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Websites in schools may earn cash

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TASMANIAN schools could soon join a program that will allow them to earn money from their websites.

Nearly 200 schools in Victoria have signed up with Sponsor-Ed, a company that builds school websites at no charge, runs approved advertising on them and then splits the proceeds with the school.

Ogilvie High School in Hobart has already signed on, with the school's website about to go live this week.

Director Denis Masseni said schools already acknowledged sponsors in their newsletters, and bought corporate sponsorship for school programs, so he said advertising on a school website was an extension of that idea.

He said school websites — especially primary school sites — were often done by parents or ex-students, and were sometimes not the useful resource to parents that they could be.

Mr Masseni said the company made it very clear to schools it would not run ads inappropriate for a school website.

"The school maintains the ethical control over the advertisements," he said

To that end, Mr Masseni said the

company had signed up hardware stores, office supply chains, photographic studios and music stores to provide advertising.

"We're sensitive to that landscape. We're parents too," he said.

As for the system itself, Mr Masseni said an hour of training was all it took for school staff to be able to update sports rosters, post urgent notices, add pictures of a school performance and send out the school newsletter.

Department of Education deputy secretary of corporate services Greg Glass said that the proposal was being reviewed.

"We are also looking at our departmental sponsorship guidelines and examining how the proposal sits within those," he said.

"We will then be providing guidelines to Tasmanian Government schools regarding the use of sponsorship and advertising on school websites."

Principals Association president Rob Banfield said he had heard of the program and was looking into it.

"We're investigating the opportunity in Tasmania and we will be talking with our senior Education Department officials in the near future," he said.