



Supporting our community on all sides

P O L I C Y

3 Organisational Management

*3.17 Child Safe and
Wellbeing*

Manual 3 – Organisational Management

Policy 3.17 – Child Safe and Wellbeing

Why we do things

Community is committed to fostering a child-safe environment for all children and young people we have contact with and deliver services to. Risk factors arise at all levels of service delivery and from within the wider community. Community is committed to a risk management approach, where risks are analysed and treated to reduce the likelihood of harm to children and young people.

While children and young people are the primary focus, risks to staff and the organisation must also be addressed:

- **Risks to children and young people from:**
 - Family, friends or peers
 - Workers or volunteers, either from our organisation or another agency
 - Residual impacts of harm experienced in the past
 - Workers failing to identify harm and respond inappropriately
 - Staff not understanding incident reporting requirements and processes
- **Risk to Staff:**
 - Harm while managing challenging behaviours and incidents
 - Psychological or emotional trauma when responding to disclosures of harm
- **Risk to Organisational Reputation** - Ethical, legal, and reputational risks arise when:
 - Organisations do not put adequate measures in place to protect the safety and wellbeing of children and young people
 - Staff cause harm to children and young people
 - Harm is not reported to the required authorities
 - Organisations fail in their duty of care to people, including in protecting the rights of staff and clients

For the above **risks**, Community recognises that, should they become real, they would have major **consequences**. Community recognises that there are factors that increase the **likelihood** that risks will become real. These can include:

- **Children and young people who:**
 - Don't feel comfortable or safe to raise concerns.
 - Don't understand their rights and what is appropriate behaviour from safe adults.
 - Do not perceive the organisation as a culturally safe environment.
 - Are at risk from family or friends, and where residual impacts of harm are not addressed.
- **Staff who don't or can't:**
 - Listen to or respond appropriately to the concerns of children and young people.
 - Understand children's legal and human rights.
 - Understand how to promote a culturally safe environment.

- Identify potential risks or signs of harm to children and young people.
- Report suspicions and allegations appropriately.
- **The organisation fails to ensure that:**
 - Adequate policies and documentation are in place to address the safety of children and young people.
 - Reporting pathways are clear.
 - All staff working with children and young people hold valid Working with Children Checks.
 - All staff working with children and young people receive appropriate training and supervision.
 - Supports are not delivered one-on-one or in secluded environments.
 - The physical and online environments in which staff work with children and young people support the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

Risk treatments focus on reducing the risk likelihood by addressing the factors listed above, including:

- Fostering an organisational culture that supports listening to children and young people, identifying and reporting risks and potential problems.
- Policies designed to reduce risk and create a safe (including culturally safe) organisational culture.
- Clear reporting pathways are established.
- Human Resources practices that minimise child-related risk.
- Training and supervision that ensures workers understand the relevant policy provisions, regulations, risks, and reporting requirements.
- Regular reviews of relevant policies, risk treatments, and staff performance.

This policy is a statement of commitment to these risk treatments detailed in the following policies and procedures:

- Privacy Policy
- Service Access, Equity and Exit
- Cultural Awareness
- Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Child Protection and Risk Management
- Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation
- Workplace Incidents (including Critical Incidents), Injuries and Accidents
- Client and Community Complaints

Definitions

- **Child** - In Queensland, a child is a person under the age of 18 years (Child Protection Act 1999).
- **Cultural safety** - Cultural safety requires “an environment that is safe for people: where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their identity, of who they are and what they need. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience, of learning, living and working together with dignity and truly listening.”
- **Disclosure** - A statement that a person makes to another person that describes or reveals abuse.
- **Equity** - Equal opportunity for children to obtain the skills, knowledge and resources they need to be safe, regardless of their characteristics, circumstances, life experiences and backgrounds.

- **Harm** - includes any detrimental effect of a significant nature on a person’s physical, psychological, or emotional wellbeing. It is immaterial how the harm is caused, and self-harm is included in the definition. Harm can result from physical, psychological, or emotional abuse or neglect, or from sexual abuse or exploitation. It may be caused by a single act, omission, or circumstance, or by a series or combination of acts, omissions, or circumstances.
- **Universal Principle** - Established in the *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024*, Section 11, the Universal Principle requires child safe entities to provide an environment that promotes and upholds the right to cultural safety of children who are Aboriginal persons or Torres Strait Islander persons.

