

Apex PRE-SCHOOL CENTRE

Kindergarten Handbook



Welcome to Apex Pre-School

We hope it will be an enjoyable year for you and your child.
This handbook has been created for parents by the Committee of Management to provide important information and guidelines about the Pre-School's policies, procedures and expectations.

Please read thoroughly and keep in a safe place for easy referral.

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Website: www.apexpreschoolcentre.com/

Facebook: www.facebook.com/apexpreschoolcentre

Office Hours: 8:30am - 3.30pm Monday to Friday



Acknowledgements

We would like to begin by acknowledging the Gulidjan and Gadubanud peoples as the traditional custodians of the land on which we are gathered.

To acknowledge our gratitude that we share this land today, our sorrow for the costs of that sharing, and our hope that we can move to a place of justice and partnership together.

We also extend that respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples present at the Centre.

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Introduction:

The program at Apex Pre-School aims to develop skills and broaden each child's experiences within a secure, supportive setting that values positive relationships. The service celebrates and respects the unique interests and strengths of every child, offering a flexible program to accommodate these differences. The facility at Apex Pre-School is purposefully designed to create a welcoming environment for children and families, promoting indoor-outdoor learning and encouraging interaction among them. The playground is crafted with the natural environment in mind, fostering exploration and investigation, including a large sandpit, teepee, vegetable growing patches, swings, flexible climbing spaces, slides, flying fox and a fishpond.

Apex Pre-School Team



Jumoke Balogun
Kindergarten Director
3-Year-Old Kinder Teacher



Tanya Gardner
3-Year-Old Kinder
Teacher



Colleen Arceri
3-Year-Old Kinder
Teacher



Kaitlyn Robinson
Kinder Teacher



Julie Wallace
4-Year-Old Kinder
Teacher



Brooke Fleming
Kinder Teacher



Kate O'Shea
4-Year-Old Kinder
Teacher



**Charmaine
Milburn**
Kinder Teacher

Term Dates 2025

	Start Date	Finish Date
Term 1	29 th January	4 th April
Term 2	22 nd April	4 th July
Term 3	21 st July	19 th September
Term 4	6 th October	19 th December

Children attending Apex Pre-School:
Monday to Friday: 8:30am - 1.30pm

Office Hours:
Monday to Friday: 8:30am - 3.30pm

This Pre-School operates as follows apart from public holidays, term holidays and two student free days granted by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

Orientation Day: Tuesday 10th December 2024

Orientation day will be an opportunity for parents and children to meet our educators and familiarise themselves with their rooms. During orientation, children will be able to have a play within the facility followed by a parent/teacher interview, where you can ask any questions and share any important information about your child. Please ensure your child wears a hat and brings some fruit and water for morning tea. Parents will be allocated **ten minutes** of interview time on the day which will be communicated to you in your child's Pre-School confirmation letter.





Kinder Fees

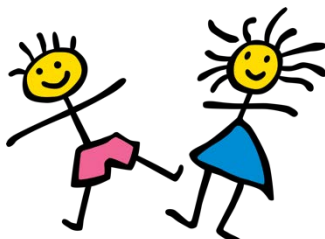
Each family is asked to pay a regular sum of money (term fees) to the Pre-School if the Victorian Government's Free Kindergarten initiative does not continue. These fees are set by the Committee of Management, after they have examined the previous year's budget.

Fees are payable in advance of the term and an invoice will be sent home. Fees must be paid by bank deposit at the Bendigo Bank or via internet banking. If the full amount at once is difficult, please speak to the Fees Coordinator immediately to work out a payment plan. They can work alternative ways of paying, but it is a lot easier if this is done before the amount owing builds up.

The committee wishes to remind you that Pre-School is not compulsory and that if you choose to send your child, you accept the responsibility of paying the fees.

A government subsidy will be paid to children whose parents hold health care/pension cards. This will be deducted from the fees. Health care/pension cards must be presented to staff before the end of each term to be eligible for the reduction in the next term's fees. Reductions will not be given, and full fees will be necessary if no card is sighted.

Our Pre-School is also a 'registered childcare provider.' You may be entitled to a partial rebate on your child's paid fees. Please contact Centrelink to check your child's eligibility. Receipts will be issued upon request at the end of each term.



