

**Sir John A. Macdonald Secondary School
History Department**

Policy on “R” Rated or Controversial Videos

Preamble It would be simple to say that no “R” rated or controversial films will be shown in our department, but we recognize that some of these movies have educational value and are consistent with History and Social Science curriculum and therefore there is merit to showing part or all of these films in class. We also believe that teachers are professionals who know the maturity level of their classes, and therefore know what type of videos the class can “handle.” However, we as a department believe that no student should be forced to view anything they or their parents are not comfortable with. Nor should they be centered out if they object to viewing anything. We also believe that a significant amount of pre-briefing and debriefing need to occur in these situations. Therefore, we have drafted the following policy on “R” rated videos that we have all agreed to follow.

Policy

Link to Curriculum

All clips will be curriculum-related.

Course Coordinators will be informed of any controversial or “R” rated videos shown in any sections of the course they are responsible for. They will, in turn, keep the Department Head informed.

All videos shown in our department will be educationally justifiable to students, parents, course coordinators, the Department Head and administrators, with ties to specific objectives in our curriculum.

Any full-length feature film shown will contain a formative or summative assignment, in order to justify the amount of class time devoted to it, and allow the students to reflect on the issues within.

All clips of feature films shown in class will be reported at the end of each month on the video log, given to the Department Head who will then give it to the Librarian to report to the Board of Education.

Preparation, Debriefing and Support

Teachers will prepare the class for the clip to be shown well ahead of time, and put the subject matter into historical context.

Teachers will ask the students to inform their parents of what is to be shown, when and why, and to seek verbal permission to watch it.

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No student will be forced to watch any “R” rated or controversial video clip that they or their parents are not comfortable with, and they should not be centered out for this. With this in mind, the following should occur:

- The teacher will announce to the class the controversial clip to be shown before the day the clip is to be shown in class, informing the students that they can “opt out” and go in the pod to do appropriate work during the clip- they need only to tell the teacher after or before class. When the time comes to watch the video, arrangements will have been made for the student to be elsewhere. This will ensure the student is not centered out.
- The teacher will repeat this immediately before the video is shown, in case any student was absent when the statement was made or they forgot the clip was to be shown. The student will also be given a second opportunity to “opt-out” here, though it will be in front of the class.

Teachers will engage in significant debriefing of all controversial clips to make sure the students understand the issues involved and place them in the appropriate historical context. They will also make themselves available to support any students who seem disturbed by the video or the themes raised within it.