Who this policy applies to

- Employees
- Volunteers
- Contactors

Our policy

This policy outlines Community’s commitment to child safety. It aligns with the *National Principles for Child Safe Organisations* and the *Queensland Child Safe Standards*.

This policy and procedure should be read in conjunction with the related policies and procedures.

How we do things

Queensland Child Safe Standards

1. Leadership and culture

Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in the entity’s organisational leadership, governance and culture.

2. Voice of children

Children are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them, and are taken seriously.

3. Family and community

Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.

4. Equity and diversity

Equity is upheld, and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.

5. People

People working with children are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.

6. Complaints management

Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child-focused.

7. Knowledge and skills

Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through ongoing education and training.

8. Physical and online environments

Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing and minimise opportunities for children to be harmed.

9. Continuous improvement

Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.

10. Policy and procedures

Policies and procedures document how the entity is safe for children.

Our Commitment

- Our organisation is committed to operating in accordance with the Queensland Child Safe Standards (outlined above).
- We prioritise the safety of children.
- Our leaders champion and model compliance with policies and procedures.
- We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be taken seriously and managed in line with our policies and procedures.
- We are committed to listening to and empowering all children within our organisation.
- We are committed to equity and inclusion.
- We recognise and respect the diverse needs of all children. We want children to be safe, happy, and empowered, and able to participate fully in their family, community, and cultural life.
- We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.
- We welcome all children, young people, and families irrespective of sexual orientation, gender identity, or sex/intersex status.
- Our organisation is committed to preventing child abuse, to identifying risks early, and to managing risks appropriately.
- We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety.
- Our organisation understands and will comply with obligations under the Reportable Conduct Scheme administered by the Queensland Family and Child Commission (commencing 1st July 2026).
- Our organisation has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers.
- We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff, and volunteers to achieve these commitments.
- We will continue to refine and implement this Policy based on our work with, and the voices of, children and young people.
- We are committed to ensuring that our policies, procedures, systems, processes and measures create a culturally safe and inclusive environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people, and families.

Responsibilities

- **The CEO is responsible to ensure that:**
 - This policy is implemented.
 - They lead and model a child safe culture across all levels of the organisation.
 - Mandatory reporting requirements, procedures, and associated legal responsibilities are adhered to.
 - Staff are aware of, trained in, compliant with, and implement this policy.
 - Staff are trained in early intervention approaches and trauma-informed care where potential or actual harm to clients is identified.
 - Staff understand their legal obligations relating to mandatory reporting.
 - The cultural needs of clients from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds, and culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, are safeguarded through training in cultural competency.
 - Staff are supported to create an appropriate service culture in accordance with this policy, and the organisation's vision and values.
 - Recruiting and training practices are appropriate to the needs of clients.
 - Complaints processes are accessible to clients using the service, in particular, children and young people.
 - Systems are in place to identify and remedy any gaps that have contributed to a client.

- **All staff are responsible for ensuring that:**
 - A child safe culture is promoted.
 - They understand and can implement cultural safety and trauma-informed care.
 - Clients are aware of:
 - This policy
 - Their right to safety
 - Their right to speak out and complain if they feel unsafe
 - The available complaints procedures and how they can access help and advice
 - The obligation on staff to share information when they suspect or are aware of harm or risk of harm to children and young people
 - They can meet their responsibilities to children, including cultural safety, record keeping, information sharing, and reporting obligations.
 - Incident management processes are followed, including mandatory reporting where relevant.

Families and Communities

Cultural Safety

- Community is committed to creating and maintaining a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.
- We actively encourage and support cultural safety, participation, and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families through:
 - Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people to express their culture
 - Building respectful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations
 - Acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land/s on which we operate

- Recognising the ongoing impact of colonisation on the safety and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families
- Respecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures across our organisation
- Actively supporting the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff
- We support all staff and volunteers to understand the strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and its role in supporting the safety and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. We do this by including relevant cultural training in:
 - Recruitment processes and the development of position descriptions
 - Induction processes
 - Ongoing professional development
 - Performance management processes
 - Strengths-based and culturally appropriate assessment and service delivery processes
- We take a zero-tolerance approach to racism in our organisation. Our response to racism is outlined in the *Non-Discriminatory Practices Policy, Violence, Abuse and Neglect Policy, and our Human Services Manual* policies and procedures.

