

## **Child Side School Literature and Television Viewing Policy:**

### **Educators' reasoning:**

Child Side School is attempting to set up a school/home culture of 'thinking' which leads to informed, conscious decision making and action based on personal bodies of 'evidence' and seeking multiple perspectives/points of view.

Books, the media (television, magazines, newspapers which are linked commercially to each other and therefore may not offer a different 'voice' or perspective to each other) and movies can have a profound influence and impact on children's ideas, views on the world and thinking.

**Children are very vulnerable to these influences** and adults specifically need to spend a great deal of time (at school and at home) to help children develop awareness and 'filters' when reading and viewing.

**Children's opinions and feelings need to be asked, listened to and valued**, as well as adults sharing their opinions and feelings about these stories/events in books and television. Adults should never dismiss children's feelings or opinions!

The books and television programmes we offer to the children need to be selected wisely and with deliberation, purpose and care. Television viewing is part of the English curriculum, but will be kept to a minimum and a definite purpose (NOT for settling children or filling in time at end of term or because it is part of popular culture.)

The messages behind television programmes (even those specifically designed for children by 'experts'-experts in marketing and commercialism mainly-) and in books are often subtle and require discussion, thought, reflection and revisiting. As adults we need to be aware of these 'messages', attitudes and any stereotypes or biases and try to 'see' the book/programme through children's eyes by attempting to 'jump into the child's skin'.

Adults need to **observe and listen to children's ideas and interpretations**, especially as they play or discuss these concepts/feelings/ attitudes with other children. Children **do** view the world differently to adults and often the significant events for them are not what adults see or remember because we 'know' the story or the 'big/full picture' and we are 'adults' not children.

As adults we have a great deal more experience, knowledge and understanding of the 'messages', commercial forces and ability to 'read between the lines' as well as to understand how humour and sarcasm are used to pass on messages which may be quite opposite to what they appear (for example think "The Simpsons"). Children need help and experience asking themselves "What if..?" "Supposing that...?" Viewing and reading are complex processes and

children need adult interest and support and questioning so that children can 'think' for themselves.

## **Literature and television viewing at Child Side School:**

### **Books (especially literature/fiction) -**

- Will be offered for children in all learning areas and will be read to them as well as children having a go at reading them for different purposes or reasons.
- Enjoyment and pleasure are significant reasons for reading. We encourage children to ponder upon books and as adults we need to show delight, amazement, disbelief, enjoyment, sadness, disappointment... when we ourselves read or read to them.
- We need to be careful not to over analyse every story or to super-impose our own adult ideas and perceptions over children's. Adults need to listen to and value children's interpretations and **children need to learn to value their own and other children's interpretations (even if they don't accept them because they differ from their own)**. Social-constructivism of learning works through books/viewing and discussion too.
- Fiction/literature will be carefully selected (or if children self-select from home or the library will be discussed and pondered upon...) but not 'censored'. Through books children need to be exposed to the range of emotions and experiences that are familiar to them and those that maybe outside of their experience. Books are often a 'safe' way of exploring/sharing uncomfortable or confronting experiences and emotions, as long as children are able to reflect upon and share their reactions or listen to others sharing and debating theirs.
- A wide range of books need to be selected and offered to children that offer children alternatives to predicted and expected solutions or endings-like surprises or twists. Books need to offer children the possibilities that there is more than one way to do things, that there is more than one way to be 'right'. Books and conversations need to look at multiple perspectives and that what is good/helpful for one, may not necessarily be the same for the other character.
- **Books also need to move children away from the concept that there are only 2 options that are mostly opposites like good or bad, wrong or right, with nothing in-between.** Books need to challenge ideas of winners and losers (what is really won and how does it change or improve their lives? What is really lost and how does it affect/change their lives?) and challenge ideas of 'the best' or who is 'better' than another... (the 'best' friend or fastest person in running... what does this mean?)
- Books and their follow up discussions/conversations need to open children up to the same person/character displaying a **range** of choices and behaviours and to get them to think about the possibilities why these maybe happening (possible causes and effects.) Many fairy tales and children's books/movies are based upon the 'good' triumphing over the 'evil' and often the only solution offered is to get 'rid' of the 'evil' character through death or dismissal. Many older children's books also convey this message as an 'absolute', as the 'truth', as 'unchanging and 'fixed' and also have many 'attitudes' which give the impression that they are 'expected' of children.

**Television programmes will-**

- Be used for a specific purpose or reason, integrated with children’s current learning experiences and for authentic purposes as expressed by children and adults.
- Be discussed in the same light as books (see above) so that children are not just offered good/bad, right/wrong, one single/simple cause and the obvious reaction...

VERSION	DATE REVIEWED	DATE RATIFIED	CHANGES MADE	AUTHOR OF CHANGES
1	June 2011	7/12/2011	No changes	KM
2	Oct 2014	5/11/2014	Minor change	KM