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# CHILDREN

## Principle

Children must be protected from advertisements that could cause physical, mental or moral harm.

## Background

The context in which an advertisement is likely to be broadcast and the likely age of the audience must be taken into account to avoid unsuitable scheduling. Advertisements that are suitable for older children and young persons but could distress younger children must be sensitively scheduled or placed. This section should therefore be read in conjunction with Section 32: Scheduling. Care must be taken when scheduling advertisements that could frighten or distress children or could otherwise be unsuitable for them: those advertisements should not be scheduled or placed in or around children's programmes or in or around programmes likely to be seen by significant numbers of children. Care must also be taken when featuring children in advertisements.

## Definitions

A child is someone under 16.
Children's products and services" are products or services of more or less exclusive interest to children.
Products and services of interest to children" are products or services that are likely to appeal to children but are not of exclusive interest to them.

## Rules

5.1 Advertisements that are suitable for older children but could distress younger children must be sensitively scheduled (see Section 32: Scheduling).

5.2 Advertisements must not condone, encourage or unreasonably feature behaviour that could be dangerous for children to emulate. Advertisements must not implicitly or explicitly discredit established safety guidelines.
Advertisements must not condone, encourage or feature children going off alone or with strangers.
This rule is not intended to prevent advertisements that inform children about dangers or risks associated with potentially harmful behaviour.

5.3 Advertisements must not condone or encourage practices that are detrimental to children's health.

5.4 Advertisements must not condone or encourage bullying.

5.5 Advertisements must not portray or represent children in a sexual way.

5.6 Advertisements must not imply that children are likely to be ridiculed, inferior to others, less popular, disloyal or have let someone down if they or their family do not use a product or service.

5.7 Advertisements must not take advantage of children's inexperience, credulity or sense of loyalty. Advertisements for products or services of interest to children must not be likely to mislead; for example, by exaggerating the features of a product or service in a way that could lead to children having unrealistic expectations of that product or service.

5.8 Child actors may feature in advertisements but care must be taken to ensure that those advertisements neither mislead nor exploit children's inexperience, credulity or sense of loyalty.

5.9 Advertisements must not include a direct appeal to children to buy or hire a product or service or to persuade their parents, guardians or other persons to buy or hire a product or service for them*.
(This rule reflects a prohibited practice from Schedule 20 of the DMCCA. See note in Section 3 for more details).

5.10 Advertisements that promote a product or service and invite consumers to buy that product or service via a direct response mechanism must not be targeted directly at children. Direct-response mechanisms are those that allow consumers to place orders without face-to-face contact with the supplier.

5.11 If it includes a price, an advertisement for a children's product or service must not use qualifiers such as "only" or "just" to make the price seem less expensive.

5.12 **Television only** – Advertisements for a toy, game or comparable children's product must include a statement of its price or, if it is not possible to include a precise price, an approximate price, if that product costs £30 or more.

5.13 Advertisements for promotions targeted directly at children:

5.13.1 must include all significant qualifying conditions

5.13.2 must make clear if adult permission is required for children to enter. Advertisements for competitions targeted directly at children are acceptable only if the skill required is relevant to the age of likely participants and if the values of the prizes and the chances of winning are not exaggerated.

5.14 Promotions that require a purchase to participate and include a direct appeal to make a purchase must not be targeted directly at children. Advertisements for promotions directly targeted at children should comply with Section 28: Competitions.