

PROTECT

Victoria's Child Safe Standards

Government School Council training



Acknowledgment of Country



Support available

- You can talk to:
 - Our school leadership team
- Or access external services:
 - Lifeline: 13 11 14 or [lifeline.org.au](https://www.lifeline.org.au)
 - Beyond Blue: 1300 22 46 36 or [beyondblue.org.au](https://www.beyondblue.org.au)
 - 1800 Respect: 1800 737 732 or [1800Respect.org.au](https://www.1800Respect.org.au)
 - Your GP or another allied health professional



In this presentation

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- Definitions: child safety & child abuse
- Child Safe Standards history
- Why the Child Safe Standards are so important
- What's different?

Overview of each Child Safe Standard and role of the school council

- Possible consequences of non-compliance

Our child safety policies and procedures

- Our school's child safety framework
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Child Safety Risk Register
- Complaints Policy
- Responding to incidents, disclosures and suspicions of child abuse
- Information sharing and recordkeeping



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Overview of the Child Safe Standards



Definitions: Child safety and child abuse

Child safety includes:

matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to suspicions, incidents, disclosures or allegations of child abuse

Child abuse is:

- a) any act committed against a child involving:
 - a sexual offence
 - grooming
- b) the infliction, on a child, of
 - physical violence
 - serious emotional or psychological harm
- c) the serious neglect of a child

Further information on child abuse, including physical and behavioural indicators of abuse, is available on the department's PROTECT website at [Identify child abuse](#).



Child Safe Standards – history



Why the Child Safe Standards are so important

- The Child Safe Standards recognise that all children are vulnerable
- The Child Safe Standards require schools to **take steps to prevent child abuse and build a culture of child safety**
- Schools cannot assume that child abuse does not and cannot happen within their school or school community



Why the Child Safe Standards are so important

Child Safe Standards aim to:

- promote the safety of children
- prevent child abuse
- ensure effective processes are in place to respond to and report all allegations of child abuse

Child Safe Standards work by:

- driving changes in culture – embedding child safety in everyday thinking and practice
- providing a minimum standard of child safety
- highlighting we all have a role in keeping children safe from abuse



What's different?

On 1 July 2022 new Child Safe Standards were introduced.

New requirements to keep children and students safe are:

- the involvement of families and students in child safety efforts
- schools' focus on safety for Aboriginal students
- better management of the risk of child abuse in online environments
- governance, systems and processes to keep students safe

[Ministerial Order 1359](#) provides the framework for implementing the Child Safe Standards in schools.

A [Child Safe Standards Action List](#) has been developed to support schools to comply with Ministerial Order 1359