Day to Day Information

Arrivals and Departures

Each time you bring your child to Pre-School, please come inside so that staff can sign the attendance book and record the time of your arrival.

On departure staff will welcome you back, sign your child out and record the time of departure.

On arrival at Pre-School the staff like to greet you and your child, and again when you leave at the end of the session. This gives the educators the opportunity to communicate with you about your child's time at Pre-School, and it also means you can ask them any questions.

The doors will open at the start of session times unless previous arrangements have been made with staff. Staff have duties before and after the session which cannot be properly attended to, whilst they are responsible for children.

The Committee of Management has established a late collection of children policy which states; **that in a non-emergency situation when a parent is more than 10 minutes late a charge of \$15.00 per 15 minutes will be invoiced within 14 days.**

For more information, please refer to the Centre Policy Handbook which is located in the foyer.

Please ask staff if you would like to view this handbook.

The safety of children and families in our car park is paramount. We now have footpaths around our entire car park. This is for you and your child's safety arriving and departing Pre-School. Please use the footpaths, holding hands with your child until you reach your car.

Authorised Persons

A list of authorised people must be given to the Pre-School (on the Enrolment Forms) and any changes must be given ***in writing*** to the Director.

If you cannot bring or collect your child yourself, then tell the teacher and note in the attendance book the name of the person who will be doing this for you. Please make sure they are familiar with the signing in/out procedure.

Department of Human Services regulations require that children are collected from the Pre-School by the parents or a person who has been authorised by the parents.



Food To Bring

Apex Pre-School acknowledges the importance of healthy eating and physical activity, and its contribution to good health and overall wellbeing. Families are responsible for providing healthy and nutritious food for snacks/meals, including fruits and vegetables.

For more information, please refer to our Mandatory – Quality Area 2 Nutrition, Active Play and Oral Health Policy.

We ask you to send food in re-usable containers as we support an environmentally friendly and sustainable curriculum.

Morning Tea Break

In the morning, we encourage the children to eat their own piece of fruit or vegetables and use a water bottle. The children sit down at the tables to eat with their friends. Fresh fruit and/or vegetables are required each session your child attends. Low salt and low sugar crackers with cheese and dips are a great extra.

Lunch

Please send healthy food with your child for lunch. Lunch may include a sandwich, cheese & biscuits, yoghurt etc. There is no need to rely solely on sandwiches as many children enjoy finger food, especially if they help to prepare it. We can heat food in the microwave if required and refrigerate dairy food such as yogurt and cheese. Please remember to keep the packaging child friendly to promote independence at mealtimes. During the Summer before kindergarten begins is a good opportunity to rehearse having a packed lunch with your child.

Drink

Please supply a water bottle with your child's name on it so they can get their own drink when thirsty.

Things to note:

Sweets, chips, soft drinks or cordial are 'sometimes' food for home time.

Food Allergies - if there is a child at risk of anaphylaxis, we will inform families of which foods are inappropriate.





Birthdays and other events

As birthdays are a special time for Pre-School children, your child may like to share this occasion with their friends at the service.

At Apex Pre-School we like to acknowledge every child's special day, in ways which are appropriate with family beliefs. Children are invited to bring along a cake which we will share after morning tea. Please let staff know if your child has any food allergies and cannot eat specific foods.

If you have religious or philosophical reasons for not wishing your child to be involved in Birthday's, Mother's and Father's Days, Easter or Christmas celebrations, please let the staff know.

Clothing

Educators will do their best to protect the children's clothes. Children will wear smocks when they paint, play with clay, water and other messy activities. However, it is not possible for children to stay clean at all times, so it is sensible for them to wear clothes that are effortlessly washed.

Where possible, please label clothing, including footwear, for easy identification in case they get separated from their owner.

To encourage children to be independent, please dress children in clothes that they can manage simply; e.g. wearing trousers that pull down easily when they go to the toilet.

In winter, a pair of gumboots and coat for outdoor play, and slippers for indoors would be a good idea.

Thongs are difficult to run in and make climbing dangerous, so unless they have heel straps, please do not use them.

