Connells Point Public School
Anti-Bullying Plan 2017

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Anti-Bullying Plan

Policy Statement Against Bullying

Public schools are inclusive environments, where diversity is affirmed and individual differences are respected.

- Quality education is provided for students to meet their learning needs in a secure, ordered and supportive environment.
- The focus of quality education is for students to learn and grow with confidence. Students develop best in schools where teaching and learning occur in a context of student welfare.
- The wellbeing, safety and health of students inform school policies, programs and practices.
- Partnership with parents, caregivers, students and the wider community is central to the success of this process.

Defining Bullying Behaviour

Bullying can be defined as intentional, **repeated** behaviour by an individual or group of individuals that is intended to cause distress, hurt or undue pressure.

Bullying involves the abuse of power in relationships.

Bullying can involve all forms of harassment (including that based on sex, race, disability, homosexuality or transgender), humiliation, domination, intimidation and victimisation of others.

It is important to remember that children are still learning about themselves and others; about how to be and have a friend; and what are appropriate and inappropriate ways to solve problems and manage their feelings. Children can and do make mistakes and behave poorly without this being bullying, as we are defining in this plan.

Bullying behaviour can be:

- **verbal** e.g. name calling, teasing, abuse, putdowns, sarcasm, insults, threats
- **physical** e.g. hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting
- **social** e.g. ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating, making inappropriate gestures
- **psychological** e.g. spreading rumours, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions, malicious SMS and email messages, inappropriate use of camera phones.

A Statement of Purpose

Students attend school to participate in quality education that will help them to become self directed, lifelong learners who can create a positive future for themselves and the wider community. Any inappropriate behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning at the school and with the wellbeing of students cannot be accepted, and needs to be managed and attract appropriate consequences.

Students, teachers, parents, caregivers and members of the wider school community can expect:

- that students will be safe at school, free from the fear of bullying, harassment, intimidation and victimisation;
- to be involved in the collaborative development of the school Anti-Bullying Plan;
- to know what is expected of them and others in relation to the Anti-Bullying Plan; and
- all students to be provided with appropriate support if and when bullying occurs.

Students, teachers, parents, caregivers and members of the wider school community have a responsibility to:

- promote positive relationships that respect and accept individual differences and diversity within the whole school community;
- contribute to the development of the Anti-Bullying Plan and support it through words and actions; and
- actively work together to resolve incidents of bullying behaviour if and when they occur.

Each group within the school community has a specific role in preventing and dealing with bullying.

Students can expect to:
- know that their concerns will be responded to by school staff;
- be provided with appropriate support (for both the subjects of, and those responsible for, the behaviour); and
- participate in learning experiences that address key understandings and skills relating to positive relationships, safety, gender equity, discrimination, bullying and harassment. These experiences will be guided by the Personal Development, Health and Physical Education syllabus, Values Education and other Key Leaning Areas.

Students have a responsibility to:
- behave appropriately, respecting individual differences and diversity;
- follow the school Anti-Bullying Plan; and
- respond to incidents of bullying according to the Anti-Bullying Plan.

Parents and caregivers have a responsibility to:
- support their children in all aspects of their learning
- be aware of the school Anti-Bullying Plan and assist their children in understanding bullying behaviour;
- support their children in developing positive and appropriate responses to incidents of bullying consistent with the school Anti-Bullying Plan; and
- support all students of the school to deal effectively and appropriately with bullying through the strategies of the Anti-Bullying Plan.

Schools have a responsibility to:
- develop an Anti-Bullying Plan through consultation with parents, caregivers, students and the community which clearly identifies both the behaviours that are unacceptable and the strategies for dealing with bullying in the classroom and playground;
- inform students, parents, caregivers and the community about the School Discipline Code or School Rules and Anti-Bullying Plan;
- provide students with strategies to respond positively to incidents of bullying behaviour, including the responsibilities of bystanders and observers;
- provide parents, caregivers and students with clear information on strategies that promote appropriate behaviour and the consequences for inappropriate behaviour; and
- communicate to parents and caregivers that they have an important role to play in resolving incidents of bullying behaviour involving their children and to follow up complaints of bullying, harassment, intimidation and victimisation.

