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With the growing use of ICT in schools, films have become more popular as a valuable resource for schools throughout the curriculum. They can help bring past events to life, in history for example, and can be used as a stimulus for children's writing. However we need to make sure that the films shown are suitable for children.

Under the Children Act 1989, teachers have a duty of care towards their pupils, traditionally referred to as 'in loco parentis' i.e. 'in place of a parent'. Legally, while not bound by parental responsibility, teachers must behave as any reasonable parent would do in promoting the welfare and safety of children in their care. Our school places a great emphasis on safeguarding children and wants to ensure that children are protected from unsuitable materials.

The British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) classifies films as:

U: Universal

Suitable for all. A U film should be suitable for audiences aged four years and over. However, it is impossible to predict what might upset a particular child.

PG: Parental Guidance

Suitable for general viewing, but some scenes may be unsuitable for younger children. A PG film should not disturb a child aged around eight or older. Parents should consider whether the content might upset younger or more sensitive children. A PG film will not contain any theme which is inappropriate for a child. PG works can explore challenging issues such as bullying, bereavement or racism.

In our school we recognise the value that film has in children's education and want to ensure the safeguarding of children. We recognise that children have very different personalities, backgrounds and experiences, and will often react to a given scene in very different ways. As a guiding principal, U films may be shown across the school. Suitable extracts from PG films may be shown to children across the whole school. With parental permission, whole films with a PG classification may be shown. Whilst teachers may use clips from a variety of films through the internet (all previewed) complete films above a 'U' classification will not be shown without first seeking parental consent.

However, it is important that the teacher has determined it is suitable and appropriate for the children and that they are able to justify their reasons. It is important to make sure that any children watching are not likely to suffer any ill effects as a result of seeing the film. If teachers are unsure about a film they should seek advice from colleagues or the school leadership team, or seek parental advice for individual children. If there is any doubt then it would be safer not to show the film.

The BBFC (www.bbfc.co.uk) provides teachers and parents with clear, concise, specially tailored information about films, video games and classification, helping them make informed choices about what is suitable for children. An annual licence to cover the screening of films for use in school and to respect the copyright of the owners of the film is provided by the DfE.