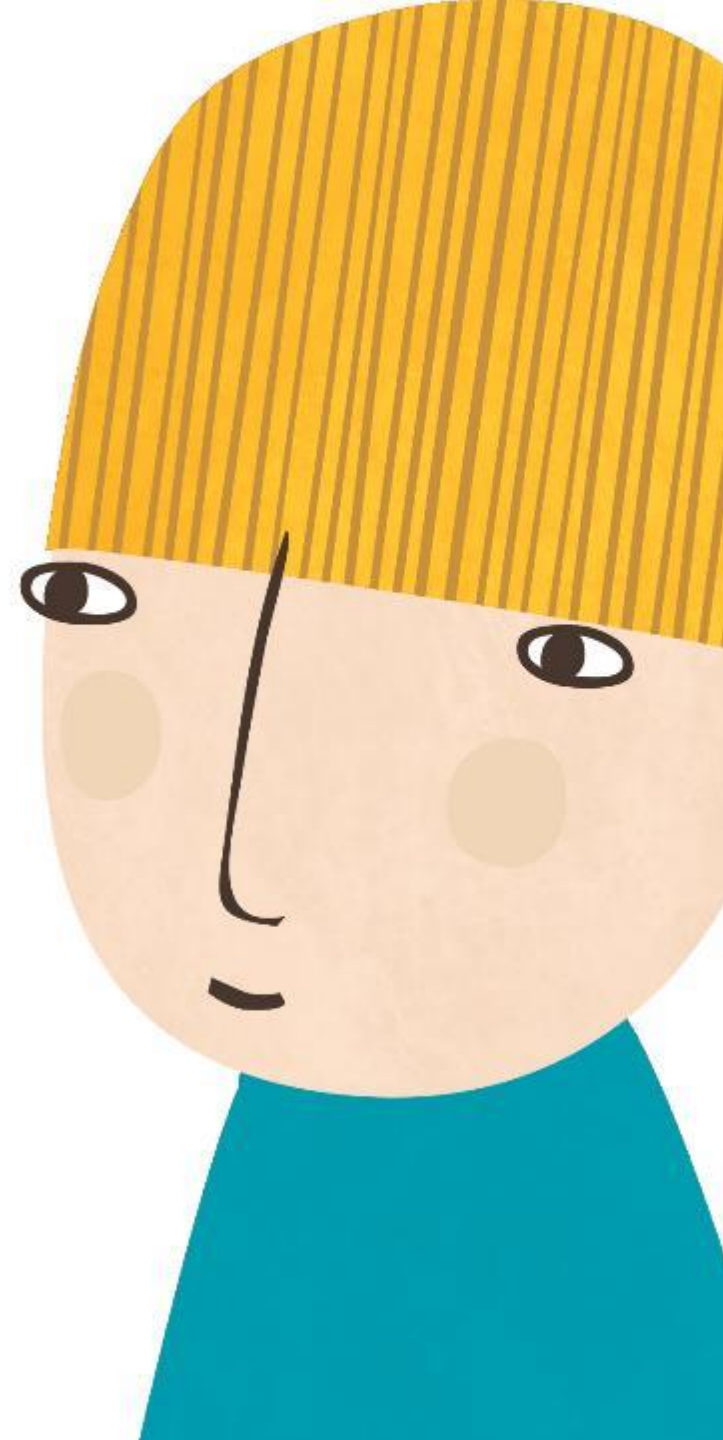


Victoria's Child Safe Standards

- **Child Safe Standard 1** – Establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.
- **Child Safe Standard 2** – Ensure that child safety and wellbeing are embedded in school leadership, governance and culture.
- **Child Safe Standard 3** – Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
- **Child Safe Standard 4** – Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
- **Child Safe Standard 5** – Equity is upheld and diverse needs are respected in policy and practice.
- **Child Safe Standard 6** – People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
- **Child Safe Standard 7** – Ensure that processes for complaints and concerns are child focused.
- **Child Safe Standard 8** – Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
- **Child Safe Standard 9** – Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
- **Child Safe Standard 10** – Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.
- **Child Safe Standard 11** – Policies and procedures that document how schools are safe for children, young people and students.
- Ministerial Order 1359 provides the framework for child safety in schools.

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Overview of each Child Safe Standard and role of the school council



What is the role of school council?

- The Education and Training Reform Act 2006 and Ministerial Order 1280 outlines Government school councils powers, duties and functions
- When performing these powers, duties and functions, school councils must comply with the Child Safe Standards and Ministerial Order 1359
- The following slides support you to understand the various roles and responsibilities for implementing the Child Safe Standards within our school



Child Safe Standards - actions for school council

Child Safe Standard 2: Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in leadership, governance and culture

- Approve the Child Safety Code of Conduct (actioned by principal and school council)
- School council approves the Code of Conduct to the extent that it applies to school council employees (actioned by principal and school council)

Child Safe Standard 6: Suitable staff and volunteers

- Ensure Department of Education and Training recruitment policies and practices are followed and appropriate records kept (actioned by principal and school council)
- The school council ensures that Department of Education and Training recruitment policies and practices are followed and appropriate records kept in respect of school council employees (actioned by principal and school council)