Teachers have a responsibility to:
- respect and support students in all aspects of their learning;
- model appropriate behaviour; and
- respond in an appropriate and timely manner to incidents or bullying, according to the school Anti-Bullying Plan.

Managing Bullying

Strategies to Prevent Bullying

- implementing the school's Values Education program, supported by the *Values in Action* behaviour awards system;
- weekly Newsletter articles highlighting the Value of the Week, so that families can support positive attitudes and behaviours at home;
- emphasising *NO, GO, TELL*
  - Say *No*: be assertive not aggressive. Tell the bully how his/her actions make you feel.
  - Choose to ignore or *Go* away.
  - *Tell* someone who can give you support;
- implementing Child Protection, Social Skills, Peer Support and Buddy Programs;
- encouraging staff vigilance and action (e.g. recording significant offences) in classrooms, at assemblies, moving to and from classrooms and on the playground;
- raising community awareness; and
- gathering and recording data.

Strategies to Manage Bullying

Students:
- implement 'Strategies to Prevent Bullying';
- abide by the Students' Code of Behaviour and the school's Values System;
- report any form of bullying to teachers or adults; and
- participate in the programs outlined above.

Staff:
- address the behaviour, and its underlying factors, of the bully and support the victim;
- listen to concerns;
- implement the Student Welfare Policy for dealing with inappropriate behaviour;
- encourage students to inform staff – telling is not dobbing;
- continually monitor in order to review and renew school policies as appropriate; and
- provide ongoing and regular communication between key staff members and the students and parents of those involved.

Parents and Caregivers:
- maintain contact and communication with school staff;
- support the development of behaviours and attitudes in their children which are consistent with our school's Values; and
- support their children in developing positive responses to incidents of bullying, consistent with the school's Anti-Bullying Plan.

Monitoring and Evaluating

Each term, the executive will review the playground behaviour books to monitor the level of bullying across the school identifying:

- bullying behaviour by groups or individuals;
- types of bullying; and
- playground areas of concern.

References

- Anti-Bullying Plan for Schools 2005
- Student Discipline in Government Schools 2006
- Support Materials at
http://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/students_serv/discipline/stu_discip_gov/implementation.shtml

Advice for Parents and Carers

Why children do not tell
Children often hide the fact that they are being bullied for a number of reasons:
- they do not want to look weak
- they do not want to tell tales
- they think it will make things worse.

As a first step, it is usually best to encourage the child to talk through the issues, as far as he or she wants to, so you get the basic facts straight. Try to keep an open mind, remembering you are hearing only one side of the story. Ask questions gently, help the child reflect on what has been done so far and help the child work out what might be done.
It is important to find out what happened, who was involved, when and where the incident took place. Ask if anybody else saw what happened and, if so, who? It is a good idea to write down what you find out from your child, so that this information can be shared with the school. As this stage, it is not advisable to contact other parents and students to gather information. Leave the investigation to the school.

What can you do if your child is being bullied?

Children need to:
- feel believed and listened to;
- develop trust in how parents will handle it;
- talk more openly about what has happened ;
- gain some control over what is happening;
- learn things they can do to protect themselves ; and
- regain self-confidence.

It helps if parents:
- involve the children in making decisions about what to do;
- listen to what children say ;
- tell them they understand; and
- keep a sense of perspective and open-mindedness.

It does not help if parents:
- get angry or upset;
- feel guilty or ashamed ;
- make the children think it is not important ;
- blame the children;
- blame the school;
- accuse people without knowing the facts;
- look for scapegoats;
- demand to know all the details at once; or
- look for easy solutions.

What are the signs?

Bullying may be very hard to see. Victims may already be having trouble getting on with other children or with teachers. They are often picked on by bullies for this reason.

Bullying usually happens out of sight, away from teachers or other adults. The people who are most likely to know what is going on are other children.

Children who are being bullied often don't like to tell anyone because they feel weak or ashamed, or are frightened that it will only makes things worse. They also feel it is wrong to "dob" in or tell tales on other children. If they tell anyone, it is most likely they will tell their parents or their friends before they will tell a teacher.