Long, full dresses are also not recommended as they make climbing difficult and get in the way when playing in the sand pit.

Starting Pre-School can be a stressful time for children and accidents can happen. It is a good idea to send a change of clothing in their bag/backpack (we do have spare clothes if needed).

Uniform

Uniform at Apex Pre-School is not compulsory. However, it is available for your convenience. In the foyer there is a rack of uniforms that can be tried on and come in a range of sizes and colours. Included are t-shirts, long sleeved tops, crew neck jumpers, hoodies and hats.



Sun Protection

At Apex Pre-School, we enforce a 'no hat, no outside play' policy from September to April and when the UV index is above three. Please provide your child with a clearly named broad-brimmed hat and sunscreen (roll on is preferable), which should be applied before arrival and not shared with other children due to allergies and reactions. We do not supply sunscreen.

In hot weather, outside curriculum starts early, before the hot part of the day. This means applying sunscreen to your child before they arrive to save time.

Things to note:

Hats should be broad brimmed, as baseball caps do not offer maximum protection.

Sleeveless tops are not adequate protection during summer months or on days of very high UV risk.

Ways in which families can participate

- Come into the Pre-School and read/tell stories to the children.
- Visit and spend time with the children.
- Help on excursions.
- Share your special talents with the children e.g., playing a musical instrument, craft skills.
- Come and join in planned social events.
- Contribute to working bees.
- Save and collect scrap materials such as gift paper, cellophane, cotton wool, patty pans, string, ribbon, wool cards, milk cartons and boxes.
- Become a member of the Committee of Management and/or Fundraising Sub-Committee.

Storypark

Apex Pre-School uses Storypark in our classrooms to communicate with families. Storypark is an online information sharing system that helps parents and teachers record and privately share children's learning and development with family – and it belongs to you (meaning you will have access to it after your kindergarten year).

Storypark can be used to communicate learning stories, updates, fundraising information and for program planning purposes. It can also be used as a tool for broadcasting emergencies. Families are administrators of their child's account and can decide who has access to their child's information.

Families will receive an email from the service to set up their Storypark account on enrolment. Further information can be obtained from www.storypark.com.au/families - or from speaking with your child's educators. We encourage you to read your emails often to stay up to date with kindergarten news.

Enrolments

Offer for a place in the three and four-year-old group will be posted early in Term 2 of the year preceding attendance. Offer for the three-year-old group will be posted early in Term 4 of the year preceding attendance.

To be eligible for three and four-year-old Pre-School, the child must have turned four by the 30th of April in the year of attendance.

To be considered and offered a place in the three-year-old group, a child must have turned three by January 31st of the year of attendance. A child turning three between February 1st and April 30th will be put on a waiting list and will not be considered for kindergarten until that child turns three.

Second Year of Funded Pre-School

No child is guaranteed consecutive years at Pre-School. A second year of funded Pre-School will only be available for children with additional needs, whose development is assessed as requiring a second year. Recommendations in relation to a child's eligibility for a second year of Pre-School will be made through a Department of Education and Training regional assessment process.

Early Withdrawal process - If a child is eligible to attend school in the following year and is deemed "not ready" by the parent or Pre-School teacher, the child concerned can withdraw from Pre-School by the end of Term 2 and return the following year for another year of funded Pre-School.

Confidentiality

All records concerning your child are confidential information, and will only be accessible to you, Apex staff, and the Authorised Officer Quality Assessment and Regulation Division South Barwon (Department of Education and Training).

Suggestion & Fundraising Box

We have a fundraising and suggestion box in the foyer for parents to use. We invite families to put down any ideas or comments and drop them in our suggestion box. All fundraising money is also to be put into this box for the fundraising committee to access.



Excursions and Incursions

Learning can take place in many settings and excursions and incursions form a valuable part of our program. Risk assessments are conducted by staff prior to any excursion taking place and parents are required to sign written permission for their child to attend. Parents are actively encouraged to attend excursions to support children and staff. A Working with Children's Check is required.

Gardening and Maintenance

Apex Pre-School takes pride in the upkeep of our kindergarten. To ensure our grounds are safe and maintained for our children we ask families to provide a small donation. The donation fee goes towards mowing the lawns, trimming hedges, planting, weeding and general maintenance.

