 'R' or 'X' classification code must not be used.

Parental permission

School staff must seek parental permission for learners to engage with a text or media resource where:

- there is any potential for parental objection
- the resource is of a higher classification than the age of the students
- the use of a resource may expose the department to risk.

Schools may use an opt-in or an opt-out model to obtain parental permission. Opt-in requires explicit consent for learners to engage with a resource, while opt-out requires explicit refusal to allow engagement with a resource. Templates for both parental permission models are available on [eLearn](#).

Learners must be provided with an alternative resource or activity if they cannot engage with a text or media resource.

eLearn resources

Go to [eLearn](#) to access the following resources, staff log on required:

- Parent opt-in and opt-out forms
- Suitable text and media resources in schools decision-making guide.

Acronyms	Full form
NT	Northern Territory
NTBOS	Northern Territory Board of Studies

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