

Case Report

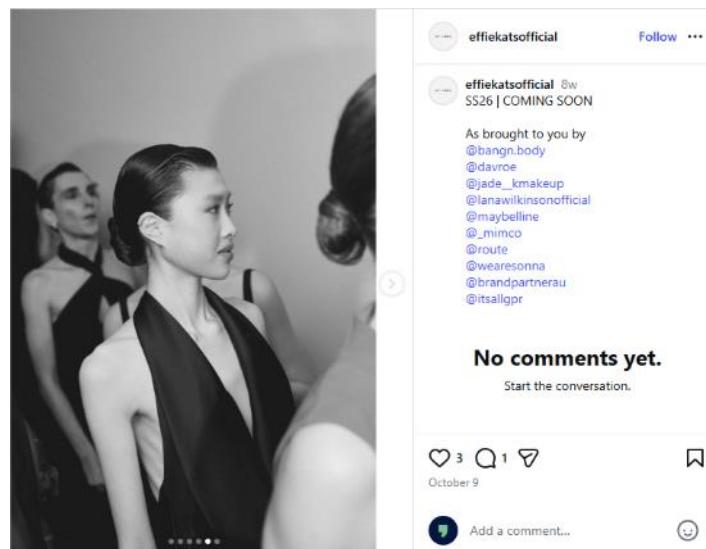
Case number: 0292-25
Advertiser: Effie Kats
Medium: Instagram
Decision date: 10-Dec-2025
Decision: Breach
Action: Ad modified

ISSUES CONSIDERED BY THE COMMUNITY PANEL

- AANA Code of Ethics - 2.6 Health and Safety - breach

AD DESCRIPTION

This Instagram post featured scenes from the advertiser's upcoming 'SS26' fashion range. In one image a model is shown, and her ribs are visible.



SUMMARY

Complaint

A complaint was received on the grounds that the ad features an incredibly thin model with ribs showing.

Advertiser response

The advertiser responded that the photo was taken during its most recent runway show, under strong overhead lighting. This model is a healthy adult professional model, represented by a

licensed modelling agency that follows industry health guidelines, including agency health checks and compliance with industry standards around safe bodyweight ranges, fitness to work, and wellbeing assessments.

The visibility of the rib area is a natural consequence of the model's posture, movement, and the strong directional runway lighting. No digital manipulation or editing was performed to exaggerate thinness or alter body shape. The imagery reflects standard, common fashion industry presentation as consistently seen in global runway photography. The focus of the imagery is entirely on the garments being shown during a live runway event.

A full copy of the advertiser's response is included as Appendix A.

Decisions

The Panel found that the ad was in breach of section 2.6 of the AANA Code of Ethics as the ad encouraged unrealistic body ideals.

ASSESSMENT AND DECISIONS

Section 2.6 (AANA Code of Ethics): Advertising shall not depict material contrary to Prevailing Community Standards on health and safety.

The Practice Note states:

Advertising must not portray an unrealistic ideal body image by portraying body shapes or features that are unrealistic or unattainable through healthy practices. Exposure to unrealistic body ideals can lead to harmful body dissatisfaction and disordered eating and for this reason it is not acceptable in advertising.

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.

While the use of people in smaller or larger bodies is itself not necessarily problematic, advertisers must ensure that models do not adopt a pose or are not depicted in a way which produces an unrealistic sense of body image, for example through the style of the advertising, the clothing, lighting, or make-up used.

Panel assessment

The Panel considered that the photo was taken at a runway shoot that might have featured unflattering lighting. However, the Panel considered that the image clearly shows ribs and clavicles protruding through the model's skin, suggesting excessive thinness. The Panel Noted that the model does not appear to be reaching or stretching in a way that would likely emphasise these areas but was merely standing with her arms relaxed by her side.

The Panel acknowledges that runway models tend to be lean, but considered that featuring a very thin model as part of a runway shoot creates a subtle message that this is what all aspiring models should look like, or that this is what customers should aspire to look like in this dress.

The Panel considered that such communication runs contrary to prevailing community standards on healthy body images.

Panel decision

The Panel found that this image in the ad breached section 2.6 of the AANA Code of Ethics.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The Panel found that the ad did not breach any other section of the advertising codes.

ACTION

The advertiser has not provided a response to the in breach decision, however Ad Standards has confirmed the advertisement has been modified and the image in breach has been removed from the platform.

APPENDIX A: ADVERTISER RESPONSE IN FULL

The advertisement consists of still images taken during our most recent runway show, showcased on the brand's Instagram feed and used in a paid Instagram promotion. The images feature professional adult runway models wearing garments from our latest collection. The specific image referenced in the complaint depicts a model walking down the runway in a fitted dress under strong overhead lighting.

Response to the Complaint:

We appreciate the opportunity to respond to the concerns raised regarding the model's appearance, specifically the visibility of her rib cage, and the suggestion that this promotes unhealthy body standards.

We take matters of health, safety, and responsible representation very seriously. The wellbeing of all models and staff is a priority for our brand.

Response to AANA Code of Ethics Section 2

2.1 Discrimination or Vilification

The advertisement does not depict or target any group in a discriminatory or vilifying manner. The models featured represent adult professional talent from diverse backgrounds, and the imagery is focused solely on displaying the garments from the collection.

2.2 Exploitative or Degrading

The models are shown in a standard runway walking posture, photographed in a professional fashion show environment. No imagery is sexualised, degrading, or exploitative. The purpose is strictly garment presentation.

2.3 Violence

No violent content or aggressive themes are present.

2.4 Sex, Sexuality and Nudity

No nudity or sexual content appears in the advertisement.

2.5 Language

The advertisement is visual only and contains no language.

2.6 Health and Safety (Primary concern raised)

We understand the complainant's concern regarding the visibility of the model's rib cage and the interpretation that the imagery may depict unhealthy thinness.

We respectfully provide the following clarifications:

- The model featured is a healthy adult professional model, represented by a licensed modelling agency that follows industry health guidelines.
- All models undergo agency health checks and meet professional industry standards, which include safe Bodyweight ranges, fitness to work, and wellbeing assessments.

- The visibility of the rib area is a natural consequence of the model's posture, movement, and the strong directional runway lighting. When models raise their arms, elongate their torso, or rotate their upper body mid-stride, the rib structure can become visible regardless of weight or health status.
- No digital manipulation or editing was performed to exaggerate thinness or alter body shape.
- The imagery reflects standard, common fashion industry presentation as consistently seen in global runway photography.

There is no message, implicit or explicit, that promotes unhealthy weight, dieting, or body ideals. The focus of the imagery is entirely on the garments being shown during a live runway event.

We acknowledge the importance of promoting healthy body representation and are committed to continuing to ensure our imagery aligns with the Code and community expectations.

2.7 Distinguishable as Advertising

The Instagram posts are published on the official brand account and clearly identifiable as marketing content for our clothing line.

Conclusion

We believe the advertisement does not breach Section 2.6 or any part of the AANA Code of Ethics.

The image in question depicts a healthy professional model photographed in a normal runway context, with lighting and movement naturally affecting the visibility of anatomical features.

However, we value the feedback from the community and will continue to ensure that our future campaigns maintain responsible, healthy, and respectful representation of all models and body types.

We remain available to provide further information if required.

Please let us know if we still need to do anything in regards to the post itself.