

COMPLAINT NUMBER	18/310
COMPLAINANT	S Gay & R van Niekerk
ADVERTISER	Spark NZ Ltd
ADVERTISEMENT	Spark NZ Ltd Television
DATE OF MEETING	17 September 2018
OUTCOME	No Grounds to Proceed

Advertisement: The television advertisement for Spark NZ Ltd shows children posing questions to their cell phones. These questions relate to typical white lies some parents tell their children, for example: “If you pee in the pool, will the water really change colour?” “Does the TV only work when it’s raining?” and “Can a stork really carry a baby?”. The lyrics for the background music are “We’re gonna rule the world don’t ya know, don’t ya know... We’re gonna put it together”. The final scene shows a boy with a stern look on his face saying to his mother “We need to talk.”

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

Complainant, S Gay, said: The SPARK ad showing a graphic change in children’s facial expressions as well as language behaviour to parents. This ad uses children to promote ‘addictive’ device use promoted by SPARK. It is known that digital devices are now considered to be detrimental to young children and young children were ‘used’ in this new ad. Also their child-like natural warmth changed in this ad. to become aggressively challenging to the adults who were caring for them. this is like parent abuse as well as child abuse. It is unacceptable.

Complainant, R van Niekerk said: This ad is run over different channel's at various times. With parent respect spiralling out of control because of all the ridiculous laws enabling youngsters to basically do what they want I find this ad extremely distasteful and basically encourages kids to disrespect their parents. It is in bad taste and bloody irresponsible.

The relevant provisions were Code of Ethics - Basic Principle 4, Rule 4, Rule 5.

The Chair noted the Complainants’ concerns the advertisement uses children to promote ‘addictive’ device use and encourages children to disrespect their parents.

The Chair said the advertisement is an acknowledgement that it has become more and more common for children to have access to digital devices. As a result, children can now find information that previous generations of children didn’t have easy access to. Once he has discovered that his mother hasn’t quite told him the truth, the boy in the advertisement is not too pleased, and seeks an explanation from her.

While the Chair noted the offence the advertisement caused the Complainants, the Chair said the advertisement did not reach the threshold to be considered offensive, taking into account the context, medium, audience and product.

In light of the above, the Chair said there was no apparent breach of the Code of Ethics.

Therefore, the Chair ruled that there were no grounds for the complaint 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. Appeals must be made in writing via email or letter within 14 days of receipt of this decision.