



## ASA Guidelines: Advertising and Children – A Parents Guide

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A look at how sexist/sexualising ads in public places (such as ads for the porn/sex industry in newspapers) breach ASA Guidelines: 'Advertising & Children – A Parent's Guide'.

We have highlighted key points in **red** with additional comments *in italics* below.

ASA guidelines can be viewed here: <http://www.notbuyingit.org.uk/ASAParentsGuide>



**'Legal, decent, honest, truthful'**

### Who We Are

The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) works to ensure advertising in the UK is **responsible** and adheres to the Advertising Codes. All ads, **wherever** they appear, must not mislead, **harm or offend** and we take quick and effective action to ban ads that break the rules.

The Advertising Codes class a child as someone under 16, but there are further rules in place, like timing restrictions, that are designed to protect younger children.

*'Wherever they appear': This means that advertisers cannot argue, as they have in the past, that they are not breaching ASA codes as their target audience won't be offended'*

### Protecting Children

The **protection of children sits at the heart of our work**. We make sure that ads targeted at **or likely to be seen by children** don't contain anything that is **inappropriate** or **harmful**. We also ensure that **young adults** are protected.

*Exposing children to pornographic images or porn and sex ads in newspapers is clearly inappropriate, harmful and an issue of child protection. Indeed it contravenes the Serious Crime Act Section 15, relating to child protection in spirit if not in letter:*

<http://www.notbuyingit.org.uk/SeriousCrimeAct>

## Key Rules State That:

- Ads addressed to, targeted directly at or featuring children must contain nothing that is likely to result in their physical, mental or moral harm
- Ads featuring **sexual imagery**, particularly posters that children are more likely to see, **must be carefully targeted and avoid causing harm or offence**

*A newspaper falls under a similar category to a poster as highly likely to be seen by a child since it is sold next to other newspapers on the bottom shelf and next to children's magazine all within easy reach of any child.*

- Ads must not portray or represent children in a sexual way
- **Ads for age-restricted products** like alcohol and gambling must not be targeted at **or likely to appeal** to under 18s

*The porn and sex industry are age restricted 'products'. It could be argued that their presence in a newspaper means that they are by their very location targeting children, many of whom read newspapers such as the Metro or ES found all over London's tube network. Further they are likely to appeal to older children under the age of 18 – boys interested in the opposite sex or girls obsessed with their body image and 'being sexy'.*

- Ads that are suitable for older children but could distress younger children must be **sensitively scheduled**

*'Adult' ads in a newspaper are a clear example of insensitive 'scheduling'.*

- Depictions of violence that may cause distress or encourage copycat behaviour should be shown only at appropriate times and in places where children are less likely to see them

*Surely the same principle applies to depictions of sex, including depicting the buying of women for sex?*

- Trailers for films or **video-games carrying an 18-certificate or 15-certificate** may not be advertised around programmes made for, directed at, or likely to appeal to audiences below the age of 16

*The same principle should apply to newspapers – they should only contain child-appropriate content as they are in a location that is readily accessible to children, surrounded by other newspapers, or indeed children's magazines.*

- Ads must not exploit children's credulity, loyalty, **vulnerability or lack of experience**

*Sex ads in newspapers absolutely exploit children's lack of experience and vulnerability. Indeed, it is exactly this kind of material that is used to 'groom' children with. Their placement in a newspaper makes it that much easier for a paedophile to carry out or normalise his grooming.*

- The Advertising Codes also require **all ads to be socially responsible**.

*The 'adult' industries are deeply harmful for the women in them and for attitudes towards all women. It is totally socially irresponsible to normalise these industries by advertising them in the public domain. By very definition they are 'adult' and inappropriate for children so it is particularly socially irresponsible to advertise them to our children.*