

Screening Pirated DVDs in Schools

This information paper is designed to inform schools about the copyright issues related to the use of “pirated” DVDs in schools.

Piracy is Theft

It has been reported that schools may be inadvertently infringing copyright in cinema films by allowing “pirated” DVD versions to be screened on school premises. We understand that these DVDs have, in some instances, been supplied to schools by students and parents.

DVD piracy is a criminal activity which carries severe penalties. In addition, copyright owners can take action against those who infringe copyright in their films and seek substantial financial compensation for their losses. By allowing this activity on their premises schools, teachers, parents and students are at risk of serious criminal penalties for DVD piracy.

How to Identify “Pirate” Movies

“Pirated” versions of films have been copied illegally. As a result they typically:

- Have photocopied or poorly printed covers and graphics (they may come in a plastic envelope instead of a normal DVD cover);
- Carry an “ALL” zone region code or no region coding at all;
- Have poor sound and vision quality;
- Have subtitling and/or DVD menu items in a language other than English or in poorly translated English;
- Have discrepancies between the inlay card and the disc;
- Contain more than one film on a disc; and
- Have technical faults – “skipped” frames, freezing during screening or non-functioning DVD menu items.

In addition, genuine DVDs carry copyright and classification notices as well as a list of credits, ownership, licensing information and the country of manufacture. These are often missing from pirated DVD’s. Where they are seen they are often misspelled or deliberately distorted.

Finally, if your school is offered a DVD of a film which is **still screening in cinemas or not yet available in Australia** then it is **highly likely** that it is a “pirated” copy.

Educate Teachers, Students and Parents to the danger of “pirated” DVDs

It is important that schools take a pro-active role and educate their staff and students to the risks of DVD Piracy. This can be done by :

- Posting warning notices in staff rooms and around the school;
- Making a clear statement to students, parents and staff on the screening of pirate DVDs on their premises;
- Raising the issue of DVD piracy in school bulletins and newsletters;
- Only screening DVDs obtained from a legitimate source. For more information see Copyright Information Sheet: *“Lawful Screening of Films and Television Programs in Schools”*.
- Reviewing DVD collections held in the school to ensure they have been obtained from legitimate sources; and
- Destroying any suspect DVDs held by the school.

Further information about DVD piracy and other copyright issues in schools is available from your local Copyright Manager (see Contacts).