

CONTROVERSIAL MATTERS

POLICY

Rationale:

- Controversial but educationally valid curriculum content should not be avoided simply because it may be controversial to some people. Instead, controversial but educationally valid matters should be dealt with professionally, systematically and objectively, without personal teacher bias or an unreasonable obligation to appease.

Aims:

- To ensure a wide and rich curriculum is available to students, including the professional and objective analysis of matters that may be considered controversial by some people

Implementation:

- Matters that may be controversial or offensive to some people, may not illicit the same response in others. However, it is reasonable to predict that topics such as fantasy or magic, religion, sexual activity, reproduction, wars, nudity, racism, crime, violence, drug misuse, suicide or satire may be controversial to some people.
- Teachers in a pluralist, democratic society have a responsibility to ensure that students have the opportunity to consider age-appropriate issues and content objectively, and to become aware of the diversity of views held on such matters, but at the same time be conscious of, and balance their intended program against the following:-
 - the context and educational merit of the material
 - the impact of the material on the audience
 - the reaction of parents in relation to the material
 - the standards of morality and decency that the school community could reasonably be expected to be upheld at school
 - the potential impact on students and families of different cultural, religious, ethnic or cultural background.
- Materials or themes likely to be considered offensive or obscene to the school community are not to be used.
- Materials or themes that are likely to be considered offensive or obscene to some students or parents are to be detailed to all students and parents before the material or theme is introduced so that those who do not wish to participate have the opportunity to lodge an objection with the principal and be provided with alternative equally educational alternative materials and themes.
- All film and computer game classifications must be adhered to, with written parent or guardian consent as required.
- After consultation with school council, it has been decided that the principal will not allow the staging of school events or performances that are not suitable for general exhibition irrespective of the possibility of restricted audiences.
- When teaching a curriculum subject, teachers must refrain from promoting their own personal preferences in relation to controversial matters. They should refrain from deliberate acts or words that attempt to impose their views upon students, or to use students for propagation of their own beliefs, opinions and practices.

- Provided that the above guidelines are followed, teachers will be supported by the principal and school council against criticism of their teaching on controversial matters.
- Staff members concerned about the potential for a particular matter to be controversial should seek advice from the principal prior to introducing the topic.
- Complaints or concerns about teaching practice and/or content should be directed to the Principal.

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in....

August 2014