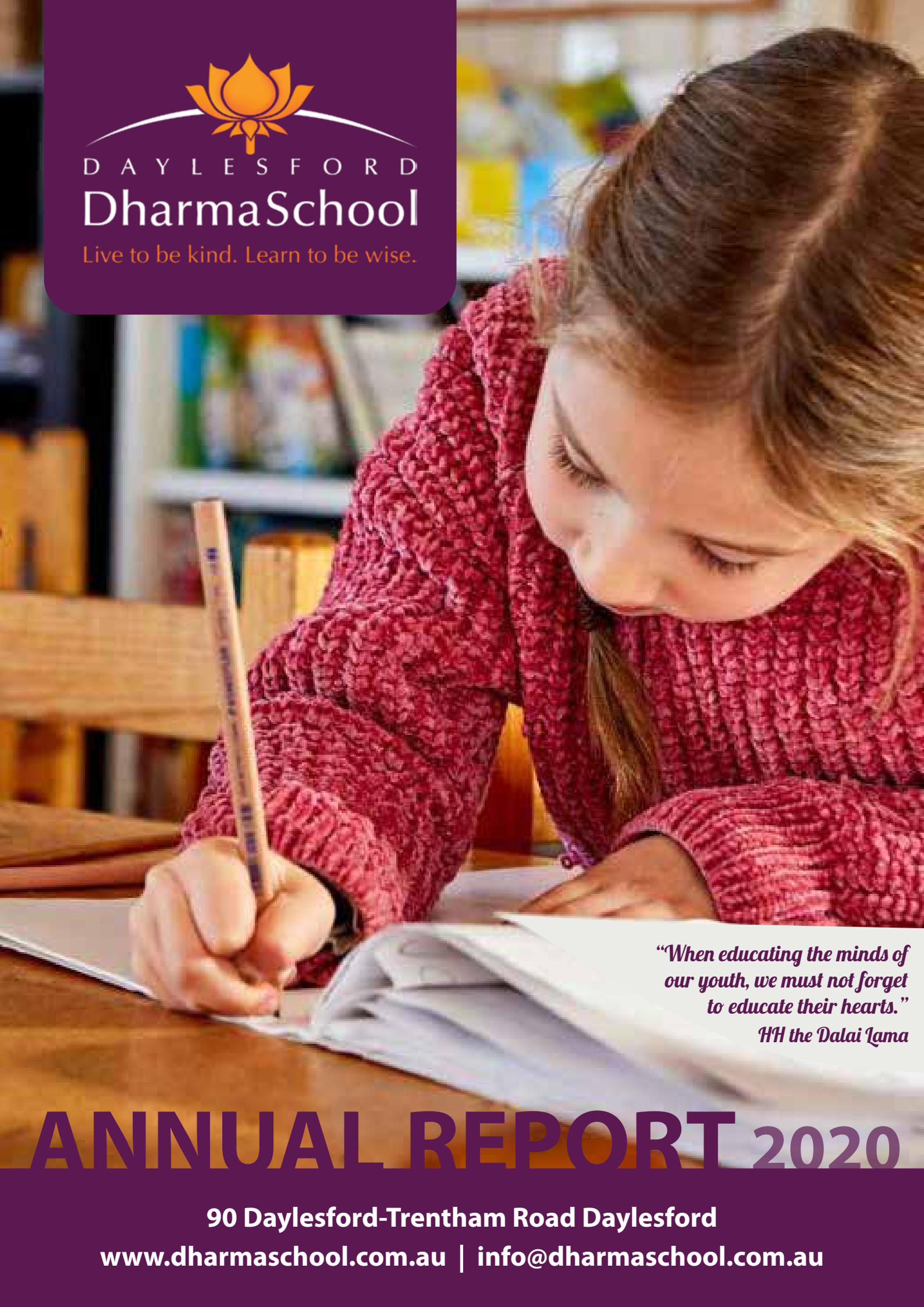




Live to be kind. Learn to be wise.



*“When educating the minds of
our youth, we must not forget
to educate their hearts.”*

HH the Dalai Lama

ANNUAL REPORT 2020

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WELCOME

Our vision is to flourish as a school abiding in the view of compassion, interdependence and universal responsibility, nurturing each child's capacity to grow into kind and wise individuals.

It's hard to know where to begin when reflecting on 2020. It was certainly a year that none of us could have foreseen. We started the year from a place of great enthusiasm and aspiration as we welcomed in new teachers to our community and together started to map out much of what we hoped to bring to our teaching and learning. We were excited to expand our experiential learning and to take children off site to learn in and about our local community. We were excited to deepen our Dharma practices and increase mindful awareness and action within the school.

