



Newsletter February 2024

St. Michael's Middle School

"Each person, uniquely made in God's image, merits the best we can give"



Dear Parents/Carers,

It has been another very busy half term and we hope that you enjoy reading about all of the activities that have been happening at St. Michael's.

One of the most impactful events was the visit of Bishop Samuel from Yambio in Sudan. He held an inspirational act of worship where he told the school about his life growing up in Sudan and the differences between education in his country and ours.

We found out that in the Sudan, schools have an average of around 120-150 pupils in each class. There are very few teachers in Sudan as pay is around £2 a day and educated people choose other professions. Most classes are taught by older brothers and sisters. He encouraged staff and pupils to be grateful for what they have and not take their education for granted.

He told the pupils that most of the pupils in schools he visits have very little equipment to use in lessons. If they are lucky enough to have a pencil, they often snap in half so that they can share it. We wanted to send Bishop Samuel back with some things that might help the pupils in his home country and we were once again blown away by the generosity shown by our pupils who gave him two full bags of pens, pencils and other items to take back with our love.

It was a very good reminder of what we have and certainly made me reflect on my life and what we have as a school to be so thankful for. I hope that pupils found similar inspiration from his visit.

Have a lovely half term.

Best wishes,

Mr Ayling



St. Michael's Church of England Middle School

Colehill Lane, Wimborne, Dorset. BH21 7AB

Tel: 01202 883433

office@stmichaelsmiddle.org

Headteacher: Mr D. Ayling BSc/Ed (Hons) NPQH NPQEL

Deputy Headteacher: Mr P. Andrews BSc (Hons) PGCE

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Athletics Success!

We were delighted that our Year 6 indoor athletics team recently won the East Dorset championships and will now proceed to represent East Dorset in the county round of the national championships. The championship came down to a very tight finish between us and Allenbourn Middle School with our team just edging ahead to take our first title in 5 years. A great job by all involved!



We have a wide range of extra-curricular clubs taking place this term including two new clubs, triathlon and boxing. We encourage all pupils to get involved in a sports club and the offer changes each term. If you are interested in taking up one of these clubs, please contact the school office to check for places.

Spring Term Sports Clubs

Monday	Triathlon (paid), Girls Football, Handball
Tuesday	Parkour, Year 7/8 Girls Rugby, Swimming (by invite only)
Wednesday	Year 8 Inter-House, Year 7 Football, Year 5/6 Netball
Thursday	Year 7/8 Netball, Year 5/6 Football
Friday	Year 5/6 Rugby, Year 7/8 Rugby, Boxing

Huge congratulations to the Year 7 Football B team who thrashed Allenbourn 7-1 in a friendly fixture in January. All of the team played well together and created lots of opportunities to score, with a couple of goals each for Jake W and Teddy H. It was a great effort from all involved, well done Year 7!



The netball season is in full swing with Leagues and Tournaments having commenced starting with Years 5-7. The commitment and effort has been outstanding both in practice and across all fixtures. We are looking forward to starting the Year 8 fixtures after half term and putting all our skills we have learnt into practice hopefully with successful results. Well done all.



Our Year 8 netball team recently participated in the PEDSSA netball tournament, coming 4th in their group with convincing wins over West Moors Middle, Purbeck Upper School and Ferndown Middle. The pupils represented themselves really well in a tough group with two of the finalists. Well done.

50%+

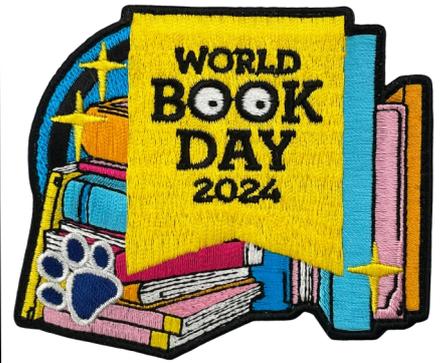
of our pupils do an after school sports club.

Sports News

Continued....

We have had a lot of success in recent football tournaments and below are some of the results.

- The Year 6 boys team lost in the quarter finals of the county cup to Emmanuel to a last-minute goal in additional extra time.
- The Year 8 boys lost in the quarter finals of the County Cup to The Bishop of Winchester Academy in a very close game that went to a penalty shoot-out.
- The Year 7 and Year 8 girls are through to the next rounds of the county cup with wins over Allenbourn Middle and Glenmoor respectively.
- The Year 6 girls team have their regional round-robin tournament on the English Schools Football Association primary cup in Bristol on Saturday 16th March. We wish them the best of luck.



St. Michael's will be celebrating World Book Day on Wednesday 6th March (a day earlier than the official day). The move to a day earlier is because there are very few English lessons on the national date (Thursday 7th March). Full details of the events and activities will be sent out after half-term but we encourage costumes, so get thinking!!

Pupils for Praise

Every Friday, two pupils from each year group are selected to go and see Mr Ayling to receive praise and a reward for their hard work. All the pupils below have been selected since the last newsletter.

Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8
Eva-Bella J	Finley W	Evie P	Molly A
Bethany P	Iris D	Leah J	Matilda C
Oliver S	Zach J	Jacob B	Dylan C
Rhys B		Jake W	Lily Mac N
		Karla La R	Patrick T
		Joseph D	
		Jacob H	
		Calvin C	

Congratulations!



WELCOMING THE BISHOPS TO ST. MICHAELS MIDDLE

We have been extremely lucky during this half term to be given the opportunity for two Bishops, one from Salisbury and the other from Sudan, to visit St. Michael's and talk about their work and Christian mission.



Bishop Stephen visited on Tuesday 30th January and simply being in his presence had a peaceful effect on many of the school community. He explained what his bishop duties involve and brought with him his crozier, mitre and his episcopal ring. He spoke about the importance of us all being uniquely made in God's image and the fact that it is what's inside that counts. He inspired us to go out into the world and be more like Jesus through our actions, speaking out against the injustices in the world and doing what we can to help others. Bishop Stephen reminded us about the power of prayer and what we can accomplish when we all work together.



On Friday we were absolutely inspired by Bishop Samuel who visited from South Sudan; we listened eagerly to what life is like where he lives. We asked everyone to bring in an item of stationery that they would be happy to donate to Bishop Samuel's local school where he told us they have to break a pencil in half to share it, or take turns in using stationery. He was overwhelmed by the amount of stationery that we donated. He reminded us not to take things for granted, to make the most of the opportunities that we have, to learn well and become responsible leaders. Bishop Samuel then spent some time with a group of pupils who were keen to ask him more questions. He had some great stories to share, which the pupils will enjoy relaying to their peers. We hope to establish a close link with Bishop Samuel's local school... watch this space!



YOUR HEALTH MATTERS DAY

Our 'Your Health Matters' days are days when whole year groups come off timetable and look at a particular PSHCE issue in more depth. Our most recent day was held in January and details of the events can be found below.

YEAR 5

Wellbeing Day

Pupils in Year 5 spent the day looking at various ways that you can keep yourself well, whether mentally, physically or emotionally. They did some activities such as mindful movement, mindful art, used our outside areas to do Forest School type activities such as using fire and drums. They also looked how a person have differing emotions and how to help themselves feel calmer when anxious.



YEAR 6

Recycling Materials Day

Year 6 used the day to look at activities based around how we can better care for our planet and reduce the amount we throw away by recycling. Part of their day was to use recycled materials to create a model of something whilst in another activity they used the recycled materials to create a response to the theme for collective worship.



YOUR HEALTH MATTERS DAY

YEAR 7

Wellbeing Day

Year 7 had a day focusing on careers and looking at what they may be interested in as a future career. The main event of the day was pupils having a chance to meet a range of professionals who told them about their jobs and the routes they took in education and training to arrive at that career. A huge thank to the parents, staff and our local vicar Suzanne for giving up their time to make this event such a big success. Pupils also had time to look at budgets and how financial packages such as mortgages work.



YEAR 8

Democracy Day

Pupils in Year 8 had a day looking the political processes that exist in our country and the different political parties that take part in elections. Pupils then had to create their own political party, run a campaign and have elections to vote on who the year group thought did the best job in selecting and presenting their ideas. Well done to the Red Bull Revolution Party who were elected and for Brooke Harrald in being voted our new Prime Minister.



A big thank you to all of the staff for their efforts in staging this day.

Staffing Update

We are very sad to be saying goodbye to one of our teaching assistants, Mrs Oldham, who will be leaving the school shortly after half term. She is taking up a new position with Beacroft School and we want to wish her the very best for the future.

We are delighted to welcome a number of new staff to the school. Miss Joyce will be joining the school as a teaching assistant and working in classes across the whole school whilst Mr Barham has joined us as a supply teacher and is working with class 5S during Mr Smart's absence. We extend a warm welcome to them both.

Lastly, we are sad to say goodbye to Mrs Cummins who has been working with class 5M following the departure of Mr Montecute. We thank her for all of her hard work and wish her all the best for her new job.

DON'T

FORGET

The dates for the Year 6 SATS tests are:

Monday 13 May—Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar

Tuesday 14 May—Reading Paper

Wednesday 15 May—Maths Arithmetic and Maths Reasoning

Thursday 16 May—Maths Reasoning

Please try to avoid any planned absences during this week, especially if your child is in Year 6.

House Point Totals

Here are the final house point totals for the year. Pupils earn 'ePraise' points and these are added together to make their house point totals.

Hanham

Bankes

Gulliver

Paget

26,151

25,047

25,597

25,881

You can check your child's ePraise points total by going to www.epraise.co.uk and logging into the parents page.

These are the five students with the most house points in each house - well done!

