St Pius X High School Adamstown
Policy Document
Censorship

1. Rationale

In today's pluralistic and information-rich society, we have the capacity to access all forms of media and materials at an amazing rate. Students are particularly vulnerable to this information explosion, often lacking the necessary skills to appropriately evaluate and select materials. They need protection from materials which may be harmful to their development. Parents, too, need help in providing guidance to student selection of resources for informational and recreational pursuits.

Staff at St Pius X High School have special duty of care in this area because of their role in the mission of the Church and the formation of their students. They have knowledge and understanding of child development, experience of curriculum and the resources available to suit the age and capacity of the students in their care. St Pius X High School staff are well situated to assist students in the evaluation and selection of resources suited to their needs, and to help parents set appropriate standards within a values framework.

Censorship is defined as follows:
Suppressing, rejecting or restricting access to or parts of books, plays, internet, news reports, films, music, radio programs, etc. deemed objectionable on moral, political, religious or other grounds.

At St Pius X High School, **Censorship, Selection, Management and Acceptable Use** are defined as follows:

Selection: choice of resources by staff, students, parents and visitors.

Management: decision-making by members of the executive or delegated personnel, in establishing guidelines for ensuring appropriate organisation and supervision of resources.

Acceptable Use: the process of making value judgements (values as articulated in this Policy) and responsible use of resources.

Censorship Issues – Selection, Management and *Acceptable Use of Resources* contains strategies to assist Diocesan Schools in relation to the following issues:
Print Media
Electronic Media
Human Resources
Film, Music and Broadcast Media

The Policy at St Pius X High School is based on our respect for:

- The dignity and rights of the human person
- The Catholic Church, its mission and values
- The laws of our land, the good or our people and the well-being of our society.

2.   Aims

The aim of this Policy is to:

Guide teachers and students in relation to the selection, management and use of materials suitable for the age level of students. Ensure that informed decisions about challenging and controversial issues are made. Assist in dealing with challenges relating to teaching materials and methods. Clarify the issue of Censorship in relation to student learning and development. Assist both parents and parent groups in responsible decision making in relation to the use of resources. Encourage the teaching of critical information literacy skills in all area of the curriculum. Enable students to make appropriate value judgements in relation to their use of resources, and finally ensure adequate supervision for student use of resources.

3.   Censorship

(a)   *Print Media*

This may include magazines, literature, newspapers and teacher resources.

It is encouraged at St Pius X High School that following occurs:

Dialogue and debate at staff/faculty level regarding purchase and/or selection of materials. St Pius X High School staff identify suitable, age-appropriate texts and materials. Those materials that need to be restricted for student access in the Library (eg. identification stickers on senior fiction, restricted books, specific location of materials, computer flagging system, teacher resources, art materials, photos.)

(b)   *Electronic Media*

This may include CD-Roms, E-mail, Internet, Intranet, Computer Software, Computer Presentations, DVD's.

It is encouraged at St Pius X High School that the following occurs:

Staff adhere to the school's position regarding acceptable use and behaviour with this form of media. Regularly review, as part of the School Policy, the 'Acceptable Use Agreement' for use of the Internet and E-mail by students. The I.T. Coordinator advises staff on an appropriate criteria for selection of electronic materials and how to identify software appropriate to age use of Internet, use of e-mail, CD ROM etc. The Studies Coordinators monitor resources and strategies listed in teaching programs and registers. Students learn how to evaluate this form of media as part of the teaching/learning process.

(c)   *Human Resources*

This may include guest speakers, performers and volunteers.

It is envisaged at St Pius X High School that the following occurs:

Dialogue and debate at staff level regarding guest speakers and performers. Guest speakers, performers and volunteers are encouraged to use the appropriate use of language, content and actions because of the age of the students. Teach students to evaluate critically this form of educational activity. Inform parents, where appropriate, of the nature of presentations by guest speakers, performers and volunteers, which is the case with the English faculty.

(d)   *Film, Music and Broadcast Media*

This may include film, television, radio, video clips, lyrics, DVD's.

It is encouraged at St Pius X High School that the following occurs:

Discussion and dialogue at staff/faculty level, with regard to student viewing of films and television shows, listening to music and radio, and content appropriateness according to teaching programs and the Office of Film and Literature Classification Board Guidelines. That all staff refer to Guidelines for Classification of Film and Video Clips for age appropriate content. Ensure that teaching programs, which include films, television shows, radio and music, enable students, as discriminating viewers and listeners, to evaluate materials. Advise parents beforehand, of visual and audio selections in cases where rating, themes or content may be questioned. For example, in Year 8 H.S.I.E. letter sent to parents regarding Dances with Wolves (M.Rated) – permission needed.

4.   Evaluation

This Policy will be evaluated by the SEV/DEV Committee every five years or as the need arises.