We were excited to be in our second year in our new school and to be able to truly start to feel at home here. And yet, only a few weeks into the term, we found ourselves facing such unforeseen circumstances as coronavirus began to spread around the globe and we were soon facing our first lockdown. The task of moving a school like ours, that thrives on connection and community and that minimises the use of technology, to remote learning felt quite overwhelming. We considered in depth how we could bring the core essence of who we are into the children's daily lives at home, and set 89% about exploring ways to do this that would be engaging for the children and also minimise demands on parents as they too adjusted their own work practices. This I believe we did very well. Through morning meditations, story times, engaging and interactive art lessons, class times and teacher check ins, we managed to maintain a sense of connection and USERS IN ASIA togetherness. It was also wonderful to see just how a staff team was able to connect, learn about one another and bond together through uncertain times and from within our own little isolation bubbles. I have no doubt that while we would not have chosen this way of existing, we all developed a new appreciation for the role that technology can play in helping sustain connection and community. The year was certainly not without its hardships, and the need for some families to relocate due to changing circumstances meant that we have experienced a decline in our enrolments, and with this a need to re-consider what it means to be a small school in a shifting global economic climate. 2021 is thus a time for us to review our strategic plan and ensure that we sustain a solid foundation from which to regrow as a school deeply committed to our important mission of providing an education that prioritises a sense of universal responsibility and loving-kindness, that teaches children to live with wisdom and compassion, with open minds and open hearts, aware of their own unique capabilities to contribute to making our world a better place for all. We are a school that thrives on community spirit and generosity, and it is each and every member of our community that is at the heart of who we are. My sincere and heartfelt thanks to everyone for your support throughout 2020.

Onward and upward!
With my loving-kindness,
Jen

Chairperson

We are now standing on the other side of a year of unprecedented change and disruption. The year of 2020 challenged family dynamics, community interactions, our relationship to freedom of movement and to be at will to wander in the greater world. It impacted our inner experience of self and life, and of course radically affected our economy. It was a time where we began to practice our new norm, of living with change and disruption. The experience was an imperative to turn within and live our lives on a much-reduced scale. In a way it shared some things in common with the spiritual practice of home-based retreat, albeit an enforced retreat.

This opportunity to turn within and accept change as the new norm, was used as a guide by the Board of Governance to set the scene for the next steps in the school's development. We acted swiftly to create a Covid Action plan to support the school and ensure that our leadership team were able to guide and support our staff with the rolling out of what eventuated as two terms of distance learning. I am grateful and proud of the integrity of our learning programs and how our staff and teaching team supported families through the challenge of lockdowns and home-based schooling. I am very impressed and grateful that we were able to maintain an education program that continued our unique point of difference as experienced leaders in compassion and wisdom education.

The Board has used the journey through 2020 to turn within and enact a program of investigating how our strategic plan will adapt to position itself meaningfully, in a post-Covid community and economy. We were mindful of the challenges that families would face to pay independent school fees, while maintaining an income in a regional setting, and we needed to be prepared and responsive to change. By November we had begun a deep rethink of our Strategic Plan and contracted the services of Claire Spencer from The 108 Collective to facilitate a re-engagement with our Strategic and Marketing Plan, through a program of work and quarterly reviews to refocus the 3 year vision for our school.

We also initiated a long-held intention to convene a Dharma Education Subcommittee comprising honorary Sangha, educational academics with long term dharma practice and research experience, and our Learning Manager. THE BOARD This subcommittee

is a knowledge base and working party to support our teaching staff and leadership team, in how we define our Buddhist philosophy as an investigation for our children in their education setting.

The prolonged lock down of 2020 in Victoria was used as an opportunity for the Board to initiate an upgrade to some of our learning facilities to be more energy efficient and comfortable to work in. It also brought about an act of exceptional generosity from local community business Bell's Water Gardens, who provided gratis to us, a play water feature for our school. They timed its building and landscaping completion for the return of the children to school based learning. 'The creek' is a favourite play and outdoor learning place for the students and a restful contemplation place for our staff. Thank you Bell's Water Gardens!

The generosity and support continues to flow to our school from our ongoing partnerships with the Quang Minh Temple and the Phuoc Hue Temple. We thank them for their kindness and connection with supporting our growth.

