

COMPLAINT NUMBER	17/415
COMPLAINANT	E. Matthews
ADVERTISER	Mars NZL Ltd
ADVERTISEMENT	Television
DATE OF MEETING	27 November
OUTCOME	No Grounds to Proceed

Advertisement: The television advertisement for Skittles showed a boy with ‘Skittles Pox’ and was shown with Skittles lollies all over his body. A girl picks a Skittle off the boy’s skin and as she eats it, asks “are they contagious?”. The girl is then shown covered in ‘Skittles Pox’ as well.

The Chair ruled there were no grounds for the complaint to proceed.

Complainant, E. Matthews, said: The advert has a girl asking a boy if his 'condition' is contagious- he says no. Then she comes out in spots. It may be candy, but the underlying message is to children, first girls, is what a boy says about his 'condition' is to be believed and trusted. And for boys, it's okay to lie to a girl about your contagious condition. Change the scenario to teens with the Skittles childhood learning and change Skittlespox to herpes etc. This advert continues the message makes are always right/to be believed and it okay to lie about a contagious disease.

The relevant provisions were Code of Ethics - Basic Principle 4, Rule 2, Rule 4;

The Chair noted the Complainant’s concern that it was inappropriate for the young boy in the advertisement to lie about “Skittle Pox” being contagious and could encourage teenagers to lie about having sexually transmitted diseases.

While the Chair acknowledged it was not ideal to show someone picking a Skittle of someone’s face and eating it and then lying about “Skittle Pox” being contagious, she took into account that it was part of the intended humour of an imaginary disease where your skin becomes covered in Skittles. The Chair noted the Complainant’s concerns but was of the view the advertisement was lighthearted and did not offend against generally prevailing community standards and was unlikely to encourage people to lie about having contagious diseases.

The Chair ruled the advertisement was not in breach of Rules 2 or 4 of the Code of Ethics and had been prepared with a due sense of social responsibility to consumers and society and was not in breach of Basic Principle 4 of the Code of Ethics.

Accordingly, the Chair ruled the complaint had no grounds to proceed.

Chair’s Ruling: Complaint **No Grounds to Proceed**