There are two working bees held throughout the year for families to volunteer their time for jobs that may require more than one person. "Many hands, makes light work."

Complaints Procedure

If, at any time, a parent has concerns about any aspect of the Pre-School program and/or administration, they are welcome to bring it to the notice of the Complaints Officer (name listed on information board at entrance) for discussion.

For further information refer to the Centre Policy Handbook.

Evacuation Procedures

These are on display in each of the Pre-School rooms, foyer and in the kitchen. Parents are asked to make themselves familiar with them. We aim to have all children aware of what to do in an emergency situation at the very least by the end of Term 1.

Smoking

No smoking is permitted anywhere on the Pre-School grounds.

Lost Property

Any clothing left behind will be placed in the appropriate group 'work' box and handed out during the next session. Any clothing not claimed will be given to the Salvation Army at the end of term.





The Curriculum

At Apex Pre-School we aim to provide a nurturing environment and a range of social and educational experiences for the children that encourage, enhance and stimulate interest in the world around them.

Pre-School children benefit most from long periods of uninterrupted play that is a mixture of structured and unstructured play. Play is not an idle activity; it is the way young children learn. Play makes a major contribution to the *Identity, Wellbeing, Learning, Communication and Community development* of your child. **Our curriculum is supported by the Victorian Early Years Learning Developmental Framework and governed by the National Quality Regulations, Act and the National Quality Framework.**

Planning for the group of children is one of the teacher's main tasks. The curriculum is planned to meet the children's needs and interests. Families and children are encouraged to have input into the planning of the curriculum (VEYLDF & NQS). At Pre-School, the children are free to select where they will play, but limits are set on behaviour. The teacher is aware of each child and what he/she is doing.

Our learning outcomes are governed by The Early Years Learning and Development Framework.

Identity

Early Years Learning and Development Outcome 1:

Children have a strong sense of identity.

- Children feel safe, secure and supported
- Children develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency
- Children develop knowledgeable and confident self-identities
- Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect

Community

Early Years Learning and Development Outcome 2:

Children are connected with and contribute to their world.

- Children develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities and an understanding of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities necessary for active civic participation
- Children respond to diversity with respect
- Children become aware of fairness
- Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment



Wellbeing

Early Years Learning and Development Outcome 3:

Children have a strong sense of wellbeing.

- Children become strong in their social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing
- Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing

Learning

Early Years Learning and Development Outcome 4:

Children are confident and involved learners.

- Children develop dispositions for learning such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity
- Children develop a range of skills and processes such as problem solving, inquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating
- Children transfer and adapt what they have learnt from one context to another

Communication

Early Years Learning and Development Outcome 5:

Children are effective communicators.

- Children interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes
- Children engage with a range of texts and gain meaning from these texts
- Children express ideas and make meaning using a range of media
- Children begin to understand how symbols and pattern systems work
- Children use information and communication technologies to access information, investigate ideas and represent their thinking

YOU MAY SEE:

- Children's play is frequently noisy. Young children cannot be quiet or still for long, as they need to talk and move about as they work.
- We encourage children to put on their own smocks, shoes and socks. Perhaps it takes more time, but by doing these things themselves, they are learning to be independent.
- That a child is just looking on. The teacher accepts this, as some children need to watch before joining in.
- That a teacher shows affection to the children. Young children need the support and approval of adults.
- Children may have frequent disputes. The teacher stands by to see if they can settle the problem themselves or will offer suggestions if necessary.
- That the children co-operate and respond well to the positive directions of teachers such as "keep the sand in the sandpit" instead of "don't throw the sand"

Behaviour Management

At Apex Pre- School, we are committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children in attendance. We believe in encouraging positive behaviour in all children and ensuring that all children are respected and valued as individuals. We believe that responsible, caring and respectful behaviour should be encouraged through peer and staff modeling as well as through providing clear directions and expectations. We believe that by setting limits for behaviour, we can develop children's self-discipline. We aim to help children learn the consequences of their behaviour and thus an understanding of how their actions affect others.