Our students are engaged with daily activities of self-reflection and exploration through our Awareness Program and embedded learning, to contemplate that all of reality is impermanent, and that impermanence makes all things possible, because everything will change and can change. In 2020, everything changed, and by its nature, new possibilities will eventually arise. Our school's embracing of this phenomena of impermanence, leads us to turn to the experience of dependent origination, where we know we are part of a limitless connection of interdependence. We can accept that all things assemble, dissipate and reassemble, and that we are part of this. In the same way that our students investigate this each day, the Board of Governance also embraces this view as the foundation of our resilience, our creativity, and enthusiasm for creating a better way of living in the world, that our children can take their place in. This is a key focus for compassion and wisdom education and guides us in how we develop our school and community life.

May you be well, May you be happy.
Andrea Furness
Chairperson
Board of Governance

Notes By The Treasurer

What a financial year the world experienced in 2020. We at the Dharma School had an interesting year as well. We are grateful that we can draw attention to the School's budget surplus of \$109,000 which will support the Dharma School to weather the changes of an unsure and changing post-Covid economy that is impacting the independent school sector.

During the financial year our leadership team made an out of budget request to the Board for more than \$10,000. This was to fund specific student support resources to enrich student education experiences within the classroom setting. This funding is not included in the amount for the Curriculum expenses noted above.

The school benefited from strong donation support from local business Bells Water Gardens who contributed a major water play feature in our playground. During the remote learning period, the Board initiated building improvements and maintenance, major tree planting and garden development to support the schooling experience of our returning students and families. We thank our community of trades people and professional services for continuing to meet deadlines and conduct their work to such a high standard within narrow budgetary margins. We are so grateful to our local community!

You will note that donations in the 2020 financials have declined in comparison to other years. Due to Covid restrictions we could not hold our normal program of fundraising, nor did we wish to burden our school community with new fundraising events, as they managed the newness of home based schooling across 2 terms. Our school qualified for USERS IN ASIA

Jobkeeper funding and so we were able to maintain our staffing structure to support student learning and continue to develop our school facilities. We created a Dharma School Beautification program and managed the works to enable our students to return to on-site learning with enhanced playground and learning facilities and some joyful surprises.

Looking strategically into the next financial period, the school will focus on upgrading its tech equipment and improving its internet service. Our staff have also developed a wish list of education items linked from our website. Any support for these initiatives enables our school to maintain an equitable and accessible fee structure so that our unique compassion and wisdom educational model is available to all families in our community.

Kim L Woodrum
Treasurer
Daylesford Dharma School
Board of Governance
June 2021

INCOME		
FUNDRAISING/DONATIONS	7,837.00	
INTEREST/SUNDRY INCOME	1,730.00	
FEDERAL AND STATE GRANTS	629,221.00	
SCHOOL FEES	121,963.00	
JOBKEEPER & CASH BOOST	350,500.00	
TOTAL INCOME		1,111,251.00
EXPENSES		
CURRICULUM EXPENSES	38,838.00	
DEPRECIATION	102,687.00	
BAD DEBT	6,577.00	
MARKETING AND FUNDRAISING	1,984.00	
INSURANCE	18,706.00	
GENERAL & ADMIN	22,168.00	
WAGES	700,212.00	
PROFESSIONAL FEES	20,988.00	
PROPERTY, BUILDING AND MAINTENANCE	72,129.00	
LOAN INTEREST/LAND	17,795.00	
		1,002,084.00
NET AUDITED		109,167.00

Teachers:

2020 was a challenging year for teachers with lower levels of energy and engagement reported than in previous years, notably as a result of the move between in school and remote learning.

Parents:

Parents were given the opportunity to provide feedback on a 5 point Likert scale in regards to the level of satisfaction with the social, emotional and academic learning, school support and guidance and communications.

The average rating across each of these areas was 4.5/5. Comments made included the following:

I've been incredibly impressed at how staff, parent and students came together to navigate this very trying year. Thankyou!!

The school did a great job responding to the pandemic in a calm, clear, confident, calm and considered manner. The learning from home approach had structure, flexibility, connection and support. Thank you!

Very satisfied. The communications are clear, thoughtful, timely, conversational. Thank you!

Thank you for getting us through this extraordinary year! Amazing! Hats off... You're all amazing!

Additionally, parents were given the opportunity to provide feedback on the Principal's performance across similar areas, also on a 5 point Likert scale, with an average rating of 4.7/5.



