

<b>COMPLAINT NUMBER</b>	18/045
<b>COMPLAINANT</b>	D Culling
<b>ADVERTISER</b>	Reckitt Benckiser (NZ) Limited
<b>ADVERTISEMENT</b>	Television
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	12 February 2018
<b>OUTCOME</b>	No Grounds to Proceed

**Advertisement:** A television advertisement for Dettol spray and hand wash showed a girl at school in various situations followed by her mother spraying her back-pack with Dettol Glen 20 and hand-washing with Dettol hand wash. The advertisement said, in part: “Kills 99.9% of germs including the common cold virus. Use Dettol foam hand wash to make hand-washing fun for kids and help protect your family against the spread of germs.”

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

**Complainant, D Culling, said:** “I was horrified to see Dettol's new 'back to school' advert during children's Saturday morning TV. This advert has clearly been created to harbour fear and anxiety in children. Children do not need to be obsessed or scared about germs. Adverts like this should be only shown for adult viewing (if at all) to prevent a whole generation of OCD sufferers! Luckily I was sitting with my children when the advert came on and was able to allay their concerns but I expect they would have been quite unnecessarily worried about germs at school. Surely we all want our children to be free to enjoy their childhood and school life without worry? In my job as a children's relaxation coach I see firsthand how anxiety and stress affects children and their families. As long as children wash their hands well with soap and water regularly they will be fine.”

**The relevant provisions were Code of Ethics - Basic Principle 4, Rule 6;**

**The Chair** noted the Complainant’s concerns the Dettol advertisement was likely to cause children to feel unnecessarily worried about germs at school.

The Chair noted a previous Decision (16/142) which considered a similar issue about two advertisements for Dettol products. That Decision said, in part:

“The advertisement was presented in a balanced way and was not misleading in its promotion of good hygiene at school. The use of the spray on shared desks in the classroom where children worked in close proximity and the depiction of handwashing did not play on fear... The majority did not see the advertisement as suggesting consumers should spray everything and there was no claim there were more germs in the environment to fear than were known and that Dettol must be sprayed to reduce their risk to children.”

The Chair said the above Decision was directly applicable to the complaint before her and was of the view there was nothing in the advertisement that played on fear unjustifiably or was likely to y scare children. The Chair said the advertisement promoted good hygiene, but was not in breach of Rule 6 of the Code of Ethics and had been prepared with a due

sense of social responsibility to consumers and society required by 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**

**APPEAL INFORMATION**

According to the procedures of the Advertising Standards Complaints Board, all decisions are able to be appealed by any party to the complaint. Information on our Appeal process is on our website [www.asa.co.nz](http://www.asa.co.nz). Appeals must be made in writing via email or letter within 14 days of receipt of this decision.