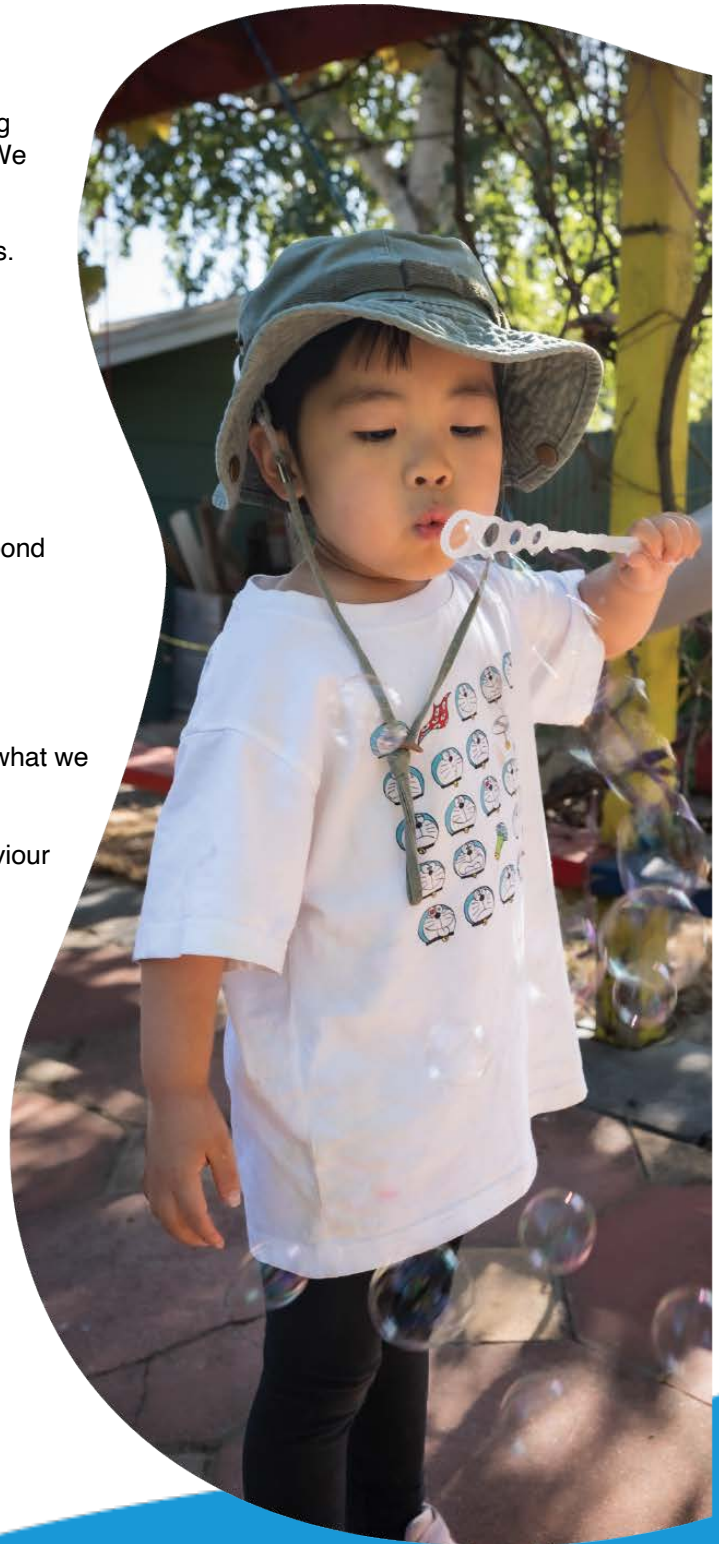
Positive Behaviour we encourage:

- Children play well with others
- Children follow room rules
- Children recognise the feelings of others and respond appropriately
- Children share and respect the rights of others
- Children use thinking skills to resolve conflict

Teaching Strategies for Positive Behaviour

- Positive guidance - phrasing remarks in terms of what we expect, rather than what we don't want.
- Positive reinforcement of acceptable behaviour.
- Redirection of children displaying disruptive behaviour to another activity.
- Firmly stating the limits.
- Using visual cues to support expectations e.g. 'Stop' card.
- "Calm down space" - Used to give a child space away from the group with the support of an adult to calm down and reflect on their feelings with the help of a feelings chart. We also discuss how their choices/behaviour may have impacted the other children or staff.