Some tell-tale signs are:

- bruises, scratches or cuts that your child can't really explain
- torn or damaged clothing
- damaged or missing belongings
- headaches, stomach aches and other pains that the child can't put a finger on
- unexplained tears or depression
- unusual outbursts of temper
- not wanting to go to school
- not wanting to play with friends
- wanting changes in the way he or she travels to and from school
- school work falls off in quality
- wanting extra money without giving a reason.

There are some important next steps to consider.

- Never try to sort out the bullies yourself. This rarely works and often makes matters worse.
- Once you have a clear picture of the situation, and some idea about how you and the child would prefer to handle it, contact the school.
- Make an appointment to see the principal or the class teacher or whoever you think would be best to see. Don't barge in. Sometimes, the school counsellor might be a good person to start with.
- Present the information you have as calmly as possible.
- Do it in a way that makes it clear to the school that you see yourself and the school as partners in trying to fix this problem. Tell the school what you and your child would like to do, and ask them for ideas as well.
- Ask about the school's policy on bullying. Your school will be as concerned as you to deal with the problem.
- The school will need time to investigate the matter and to talk to teachers, other students and even other parents if that's the best thing to do. Remember the school staff may not have seen the incidents and it is not always easy to judge if it is bullying or just a social issue which has gone too far.
- Make a note of what the school says it will do, and arrange to make a follow-up call to see what has been done.

Helping your child to cope

Many parents try, in the first instance, to support their children to resolve the issues themselves, rather than rushing in at the first sign of trouble. This is wise, as long as the incidents have not been severe. Talk to your child about some of the things that have happened and discuss some ways of dealing with them, such as:

- inviting school friends home to strengthen the relationships begun at school;
- pretending not to hear hurtful comments;

- using silent self-talk such as, That's their problem, not mine, or, I'm OK;
- reinforcing self-confidence;
- having a plan for where to play and who to play with at problem times;
- having friends to be with so as to be less vulnerable;
- making sure they treat people well, and aren't antagonising others who then retaliate;
- developing greater self-assertiveness, so as to be able to face the bully without becoming scared, upset, abusive or violent; and
- believing that it is OK to tell someone, in fact, they must, when bullying happens – that it is not dobbing.

It is important that children understand the difference between dobbing in and reporting something that is serious. Bullying is serious. People get hurt, and some are harmed for a long time. Children have said that being bullied is almost the worst thing that can happen to them.

Factors that may contribute towards a child becoming a bully

Becoming aware that your child may, in fact, be a bully in some situations is often confronting for parents. Being objective and openly listening to the information the school is giving you will help start the process of developing better social skills. Some children who adopt bullying behaviour are well liked by their peers. They are looked up to and can often have the skills to influence others. They develop quite a significant amount of power in their group, and other children want their approval and to please them. This can create a situation where they misuse their power.

Some other factors which contribute to bullying behaviour include:

- *Too little supervision of children and adolescents.* Without supervision, children do not get the message that aggressive behaviour is wrong.
- *Bullying pays off.* Many children learn at a very young age that when they bully
- their brother, sister or parents they get what they want. Often parents are too busy or too tired to fight with the child so they just give in. Each time parents give in when the child is aggressive they give the child the message that bullying pays off.
- *Do as I say, not as I do.* When parents fight and one parent intimidates the other and wins, the child gets the message that intimidation gets you what you want.
- *Harsh, physical punishment.* Although spanking a child may stop the child's behaviour, spanking that is too harsh, too frequent or too physical teaches a child that it is OK to hit other people. In particular, this teaches a child that it is OK for bigger people (parents) to hit little people (children). Bullies usually pick on younger, smaller or weaker children. They model, in their physical attacks, what may have happened to them personally in the home. The worst thing that can be done is to physically punish a bully for bullying behaviour.
- *Peer group that supports bullying behaviour.* Many parents do not know what their children are doing with the peer group. Their child may be playing with other children who bully. In order for the child to fit in, the child must bully like the peers.
- *Getting more negative than positive messages.* Children who develop bullying behaviour feel that the world around them (home, school, neighbourhood) is more negative than positive.
- *Poor self-concept.* Children who get more criticism than praise may develop a poor self-concept. These children believe that the only way to be accepted is to pick on others.
- *Overly strong self-esteem.* Sometimes children can have a greater sense of their own importance. Bad behaviour is excused or justified by their parents and they face no consequences when their behaviour is unacceptable.
- *Expecting hostility.* Because of the criticism and the poor self-concept, bullies expect their parents, teachers and peers to pick on them, blame them or otherwise humiliate them. Therefore, they attack before they are attacked, even when in reality they were not about to be attacked. They assume hostility when none exists. In many ways, the bully's philosophy is, the best defence is offence.