Child Safe Standards - actions for school council

Child Safe Standard 8: Child safety knowledge, skills, and awareness

- Ensure at least annually, the school council receives appropriate guidance and training about:
 - individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for implementing the Child Safe Standards and managing the risk of child abuse
 - child safety and wellbeing risks in the school environment
 - the child safety policies, procedures and practices of the school
 - (actioned by school council)

Child Safe Standard 9: Child safety in physical and online environments

- Ensure procurement policies for facilities and services from third parties ensure the safety of children and students (actioned by principal and school council)
- The school council, where applicable to their powers and functions, ensure that procurement policies for facilities and services from third parties ensure the safety of children and students (actioned by principal and school council)



Child Safe Standard 1: Culturally safe environments

Schools must establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children, young people and students are respected and valued

- Aboriginal children and young people who don't feel safe being themselves and expressing their individuality may be less willing to report abuse
- Providing safe environments for children has positive, lifelong impacts that cannot be underestimated, and cultural safety is a key dimension of safety for Aboriginal children
- By supporting Aboriginal children to feel strong in their identity schools also help them enjoy their cultural rights
- Schools need to address all forms of racism and consider attitudes and practices that are a barrier to providing a culturally safe environment and addressing all forms of racism
- **The school council can support the principal by informing them of any views of the school community that may be relevant to this standard**



Child Safe Standard 2: Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in leadership, governance and culture

Schools must ensure that child safety and wellbeing is embedded in school leadership, governance and culture

- School leaders and governing authorities have a vital role in establishing:
 - a culture where child abuse and harm is not tolerated
 - effective systems and processes to implement child safe policies and practices and manage child abuse risks
- Schools must take deliberate steps to promote child safety and wellbeing and protect children by:
 - embedding and promoting a child safety culture at all levels
 - school leaders actively modelling such a culture
 - ensuring transparent governance arrangements
- **There is a specific role for the school council in implementing this standard (see next slide)**



Child Safe Standard 2: Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in leadership, governance and culture

Role of the government school council

- Approve the Code of Conduct to the extent that it applies to school council employees (unless delegated to the principal)
- Follow our school's Child Safety Code of Conduct and our school's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Be aware of our information sharing and recordkeeping obligations:
 - [Privacy and Information Sharing Policy](#)
 - [Child and Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes Policy](#)
 - [Records Management - School Records Policy](#)



Child Safe Standard 3: Child and student empowerment

Schools must ensure that children, young people and students are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously

- Empowering children and young people improves child safety
- Policies and practices that are shaped by children's and young people's views can better prevent the risk of harm
- Children and young people are more likely to speak up when they feel respected and confident that they will be heard
- Children and young people benefit from strong friendships. They often see their friends as their main source of support, information and advice, and will go to them for help
- Supporting students to raise concerns about the safety or wellbeing of their friends to encourage students to support their peers
- **The school council can support the principal by informing them of any views of the school community that may be relevant to this standard**



Child Safe Standard 4: Family engagement

Schools must ensure that families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing

- Involving families and communities in decisions relating to their children's safety and wellbeing:
 - recognises the important role they play in monitoring children's safety and wellbeing and helping children to disclose concerns
 - creates an open and transparent culture
 - promotes a greater understanding of child safety
 - encourages them to raise concerns or ideas for improvement.
- Providing accessible and inclusive child safe information encourages families to engage in child safety and wellbeing discussions.
- **The school council can play an important role supporting families and the school community to understand and have a say in the school's child safety approach**



Child Safe Standard 5: Diversity and equity

Schools must ensure that equity is upheld, and diverse needs respected in policy and practice

- Schools need to create environments where all children and young people feel welcome
- Children and young people have unique abilities, skills and life experiences. Differences in backgrounds, personality and beliefs shape a child's experiences and needs. Their individual identity and sense of self can be fundamental to their wellbeing
- Children have better opportunities to fulfill their potential when diversity is valued
- Negative experiences like exclusion and discrimination can be harmful. They increase the risk of child abuse and decrease the likelihood of a child telling someone and receiving an effective response
- **The school council can support the principal by informing them of any views of the school community that may be relevant to this standard**