Children and Young People

- Community seeks to empower children - they are vital and active participants in our organisation. We involve them in decision-making, especially on matters that directly affect them. We listen to their views and respect what they have to say.
- We tell children and young people about their right to be safe, to access information, and to participate in decision-making. Actions to support this include providing them with a child-friendly version of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- We encourage children to cultivate friendships and seek support from their peers to help them feel safe and connected.
- Where relevant, we refer children and families to appropriate information and services, including, but not limited to, age-appropriate sexual abuse prevention programs.
- We provide information and support to children and young people on how to tell us or others about any worries they have. See the *Feedback Processes and Client and Community Complaints Policy and Procedure*.
- We support children and young people to access information, receive support, and make a complaint in a way they can understand, and that is culturally safe. See the *Feedback, Compliments and Complaints Policy and Procedure*.
- Our assessment and planning processes support children (and their families) to identify their individual strengths and needs.
- We support equity and inclusion. We make reasonable changes to support all children to participate and respond to the needs of all children in our organisation (see *Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Procedure*).
- We promote diversity and acceptance in our organisation, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. We seek to understand and respond to the diverse needs and circumstances of children and young people. In particular, we:
 - promote the cultural safety, participation, and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.
 - Recognise that children with a disability have a heightened vulnerability to the risk of harm

- and ensure they are safe and able to participate equally.
 - identify the particular support needs of the children with whom we work.
 - identify and respond to the specific needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex children, and young people.
- We promote diversity by celebrating or acknowledging significant occasions, delivering staff training, and using recruitment practices that seek to represent the diversity in the community.
- We work to prevent child abuse and harm resulting from discrimination based on disability, ethnicity, religion, sex, intersex status, gender identity, or sexual orientation (for example, by complying with anti-discrimination laws, taking a zero-tolerance approach to racism, and outlining expectations in the *Staff Code of Conduct* and *Child Safe Code of Conduct*).

Families and Communities

- Communitify supports families to participate in decisions affecting their child/ren.
- We inform families and the community about our child safe approach and ensure they can access the information they need (e.g., via our website, service welcome packs, by providing policies to clients, and incorporating client feedback into our policies and procedures).
- We support families and communities to have a say in how we develop and review our policies and practices.
- We consider the diversity of families accessing our services and take action to reduce barriers to inclusion (see *Service Access, Equity and Inclusion* and *Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Procedure*).

Staff and Volunteers

Recruitment

- Communitify takes all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with children, as set out in the *Human Resources Manual Policy and Procedures*.
- We develop position descriptions, selection criteria, and advertisements that clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and wellbeing, as well as an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. Our organisation understands that we have ethical and compliance obligations when recruiting staff and volunteers.
- We actively encourage applications from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and people with a disability.
- Our recruitment processes include a range of values-based interview questions to assess suitability to work with children.
- All staff, including volunteers, are required to hold a Working with Children Check and provide evidence of this check.
- We carry out reference checks and NDIS Worker Screening Checks (where relevant) to ensure we are recruiting the right people.

Training and Supervision

- Communitify understands that training and education should help promote a culture in which child safety is everyone's responsibility.
- Our organisational culture aims for all staff, volunteers, parents, carers, and children to feel confident and comfortable discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns.

- We train staff and volunteers to:
 - understand and implement our child safe and related policies;
 - contribute to building cultural safe environments;
 - identify, assess, and minimise risks of harm to children;
 - communicate with children and young people in a way that is appropriate for their age, maturity, and capability;
 - support children to have a say, take part in decision-making, and talk about any worries they have;
 - recognise potential signs of child abuse, including harm caused by other children and young people;
 - support a person making a disclosure about harm to a child;
 - respond to issues of child safety, including:
 - internal and external reporting requirements;
 - notifying families and carers; and
 - managing risks to children.
- We document training in employee and volunteer files.
- We provide an appropriate induction to all staff and volunteers to ensure they understand their responsibilities to children and young people, including responding to disclosures, record keeping, information sharing, and reporting obligations (see *Human Resources Policy and Procedures; Child Protection and Risk Management; Violence Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation; Privacy Policy; Record Retention; and Workplace Incidents (including Critical Incidents), Injuries and Accidents Policies and Procedures*).
- We provide ongoing supervision for staff and volunteers to:
 - support child safety and wellbeing;
 - develop their skills to protect children from abuse; and
 - promote the cultural safety of:
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children;
 - children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds;
 - children with a disability, and
 - lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex children and young people.
- Where relevant, we include child safety and wellbeing as a standing agenda item in team meetings.
- New employees and volunteers are supervised regularly to ensure they understand our organisation's commitment to child safety and wellbeing, that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, and to check that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate (see *Staff Code of Conduct* and *Child Safe Code of Conduct*).
- Our organisation will report inappropriate behaviour through the appropriate channels.