Myths about bullying

MYTH 1: You can spot a bully by their looks. They are usually bigger than the rest of the kids and often dress shabbily.
FACT: Bullies have no particular looks. They come in all shapes and sizes. Both girls and boys can be bullies – bullies are found in all economic, social and racial groups.

MYTH 2: Some children ask to be bullied. They are born victims.
FACT: Some children are more prone to being bullied. It is often due to things they cannot change about themselves e.g, appearance, ethnicity, disabilities. This difference is just an excuse for the bully to justify what they do. No-one chooses to be hurt by others.

MYTH 3: Bullies usually feel inadequate and have a low self esteem. Most bullies are unpopular or are poor students.
FACT: A high percentage of bullies are relatively popular, have a high estimation of themselves and often have good verbal skills and achieve average grades. Studies show that bullying builds self esteem; children who bully are not loners.

MYTH 4: I was bullied at school and it did not do me any harm.
FACT: This is often said aggressively as if the person is still ashamed. They may have forgotten the pain they suffered.

MYTH 5: Children just have to learn to stand up for themselves.
FACT: Children who tell about bullying have usually reached the end of their tether. If they could have dealt with the bullying they would have. Asking for support is not weakness but a recognition that they cannot cope with the situation on their own.

MYTH 6: The best approach is to tell the child to hit back – harder.
FACT: Bullies are often bigger than their victims so the victim could get seriously hurt by hitting back. Hitting back reinforces the idea that violence and aggression are acceptable.

MYTH 7: Bullying is character-building.
FACT: The sort of character it builds is not the sort of character most parents want for their children. Bullying can damage victim's self esteem and can make them reserved and distrustful.

MYTH 8: Sticks and stones may break your bones but words can never hurt you.
FACT: Bruises left by blows fade and heal but the scars left by name-calling can last for ever. *An 84 year old man wrote: "I can remember every word those friends said. I have been hearing their bullying jeers all my life".*

MYTH 9: That's not bullying! It is just fun.
FACT: Teasing is one thing but when it gets out of hand it can turn into vicious taunting. Once teasing begins to hurt the victim it is no longer "just a bit of fun" and should be stopped.

MYTH 10: Once a bully, always a bully.
FACT: Bullying is a learned behaviour that can be unlearned

Connells Point Public School Cyberbullying Policy

NSW Department of Education and Training

Approach to cybersafety

The NSW Department of Education and Training recognises that technology plays an important role in engaging students in education. However, the Department also acknowledges the inherent risks of young people having access to a range of sites, particularly where such access is not carefully monitored. It is important to educate young people and teacher/parents on responsible technology use and equip them with the skills to keep safe. Schools and families must work together to ensure that students know that bullying by any means is not acceptable and that young people use technology appropriately and can resolve conflict without violence. The Department has policies, programs and supports in place to help raise awareness and counter inappropriate use of technology.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is commonly defined as the use of information and communication technologies to support repeated and deliberate hostile behaviour intended to harm others. It is sometimes used as an extension to other forms of bullying, and can result in the target of bullying experiencing social, psychological and academic difficulties.

Children and young people can also be affected by hostile behaviour that does not fit the definition of cyberbullying. For example, a one off insensitive or negative remark or joke online or via text is not cyberbullying by definition. However, the impact can be widespread due to the rapid dissemination and the relative permanency of the message sent.

How cyberbullying works

There are two kinds of cyberbullying: direct attacks (messages sent to your child directly) and cyberbullying by proxy (using others to help cyberbully the victim, either with or without the accomplice's knowledge). Because cyberbullying by proxy often gets adults involved in the harassment, it is much more dangerous.