Child Safe Standard 6: Suitable staff and volunteers

Schools must ensure that people working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice

- Selecting suitable people to work with children is vital to protecting children.
- Good recruitment practices:
 - create a safer workplace
 - reduce the opportunity for harm to occur
 - prevent, screen out or deter people who are unsuitable to work or volunteer with children
 - recruit staff who uphold the school values
- Rigorous selection processes and appropriate induction, training and supervision helps keep staff and students safe
- **There is a specific role for the school council in implementing this standard (see next slide)**



Child Safe Standard 6: Suitable staff and volunteers

Role of the government school council

- For government school council employees, ensure that Department of Education and Training recruitment policies and practices are followed, and appropriate records kept



Child Safe Standard 7: Complaints processes

Schools must ensure that processes for complaints and concerns are child focused

- Making a complaint can be challenging
- Complaints are more likely to be raised when there are clear, well-communicated policies and procedures for concerns or allegations
- Complaints handling processes need to focus on students and their safety needs. The process should be able to handle all kinds of complaints and concerns. A complaint might reveal a bigger issue or prevent a situation from escalating
- Empowering students to raise low-level concerns improves the likelihood they will feel comfortable making a disclosure or reporting abuse
- Reporting concerns is easier if the school has procedures that are child-friendly and accessible to students and the school community
- **The school council plays an important role in ensuring they immediately notify the school if they become aware of any child safety concerns**



Child Safe Standard 8: Child safety knowledge, skills and awareness

Schools must ensure that staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training

- By delivering tailored training to all staff and volunteers, everyone will share an understanding of:
 - what child safety means
 - the importance of child safety
 - what to look for and what to do
- This provides staff and volunteers with the knowledge and skills they need to create a schoolwide culture of child safety
- Appropriate training and supervision helps keep staff and students safe and helps schools meet their child safety and occupational health and safety legal requirements
- **There is a specific role for the school council in implementing this standard (see next slide)**



Child Safe Standard 8: Child safety knowledge, skills and awareness

Role of the government school council

- Undertake appropriate training about child safety at least annually including:
 - guidance on individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for implementing the Child Safe Standards and managing the risk of child abuse
 - child safety and wellbeing risks in the school environment
 - the child safety policies, procedures, and practices of the school
 - information sharing and reporting obligations, and record-keeping obligations



Child Safe Standard 9: Child safety in physical and online environments

Schools must ensure that physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children, young people and students to be harmed

- A thorough risk analysis is the first thing schools should do to promote child safety
- Effective risk analysis will consider all of the Child Safe Standards and risks in physical and online environments and procurement
- Online technologies are constantly changing which presents significant challenges for schools, parents and carers
- Arrangements with external agencies also create child safety risks. They create opportunities for unknown people to have contact with students
- **There is a specific role for the school council in implementing this standard (see next slide)**



Child Safe Standard 9: Child safety in physical and online environments

Role of the government school council

- Where applicable to their powers and functions, ensure that the department's procurement policies for facilities and services from third parties are followed, to ensure the safety of children and students
- Notify the school of any child safety or wellbeing risks they become aware of in the physical or online school environment



Child Safe Standard 10: Review of child safety practices

Schools must ensure that implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved

- Being a child-safe organisation requires ongoing effort
- Child safe organisations have an open and transparent culture, learn from their mistakes, and put the interests of children first. Taking time to review policies, procedures and practices put child safety and wellbeing at the centre of the school's activities
- Regular reviews of policies, procedures and practices:
 - makes sure they are adequate, up-to-date and effective, fully implemented and followed by everyone
 - helps schools maintain the best approach to child safety and wellbeing and minimise the risk of harm
- **The school council can support the principal by informing them of any views of the school community that may be relevant to a review of the school's child safety policies, procedures and practices**



