

## Group policies – Product policies

### Our guidelines on socially acceptable products

We supply our product buyers and quality assurance managers with a set of guidelines (detailed below) to use when selecting and appraising new products.

These guidelines allow us to consider in advance whether and how we wish to stock items that may cause controversy.

We are aware of the need to understand and respond to the sensitivities from selling potentially socially unacceptable products.

If a product falls in to any of the categories discussed below, the matter is discussed by our buying and quality assurance teams; senior management makes the final decision to select the product or withdraw it from sale.

#### Guidelines

##### Product details

- Is the product a weapon – eg gun, airgun, ball-bearing ('bb') gun, replica weapon, knife, hunting knife, military knife?
- Does the product include real animal fur?
- Does the product contain any unusual leathers (eg crocodile, ostrich etc) as opposed to cow or goat hide?
- Does the product contain animal or plant related materials that may have been sourced illegally or from an endangered species (eg ivory, bone)?
- Has the product been sourced from the wild (eg beach cobbles, flower bulbs, seeds, peat etc)? The product must have been obtained in a sustainable way with no long-term environmental damage
- Is there a potential controversy or particular media sensitivity surrounding the source or type of product (eg has the product been genetically modified or engineered in some way)?

##### Hidden messages or content

- Does the product have 'design' text in a script or language not understood?
- Does the product have 'design' text that is or could be interpreted as offensive or unsuitable for children?
- Does the product have unsuitable recorded dialogue (eg children's toys)?
- Could there be an issue over the content (eg video games, computer software) for explicit violence or sexual content etc?
- Does the accompanying product documentation (eg instructions) obviously mislead or encourage the product to be used in a dangerous or inappropriate way?

- Does the product contain substances that are potentially hazardous to human health or the environment (eg pesticides, volatile organic compounds, acids or solvents)?
- Are product usage instructions and labelling clear enough to prevent misuse?

##### Irresponsible behaviour

- Could the product lead to irresponsible use of IT (eg computer hacking, police radios, surveillance etc)?
- Are there any particular issues with children's toys (inappropriate weaponry, toys which could cause harm with repeated use, toys which do not support good infant development etc)?
- Is there potential for the irresponsible use of health products (eg dietary supplements) or alcohol?
- Are there questions over the product's effectiveness or ability to meet the stated claims (particularly consider for health and fitness products, household products, electronic products)?

##### Causing offence

- Is there potential for offence in the way the product or its packaging represents groups of people (eg ethnic groups, male/female images, disability etc)?
- Does the product or its packaging contain any religious reference or content (eg in designs, quoted phrases, images etc) that could offend customers?
- Could the product be seen as sexualising children under 16 (eg clothes, dolls, beauty/glamour products)?
- Is the product adult branded and to be featured with items specifically designed for children?
- Taking account of the cultural and social attitudes of customers, is the product likely to be considered distasteful (eg the sale of marital aids, pornographic content of games, videos, magazines)?