



Ad Standards Community Panel  
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Ad Standards Limited  
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## Case Report

1. Case Number :	0033-21
2. Advertiser :	Hanes Brands Inc
3. Product :	Other
4. Type of Advertisement/Media :	Internet - Social - Facebook
5. Date of Determination	24-Feb-2021
6. DETERMINATION :	Dismissed

### ISSUES RAISED

AANA Code of Ethics\2.6 Health and Safety

### DESCRIPTION OF ADVERTISEMENT

This Facebook advertisement features 5 smaller cropped images of four babies and a dog making excited, surprised or sad expressions. In the centre read's 'BONDS, Entries Open, Every Baby Baby Search'. The post text states "Enter a pic in one of the 21 new 'not-so-cutesy' categories. Over 50k in prizes."

### THE COMPLAINT

A sample of comments which the complainant/s made regarding this advertisement included the following:

*This is an appalling concept that causes low self esteem in both children and adults, promotes child abuse, and actively engages in, demonstrates, and normalises bullying based upon a person's appearance. I fail to see what is "not-so-cutesy" about the blonde child in the bottom right corner. I understand that in the other three photos of the children, Bonds is attempting to communicate to the audience what "not-so-cutesy" entails. For eg. The children are pulling "funny" faces, or have food mess on themselves, but the blonde child is happily smiling. There is no face pulling, no mess, just a child innocently smiling looking gorgeous. There is no other way that this can be taken other than Bonds, parents and the general public who entertain and take part in this shameful competition and advertisement are directly normalising the attacking of an innocent child's appearance. The advertisement implies that the children in the advertisement, and the children who will win the competition, are silly/messy/not cute. It is disgraceful that this hurtful garbage of a competition is allowed to continue in a society who claims they are trying to become more aware of, and are supposedly*



*taking action against the severely ingrained problem of abuse, bullying, and low self esteem. The fact that Bonds even came up with this idea speaks volumes about the moral turpitude of the company.*

## **THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE**

Comments which the advertiser made in response to the complainant/s regarding this advertisement include the following:

*Bonds Baby Search has celebrated babies for the past 16 years. This year Bonds has gone a step further to act on their belief of celebrating every baby equally, by providing more chances to win with a larger prize pool and 21 categories to enter that are more insightful, honest and true to the way babies really are, and all the ways we love them.*

*As the name implies, Every Baby, Baby Search, invites every baby to participate in a true celebration of the real-world experience of babies and the pure joy they bring to our lives. Furthermore, the competition extends to pets (fur babies), and pregnant women (bumps), and therefore does not solely talk about babies and or children. There is no discrimination or vilification, exploitation or degradation as all babies are encouraged to participate, and are treated equally.*

*The 21-not-so-cutesy categories pushes the stereotype that babies are one-dimensional cute beings, but rather have many expressions which are recognisable to us all and Bonds is choosing to celebrate all these moments in a more inclusive way in 2021. There continues to be no public voting and an increase in the celebration – with 21 winners this year (vs 1 major winner previously).*

*This ad was created using content that was provided by the parents of the children and owner of the dog shown. They were excited by the opportunity to be involved in the competition ad, and wholly supported the intentions behind the refreshed Every Baby, Baby Search, as described above. There is nothing else within the advertisement that could be regarded as falling foul of sections 2.1 – 2.6 of the Code when considered against prevailing community standards and it is clearly an advertisement for the Bonds Baby Search.*

## **THE DETERMINATION**

The Ad Standards Community Panel (Panel) considered whether the advertisement breaches Section 2 of the AANA Code of Ethics (the Code).

The Panel noted the complainant's concerns that the advertisement causes low self-esteem in both children and adults, promotes child abuse, and actively engages in, demonstrates, and normalises bullying based upon a person's appearance.

The Panel viewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser's response.



**Section 2.6: Advertising or Marketing Communications shall not depict material contrary to Prevailing Community Standards on health and safety.**

**Does the advertisement cause low self-esteem?**

The Panel noted the Practice Note to Section 2.6 which includes:

*“BODY IMAGE: Advertising must not portray an unrealistic ideal body image by portraying body shapes or features that are unrealistic or unattainable through healthy practices. Unrealistic ideal body image: Advertising that provides an unrealistic ideal body image by portraying body shapes or features that are unrealistic or unattainable through healthy practices, which is not justifiable in the context of the product or service being advertised, will be contrary to prevailing community standards relating to health and safety.*

*An unrealistic ideal body image may also occur where models are depicted in a way that:*

- *promotes unhealthy practices*
- *presents an unrealistic body image as aspirational; or*
- *is reasonably likely to cause pressure to conform to a body shape that is unrealistic or unattainable through healthy practices (such as diet or physical activities), unless such depictions are justifiable in the context of the product or service advertised.”*

The Panel considered that the advertisement was promoting a variety of categories for the advertiser’s photo competition, with the key point of difference that they were not looking for a traditional high standard of beauty, but that they were celebrating everyday occurrences in children’s lives.

The Panel considered that rather than promote an unrealistic ideal body image, the advertisement celebrated all kinds of children in everyday situations.

The Panel considered that the phrase ‘not-so-cutesy’ was not a direct comment of the children not being cute or good-looking, but was referring to the competition not being a traditional beauty competition.

The Panel considered that the advertisement does not portray an unrealistic ideal body image, or suggest that children or adults’ self-esteem would be affected if they did not look a certain way.

**Does the advertisement promote child abuse or bullying?**

The Panel noted the Practice Note to Section 2.6 which includes:

*“BULLYING The age of the people depicted in an advertisement, their relationship to each other and the nature of the communication are relevant in determining whether an advertisement constitutes bullying and is contrary to Prevailing Community Standards. More care must be taken when the people*



*depicted in an advertisement are Minors or if there is an unequal relationship between the people in the advertisement, e.g. student and teacher, manager and worker.”*

The Panel considered that the advertisement did not depict bullying behaviour or anyone being treated unfairly. The Panel considered that the phrase ‘not-so-cutesy’ was not a direct comment of the children not being cute or good-looking, but was referring to the competition not being a traditional beauty competition.

The Panel considered that the advertisement did not depict or promote child abuse or bullying behaviour.

### **Section 2.6 conclusion**

The Panel considered that the advertisement did not contain material contrary to Prevailing Community Standards on health and safety and determined that it did not breach Section 2.6 of the Code.

### **Conclusion**

Finding that the advertisement did not breach the Code on other grounds, the Panel dismissed the complaint.