Child Safe Standard 11: Implementation of child safety practices

Schools must have policies and procedures that document how schools are safe for children, young people and students

- Being a child-safe organisation requires ongoing effort
- Schools are safer for children and students when child safety policies and procedures are championed by leaders and understood by all members of the school community
- **The school council can support the principal by informing them of any views of the school community that may be relevant to this standard**



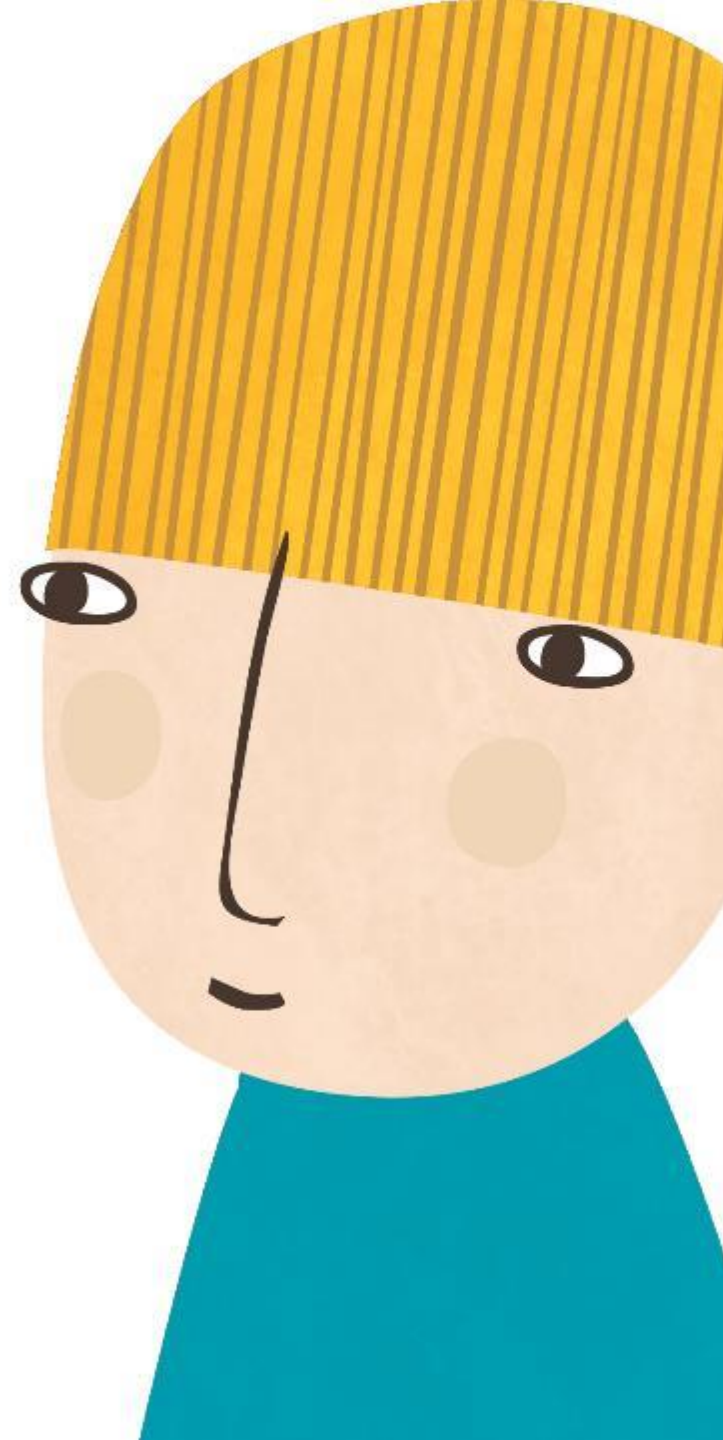
Possible consequences of not complying with the Child Safe Standards