Fair Procedures

- Communitify creates a culture of safety by treating its staff justly and fairly.
- Decisions made when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action are always thorough, transparent, and based on evidence.
- If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, we provide updates to children and families on progress and any actions taken by the organisation.

See the *Human Resources Manual Policy and Procedures* for further guidance.

Acceptable and Unacceptable Interactions

Staff

- Staff must treat clients and their supporters in accordance with the *Staff Code of Conduct* and *Child Safe Code of Conduct*.

Peer-to-Peer, Child-to-Adult

We expect and promote interactions based on open communication, mutual respect, and healthy boundaries, both online and offline.

- **Respect and Trust:** Individuals should treat each other with respect, regardless of differences, to build relationships based on trust and open communication.
- **Positive Communication:** We encourage effective communication, including active listening and clear expression of needs and boundaries.
- **Constructive Conflict Resolution:** Learning to address disagreements and conflicts in a respectful and constructive manner is essential for maintaining positive relationships.
- **Empathy and Understanding:** Developing empathy and an understanding of others' perspectives fosters deeper connections and strengthen peer relationships.
- **Setting Boundaries:** Individuals should be able to set healthy boundaries and communicate them clearly to their peers, while also respecting the boundaries of others.
- **Positive Influence:** Friends should be a positive influence on one another, encouraging healthy behaviours and promoting personal growth.
- **Safe and Inclusive Environments:** We aim to create spaces where all individuals feel safe, respected, and included, free from bullying, harassment, and discrimination.
- **Online Etiquette:** Recognising that online interactions require the same principles of respect, kindness, and appropriate behaviour as face-to-face interactions.

Examples of Acceptable Interactions:

- Sharing personal experiences, feelings, and concerns with trusted friends.
- Collaborating on projects or activities in a respectful and inclusive manner.
- Offering support and encouragement to friends who are facing challenges.
- Respectfully disagreeing with a friend's opinion while maintaining a positive relationship.
- Practicing active listening and showing genuine interest in what others have to say.
- Using online platforms for positive interactions, such as sharing information or offering support.

Examples of Unacceptable Interactions:

- Bullying, harassment, or any form of aggressive behaviour.
- Spreading rumours or gossip.
- Excluding or isolating others from social groups.
- Using offensive or disrespectful language.
- Pressuring or coercing others into actions they are uncomfortable with.
- Disregarding or violating boundaries set by others.

Information and Disclosure

Allegations, Concerns, and Complaints

- Community takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and promptly. Our staff and volunteers are trained to respond appropriately to allegations, as set out in the *Child Protection and Risk Management; Violence Abuse Neglect and Exploitation; Client and Community Complaints; and Workplace Incidents (including Critical Incidents), Injuries and Accidents Policies and Procedures*.
- We work to ensure all children, families, staff, and volunteers know what to do, and who to tell, if they witness abuse, experience it themselves, or notice inappropriate behaviour.
- We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place (see information about failure to disclose, under *Reporting Obligations*).
- If an adult has a reasonable belief that an incident has occurred, they must report the incident. Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:
 - A child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves).
 - Behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed.
 - Someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it.
 - Suspicious behaviour is observed.

Privacy

- Community respects the privacy of individuals, staff, volunteers, parents, or children, involved in a complaint, allegation, or investigation. We have safeguards and practices in place to ensure personal information is protected, as set out in our Privacy Collection Notice and Privacy Policies and Procedures. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will have access to it.
- We understand that, while privacy is important, consent to share information is not required when promoting the safety and wellbeing of a child, for organisations that fall under Queensland's information sharing schemes.
- We securely store all records of allegations of abuse and safety concerns, such as incident report forms and investigations.

Reporting Obligations

- Community takes our legal responsibilities seriously, including:
 - **Failure to disclose:** Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults in Queensland who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 18 have an obligation to report that information to the police.
 - **Failure to protect:** People of authority in our organisation will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.
- We understand our obligations under the Reportable Conduct Scheme (from 1st July 2026), as set out in the *Child Protection and Risk Management Policy and Procedure*.
- We understand that any alleged reportable conduct by staff or volunteers must be reported to the Queensland Family and Child Commission (from 1st July 2026).