Cyberbullying can be conducted through many different media including:
- the sending of abusive texts or emails (Instant Messaging/Text Messaging Harassment)

- taking and sharing unflattering or private images, including naked or sexual images

- posting unkind messages or inappropriate images on social networking sites

- excluding individuals from online chats or other communication

- assuming the identity of the victim online and representing them in a negative manner or manner that may damage their relationship with others

- repeatedly and for no strategic reasons attacking players in online gaming

- stealing passwords

- blogs

- web sites

Like other forms of bullying such as verbal abuse, social exclusion and physical aggression, cyberbullying has the potential to result in the target of bullying developing social, psychological and educational issues.

While cyberbullying is similar to real life bullying, it also differs in the following ways:

- it can be difficult to escape and invasive—it can occur 24/7 and a person can be targeted while at home;

- it can involve harmful material being widely and rapidly disseminated to a large audience, for example, rumours and images can be posted on public forums or sent to many people at once; and

- it can provide the bully with a sense of relative anonymity and distance from the victim, so there is a lack of immediate feedback or consequences.

Identifying and responding to incidents of cyberbullying

Cyberbullying can happen to anyone, not just those generally considered more vulnerable. Confident, outgoing individuals can also be targeted.

Research has identified that girls are more likely to report that they have been victims of cyberbullying than boys, potentially because they engage in a higher level of technology-assisted social communication such as texting, emailing and social networking.

One or more of the following signs and changes in behaviour could indicate that a student is being cyberbullied:

- Decline in academic performance and social interaction.

- Dislike and avoidance of school sometimes resulting in higher absenteeism.

- Complaints of feeling unwell though parents report no specific illness.

- Having less to do with friends.

- Increased social exclusion and peer rejection.

- Falling behind in homework.

- Poorer physical health and sleepiness.

- Increased negative self-perception.

- Increased reluctance to participate in regular school activities, including classroom discussions.

- Becoming withdrawn, appearing depressed or anxious, having mood swings, crying for no apparent reason.

The above signs should be considered in light of the student's usual behaviour. Some of the signs above may also be indicators of more general social issues, specific mental health issues, or may even reflect developmentally appropriate behaviours for young people as they seek to establish their identity. Exploring any significant concerns with students and parents/carers is an important first step towards identifying issues and developing strategies to overcome them.

Cyberbullying Protocol at Connells Point Public School

The school reserves the right to determine whether incidents of cyber bullying relate to the responsibility of the school. If it is determined that the school has a role to play, we will:

1. Ensure each student is safe and arrange support, including the involvement of Student Wellbeing Unit if required. Support from staff should be provided on an ongoing basis with the agreement of the student and parent/carer to assist the student to work through the effects of the cyberbullying and to help them develop and implement effective coping strategies.

2. Contact the student's parents to alert them to the issue, and ongoing concerns regarding the welfare of the student, and discuss the issue and how best to deal with it.

3. Reassure the student that the school is taking the incident seriously and that the reported bullying will be acted on.
   ➢ Gather basic facts about the suspected cyberbullying and, if possible, identify the students involved.

   ➢ Implement appropriate responses to address the bullying using evidence-based responses such as restorative justice approaches to conflict resolution.

4. Bear in mind that advising students to completely disengage from their online activities is not always helpful as this can also isolate them from supportive friends.

5. Provide the following strategies to the student and parent to assist with managing the issue in the future.

   ➢ Don't respond to any further messages/postings from the bully and, if possible, block further correspondence from them (block their mobile number or email address).

   ➢ Report any further correspondence from the bully to the parent/carer and an agreed school contact

   ➢ Keep evidence of any bullying to assist with tracking down the bully and potentially reporting the matter to police (screen captures, bully's screen name, text and images).

   ➢ Report any concerns to the administrator of the service used, including the mobile phone provider (if SMS is involved), website administrator (if social networking or chat services are involved), or internet service provider, as most have measures to assist with tracking and blocking the bully. Some block the bully's access to their services entirely as bullying is often a breach of website terms of use.

If the student is distressed by the bullying, ensure they are provided with options for psychological support including school counselling and the DET Well Being Unit
The school will follow its established approach to incidents of bullying as outlined in the school Anti-Bullying Policy and Discipline and Wellbeing Policy.