- Greater risk of child abuse
- Unsafe school culture
- Non compliance identified during school review
- Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority action
- Commission for Children and Young People investigations
- Breach of duty of care or organisational duty of care
- Failure to report and failure to stop offences
- Legal action such as negligence claims
- Loss of reputation for keeping children safe



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Our child safety policies and procedures



Our school's child safety policies and procedures



Overarching child safety documents for our school

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

Child Safety Risk Register

Child Safety Code of Conduct

**Child Safety Responding and Reporting
Obligations Policy and Procedure**



Connected policies for child safety at our school

**Bullying
Prevention**

Complaints

**Digital
Learning**

**Student
Wellbeing
and
Engagement**

Visitors

Volunteers

**Yard Duty
and
Supervision**



Department policies on the Policy and Advisory Library and department systems

For example, procurement, records management, recruitment, incident reporting, complaints/misconduct processes, eduPay.



Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

Our school's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy:

- demonstrates our commitment to providing environments where our students are safe and feel safe
- tells our community about our strategies and governance arrangements to keep children safe
- helps us create a shared commitment to keeping children safe
- supports everyone in our school community to know their responsibilities for keeping children safe
- is publicly available



Child Safety Code of Conduct

Our school's Child Safety Code of Conduct provides adults with a clear guide on the behaviour that is expected of them in our school environments, and:

- lists acceptable and unacceptable behaviours
- identifies professional boundaries and ethical behaviour
- applies to all school activities, including school camps, using digital technology and social media
- is publicly available

Who has to follow it?

Staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of our school community involved in child-connected work, including school council members



Child Safety Risk Register

Our school has developed a Child Safety Risk Register, and we:

- have considered risks for each of the 11 Child Safe Standards and have developed and recorded our risk controls
- have taken risk causes and consequences into account
- have considered different types of risks by asking ourselves key questions. For example:
 - How do our school structures, attitudes and practices affect the risk of harm or child abuse?
 - Have staff, volunteers, contractors, and service providers been effectively vetted?
 - Are there opportunities for adults to be alone with students, unseen by others?
 - Are students, parents and the school community empowered to raise concerns? How do we know?



Complaints Policy

Our school's Complaints Policy:

- provides an outline of our school's complaints process
- informs students, parents and members of the community how they can raise complaints or concerns about issues arising at our school
- sets an expectation that all complaints and concerns are managed in a timely, effective, fair and respectful manner
- relates to complaints brought by students, parents, carers, or members of our school community and applies to all matters relating to our school.
- is publicly available

Complaints and concerns relating to child abuse will be managed in accordance with our school's **Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures**



Responding to incidents, disclosures and suspicions of child abuse

School Council members should follow the [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#) when responding to incidents, disclosures and suspicions of child abuse

1. Respond to the emergency

If a child is at immediate risk of harm you must ensure their safety

2. Report to authorities

As soon as immediate health and safety concerns are addressed you must report your concerns to the principal or school leadership

3. Contact Parents/Carers

The principal and school will determine who needs to be contacted

4. Provide Support

The school will determine the support for children impacted by abuse.

For more information, see the [Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse Poster](#)



Information sharing and recordkeeping

- Our school follows the department's:
 - [Privacy and Information Sharing Policy](#)
 - [Records Management- School Records Policy](#)
 - [Child and Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes Policy](#)
- These policies are available on the department's [Policy and Advisory Library](#) (PAL)



Important things to remember

- Child safety at our school is everyone's responsibility
- School Council members should inform school leadership:
 - immediately if you witness a child safety incident, or if you have any concerns that a child associated with our school has been, or is at risk of being abused
 - if you identify any child safety risk not currently being addressed or managed by our school
 - if you have any suggestions for how our school can improve our child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures or practices.

We all want to keep our kids safe



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Questions?



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Thank you

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