Risk Management

- Communitify embeds risk management strategies focused on preventing, identifying, and mitigating risks to children and young people into our organisational leadership, governance, and culture (see the *Child Protection and Risk Management, and Risk Management Policy and Procedure, Human Resources Policy and Procedures, the Violence Abuse Neglect Exploitation Policy and Procedure, and the Workplace Incidents (including Critical Incidents), Injuries and Accidents Policy and Procedure*).
- In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to children and young people.
- Our complaints system includes risk treatments such as ensuring confidentiality, offering appropriate protections where possible, and addressing the possibility of retaliation against all parties (see the *Client and Community Complaints Policy and Procedure*).

Physical and Online Environments

- Communitify recognises the right of children and young people to privacy, access information, social connections, and learning opportunities through online environments.
- Staff and volunteers use physical and online environments in line with our *Staff Code of Conduct* and our policies on child safety and wellbeing (such as the *Child Safe Code of Conduct and Use of Public Computers and Social Media*).
- When considering phone/video service delivery to children and young people, we will:
 - Assess whether this technology suits the needs and situation of each child and family, taking into account the child's needs, assessment, mode of communication, and any potential risk factors in the home.
 - Obtain consent from children and their families for services to be delivered via phone/video.
 - Establish appropriate oversight and safeguards for any one-on-one contact with children over phone video. For example:
 - Limit one-on-one services to situations in which a parent/carer can be in the room with the child.
 - Clearly scheduling and document any one-on-one contact.
 - Where possible, staff who have one-on-one phone/video contact with children should do so in open, public spaces with clear lines of sight to others, to minimise the risk of inappropriate contact or abuse.
 - Ensure staff do not contact children or young people through their personal phones.
 - Require staff to obtain senior authorisation or include managers in certain communications.
 - Ensure staff know what to do and who to contact if there are concerns about a child or young person's immediate safety or wellbeing.¹
 - Inform staff, children, and families about how we manage safety risks associated with this technology, for example, using a secure video conferencing platform with adequate IT security software.
 - Have a contact person available in case either participant has concerns during the session.
 - Provide clear guidelines for staff about acceptable and unacceptable forms of online/ phone contact with children and young people, and communicate clear consequences for breaches.
- Where we contract other providers to deliver services or facilities, we will make reasonable efforts to ensure that the provider has policies to ensure the safety of children and young people, including ensuring that their staff hold valid Working with Children clearances.

¹ <https://www.esafety.gov.au/key-issues/covid-19/working-alone-children-online>

How policy change happens

This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis. Information that may inform this review includes:

- Employee and volunteer feedback
- Client and stakeholder feedback
- Incidents and complaints
- Changes to legislation or regulations
- Changes from external organisations (e.g. certification bodies or funding bodies)
- Changes in service delivery activities

Our obligations

This policy relates to the following Practice Standards and legislation:

- Child Protection Act 1999
- Failing to Report Sexual Offences Against Children Law July 2021
- Human Services Quality Standards
- ISO 9001:2015
- NDIS Practice Standards
- National Safety and Quality Mental Health Standards for Community Managed Organisations
- National Safety and Quality Digital Mental Health Standards
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)
- Universal Principle and Child Safe Standards
- Human Rights Act 2019

Relevant forms and/or documents

- Activity, Event and Program Risk Assessments (Folio)
- Child Safe Code of Conduct Agreement Form
- Communify Privacy Collection Notice
- Employee Induction Checklists
- Risk Management Register (Folio)
- Working with Communify – Children and Young Person Information Pack
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Related policies and procedures

- 2.00 Privacy Policy
- 2.00.2 Record Retention
- 2.02 Service Equity and Exit
- 2.04 Non-Discriminatory Practices
- 2.04.2 Cultural Awareness
- 2.06 Participation and Choice
- 2.11 Child Protection and Risk Management
- 2.12 Client and Community Complaints
- 2.13 Feedback Processes

- 2.18 Violence, Abuse and Neglect policy
- 2.22 Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
- 2.25 Transporting Clients in Vehicles
- 2.26 Domestic and Family Violence
- 3.06 Risk Management
- 5.00 Code of Conduct
- 5.00.2 Child Safe Code of Conduct
- 5.01 Employee Recruitment and Selection
- 5.03 Workforce Screening
- 5.06 Employee Induction and Orientation
- 5.07 Employee Training and Development
- 5.22.1 Social Media
- 5.22.2 Use of Public Computers
- 5.28 Whistleblowing
- 5.29 Misconduct
- 6.02 Workplace Incidents (including Critical Incidents), Injuries and Accidents

Approval date	September 2025
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