Technologies used for cyberbullying

The following information is provided as a support to students and families

Technology	Cyberbullying activities	Strategies for addressing this behaviour
Chat rooms message boards on the internet	• Sending or posting nasty or threatening messages which may be anonymous. • A group picking on or excluding individuals. • Misusing personal information gained by pretending to be someone's 'friend' to spread rumours, secrets and to gain power over others.	• Block communications with offensive individuals. • Don't respond to messages. • Keep a record of inappropriate postings, including time, date, user names for reporting. • Report misuse of personal information to the chat room or message board site host. • Report any incidence of bullying or upsetting hostile behaviour (including exclusion) to parents, school or a trusted adult or the Kids Helpline www.kidshelp.com.au or phone 1800 551 800.
Emails and text messages via computer or mobile phone Instant Messaging (IM) on the internet	• Sending nasty or threatening messages or emails. • Forwarding offensive content including jokes, videos, images and sound. • Sending computer viruses. • Accessing someone else's account to forward personal emails or delete them. • Constantly calling or texting a person and making derogatory and/or rude remarks and/or threatening and hostile remarks. • Taking and sharing unflattering images with other mobiles or uploading onto the internet. • Using text or voice chat to harass or scare someone. • Sending a hostile attachment. • Using someone else's account to forward rude or unpleasant messages via their contacts list. • 'Ganging up'—a group deciding to pick on or exclude	• Block communications with offensive individuals. • Don't respond to messages. • In the case of an SMS report misuse of the mobile phone to the phone company if known. • Keep inappropriate messages, including time, date, email addresses and mobile phone numbers for reporting. • If necessary create a new email address and only share it with close friends and family. • Ensure the computer is protected from compromise. Information is available in Protecting computers: e-Security in Common cybersafety issues in the Schools section on the ACMA Cybersmart website www.cybersmart.gov.au/schools.aspx. • Report any incidence of bullying or upsetting hostile behaviour (including exclusion) to parents, school or a trusted adult or the Kids Helpline www.kidshelp.com.au

Technology	Cyberbullying activities	Strategies for addressing this behaviour
Webcam	someone during IM. • Making and sending inappropriate pictures and content. • Persuading or threatening young people to act in inappropriate ways. • Using inappropriate recordings to manipulate young people.	or phone 1800 551 800. • Block communication with people who make you feel uncomfortable. Turn off your webcam—claim it is broken if necessary. • Report any incidence of bullying or upsetting hostile behaviour (including exclusion) to parents, school or a trusted adult or the Kids Helpline www.kidshelp.com.au or phone 1800 551 800.
Social networking sites on the internet	• Posting nasty and abusive comments. • Posting images, videos or sound that may embarrass or frighten a person. • Groups excluding a person from a network. • Creating a fake profile to bully, harass or create trouble for a person. • Accessing another person's account details and using their page to post negative materials, send unpleasant messages or make private information public.	• Ask the host site to remove any images, videos, etc, that are concerning. • Report inappropriate use of passwords, identity, etc, to the host site. • Keep a record of the actions of the offending parties, including the information posted, times, dates, any information about their username, etc. • Report any incidence of bullying or upsetting hostile behaviour (including exclusion) to parents, school or a trusted adult or the Kids Helpline www.kidshelp.com.au or phone 1800 551 800.
Video hosting sites on the internet eg, YouTube	• Posting embarrassing or humiliating video clips.	• Ask the host site to remove the content. • Keep a record of the content and the ID of the person responsible for posting for reporting purposes. • Report any incidence of bullying or upsetting hostile behaviour (including exclusion) to parents, school or a trusted adult or the Kids Helpline www.kidshelp.com.au or phone 1800 551 800.
Virtual worlds on the internet Gaming sites on the internet	• Interacting negatively with someone else's avatar. • Pretending to be someone else's avatar. • Name calling and making abusive comments.	• Avoid interaction with the negative individual/group. • Report the issue to the game/virtual world site administrator.

Technology	Cyberbullying activities	Strategies for addressing this behaviour
Playing games with people in your local area using handheld consoles	• Picking on other users e.g. by repeatedly killing their characters or demeaning their lack of skill. • Denying access to a team game.	• Change avatar or character name if necessary. • Keep a record of the other player's avatars/usernames, their actions and the dates/times of their inappropriate behaviour for reporting purposes. • Report any incidence of bullying or upsetting hostile behaviour (including exclusion) to parents, school or a trusted adult or the Kids Helpline www.kidshelp.com.au or phone 1800 551 800.

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