There is a more detailed outline of the Behaviour Management Policy in our Policy Handbook available in the foyer.



Health, Safety & Wellbeing

Health and Absence

If your child is sick, they should stay at home until well. If your child gets an infectious disease, please call the teacher, and they will tell you how long the regulations state the child must be away.

Please keep in mind that your child is not the best judge as to whether he/she should be at home or Pre-School. In the small Pre-School community, infections are easily transmitted. If your child is feeling over-tired, heat exhausted, has a temperature or is "off colour" please help by keeping him/her home, where they can recover without the risk of further infection.

If your child is going to be absent for more than a few days, please let us know.

Parents must keep their children at home if they have any of the following;

- Gastroenteritis - including vomiting or diarrhoea
- Fever
- Infectious diseases as per the Department of Human Services schedule
- Respiratory infection - more than just the common cold.
- Hand, foot and mouth disease - when weeping blisters are present.
- Covid-19 related symptoms

Anaphylaxis, Allergies and Asthma

If your child is diagnosed as at risk of anaphylaxis, allergy, or asthma you must inform the kindergarten as soon as possible. The following information and details must be provided prior to commencement of care or if the condition is diagnosed after commencement at the kindergarten;

- an approved action plan developed by your child's doctor (with colour photo).
- your child's medication.

The service will work with you to develop a detailed Risk Minimisation Plan specific to your child, including strategies to prevent your child being exposed to triggers of an allergic reaction or asthma attack and how to store and use any medication.

Children cannot commence kindergarten until an action plan and medication have been received.

For further information refer to the Anaphylaxis and Asthma Policy.

Health, Medication and Accidents

In some circumstances medication may be given to a child during Pre-School. Parents must give written instructions and sign the medication record book daily. Medication must be in the original container with your child's name and the dose to be given clearly labeled.

Staff are trained in Emergency Asthma Management, Anaphylaxis and Epilepsy management.

If your child becomes ill or is involved in an accident, an accident/illness report will be filled in by staff for you to sign. If the staff feel that the child needs to go home, or to the doctor, parents or emergency contacts will be notified. If none of these are available, staff may need to take emergency action for the well-being of the child. For further information refer to the Centre Policy Handbook.

Immunisations

Australian Government legislation ('No Jab, No Play') requires every child to be fully vaccinated for their age to attend any early learning and care service.

Please complete your child's immunisation details on their enrolment form and provide a current immunisation history statement, approved catch-up schedule or medical exemption form as soon as possible.

Your child's Immunisation History Statement can be downloaded from your MyGov Account. Alternatively, visit your local medical practitioner.

Policies & Procedures

Apex Pre-School has developed a number of key policies and procedures in order to provide quality education and care services to their families.

The kindergarten will keep the policies up-to-date with current legislation, research and best practice and will revise these policies and procedures as part of the Pre-School's policy review cycle, or as required.

We encourage parents to read and comply with these policies and procedures to ensure the safety, health and well-being of children attending our kindergarten.

This is a list of the titles of the kindergarten policies. These are available at all times in the foyer. If you would like a copy of a particular policy, please ask the Kindergarten Director, Jumoke Balogun.

Apex Kinder Policies

Asthma

Anaphylaxis

Administration and medication

Curriculum development

Epilepsy and Seizure

Diabetes

Nutrition, food, and active play

Sun protection

Incidents, injury, trauma, and illness

Infectious diseases

Emergency and evacuation

Delivery and collection of children

Excursions, regular outings, and transport

Food safety

Child safe environment

Staffing - must include:

- A code of conduct
- Determining the responsible person present at the service.
- The participation of volunteers and students

Interactions with children

Enrolment and orientation

Governance and management of the service, including confidentiality of records.

Acceptance and refusal of authorisations

Dealing with complaints.

Behavioural management

A Final Word

Trust and effective communication between the home and Kindergarten is very important. Please do not hesitate to speak to us if anything is worrying you or your child. We look forward to a happy and enjoyable year with you and your child.

The Staff and Committee Members at Apex Pre-School

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