Students

Overall, students navigated 2020 and the transitions between remote learning and in school learning exceptionally well. In conversation with parents, much of this was attributed to the engaging and mindfully focussed program that teachers delivered, and notably to the continuation of the morning Awareness program and a range of engaging arts activities.

Due to COVID-19 there was no NAPLAN testing in 2020. During the previous 2019 NAPLAN testing period Year 3 and 5 students performed either At or Above the National Minimum Standards across all testing areas.

Year Level	Year	National Minimum Standard	Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar & Punctuation	Numeracy
Yr 3	2020	NAPLAN TESTING NOT CONDUCTED DUE TO COVID					
Yr 5		NAPLAN TESTING NOT CONDUCTED DUE TO COVID					
Yr 3	2019	Above	67%	100%	100%	67%	100%
		At	33%			33%	
Yr 5	2019	Above	100%		100%	100%	
		At			100%		100%
Yr 3	2018	Above	100%	86%	71%	86%	86%
		At			29%		14%
Yr 5	2018	Above	75%	75%	75%	100%	75%
		At	25%	25%	25%		25%
Yr 3	2017	Above	100%	78%	80%	90%	70%
		At			11%		20%
Yr 5	2017	Above	50%	50%	50%	50%	100%
		At	33%	50%	50%	50%	

In 2020 there was a continuation of a whole school approach to spelling using the Soundwaves program and further development of CAFÉ Literacy as our whole school reading structure. Results from our in school benchmark assessments are tabled below. These results vary given the nature of Remote Learning throughout much of 2020 and a change to the usual teaching and learning program. This may have had an impact on the consistency of the results.

Grade	PM Reading Benchmark (P-3) ACER Probe (4-6)	PAT Maths
Prep	42% at level	Not administered at this level
		Not administered at this level
Grade 1	37% at level	100% at or above level
	37% above level	
Grade 2	14% at level	75% at or above level
	66% above level	
Grade 3	66% at level	50% at or above level
Grade 4	66% above level	75% at or above level
Grade 5	100% at level	100% at level
Grade 6	100% at level	50% at level

Enrolment by Grade	Male	Female	Total in Grade
Prep	5	5	10
Grade 1	6	4	10
Grade 2	1	7	8
Grade 3	3	3	6
Grade 4	0	4	4
Grade 5	1	3	4
Grade 6	2	0	2
Total: 41			

Attendance is monitored three times daily. All absences, latecomers and early leavers are required to inform the school via phone, email or through Compass. Unexplained absences are followed up by class teachers or Administration via phone or email. Attendance rates are reported to parents in student reports and can be viewed at any time in Compass. During remote learning, attendance was measured through student presence in Zoom classes, or via parent email confirming the student was engaging in learning activities each day. Absence rates were higher than previous years due to parents managing work and remote learning.

Year Level	Attendance Rate
Prep	84.24%
Grade 1	89.78%
Grade 2	88.58%
Grade 3	90.98%
Grade 4	87.71%
Grade 5	88.97%
Grade 6	96.23%

Jennifer Willis	Principal	Post Grad Dip Ed, MEd, MBA, MAPP
Tanya Wiggins	Learning Manager	Grad Dip Ed (Primary), MEd,
Jaala Freeman	Chaplain	Cert IV Pastoral Care
Rosie Berenyi-Mansell	Office Administrator	Cert IV in Business Management
Emily Wilden	Classroom Teacher	Master of Teaching (Primary)
Karla Popovic	Classroom Teacher	Bachelor of Education
Christina Halvy	Classroom Teacher	Bachelor of Education
Angelique Downing	Classroom Teacher	Bachelor of Education
Annshar Wolfs	LOTE/HPE	Bachelor of Education
Cameron Frost	Arts	Grad Dip Ed
Selena McVeigh	Learning Support	Certificate in Education Support
Neil Jobson	Learning Support	Certificate in Education Support

All teachers employed at the school have the appropriate registration required by the Victorian Institute of Teachers (VIT). Working with Children checks have been obtained for all other non-teaching staff and volunteers working at the school.

Professional development for 2020 included:

- First Aid, CPR
- Specific training, seminars, workshops and events from approved Educational Training Providers in areas such as supporting students with a range of learning differences, Reggio Emilia approaches and mindfulness and meditation.

Type	Gender	ALL STAFF	
		Headcount	FTE
Principal	Female	1	1.0
Teaching Staff	Male	1	0.2
	Female	6	3.2
Specialist Support	Female	2	0.7
Administrative and Clerical	Female	2	1.4
Total		12	6.5



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