Oliver H (272)

Eva-Bella J (277)

Oliver S (260)

Charlotte F (288)

Annie B (261)

Freddie H (277)

Edward F (255)

Heidi C (270)

Lily S (256)

Mpho M (261)

Roseanna L (250)

Constance H (256)

Rachel K (256)

Alexander B (236)

Oscar M (250)

Hetty R (251)

Freya W (255)

Alyssa C (230)

Olivia A (245)

Felicity B (246)

Pupils for Praise

Every Friday, two pupils from each year group are selected to go and see Mr Ayling to receive praise and a reward for their hard work. All the pupils below have been selected since the last newsletter.

Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8
Lydie S	Fahren A	Joshua B	Freddie D
Esme W	Cassius N	Delilah G	Archie S
Annabelle B	Amelia B	Harry R	Samuel S
Alfie H	Alfie C	Dougie W	Brigit N
Oscar M	Charlie S	Matilda P	
Ronnie S		Sidney B	
Jesse M		Bethany T	
Jess L		Ted W	
Roseanna L			
Sophia H			

Congratulations!

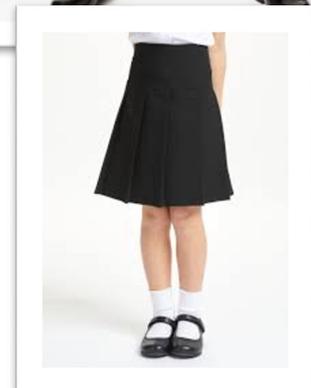


Staff are finding that we are increasingly needing to have conversations with girls, particularly in Years 7 and 8, regarding the length of their skirts. The vast majority of these are due to skirts being rolled-up and not worn as intended.

The school has a very clear uniform policy and this states that 'Skirts are to be worn without being altered or rolled up and should finish just above or on the knee (suitable to sit on a floor or stool or for light physical activity)'.

Pupils who repeatably choose not to follow this rule will be treated as being defiant and sanctioned accordingly in line with our school policy for poor behaviour.

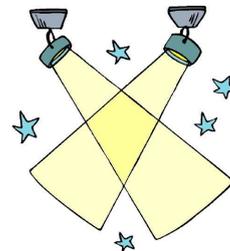
The uniform policy applies to all pupils and, by coming to this school, pupils are expected to follow it. We appreciate your support in backing up the school when sanctions are issued and for ensuring that your child arrives at school each morning dressed appropriately.





Pupil Spotlight

Jamie Currie



Jamie is a pupils in year 7 with a special talent for Motocross. He is currently involved in the Arenacross UK tour travelling all over the country to compete. He had a fantastic first round at the Manchester Arena, coming 1st overall, and is building towards an appearance at Wembley later this month. He is drawing the attention of some of the big names in Motocross and we all wish him continued success. If you want to see Jamie in action, look for his interview on YouTube 'Catching Up with Jamie Currie—Birmingham Arenacross DR7'.

St. Michael's Middle School presents



Layard Theatre, Canford School

Tuesday 26th March 2024

Wednesday 27th March 2024

Thursday 28th March 2024

[Tickets on sale soon!](#)



UPCOMING IMPORTANT DATES

Monday 12th February	Half Term starts
Friday 17th February	Half Term ends
Monday 19th February	INSET Day (school closed to pupils)
Tuesday 27th February	School Choir Performing at Hayeswood and Colehill First Schools
Tuesday 27th February	Subject based parents evening (in school)
Friday 8th March	Year 8 Apprenticeship Awareness Assembly
Monday 11th March— Friday 15th March	Year 5 Easter Experience at Wimborne Minster (one class each day)
Wednesday 13th March	Subject based parents evening (online)
Monday 25th March	All day Peter Pan rehearsal at Layard Theatre
Tuesday 26th March	Peter Pan Performance Night 1
Wednesday 27th March	Peter Pan Performance Night 2
Thursday 28th March	Peter Pan Performance Night 3
Thursday 28th March	INSET Day (school closed to pupils)
Friday 29th March	Easter Holidays start
Monday 15th April	Pupils return to school
Tuesday 23rd April	Year 8 Visit to Bournemouth University
Wednesday 24th April	Year 8 Visit to Bournemouth University
Wednesday 8th May	Year 8 Trip to Paultons Park
Thursday 9th May	Year 8 Chelsea's Choice PSHCE Production
Monday 13th May— Thursday 16th May	Year 6 SATS Week (See the order in the main newsletter)
Monday 13th May— Friday 17th May	Year 7 Holme Park Residential Visit / Activity Week for Year 7 in school
Monday 27th May	Half Term starts
Friday 31st May	Half Term Ends

SMARTPHONE SAFETY TIPS

for young people

7

You may have been lucky enough to have unwrapped a smartphone at Christmas, or you might be eagerly anticipating getting a new one at some point during this year. Whether it'll be your first ever phone or an upgrade on your old model, it's always useful to have a refresher about how to set it up and adjust the settings to keep yourself – and your valuable personal info – safe and secure. We've collected some expert tips to help you enjoy your smartphone in the healthiest way possible.

NEVER SHARE YOUR PASSCODE

Alongside face or fingerprint recognition, your passcode is crucial to unlocking your phone and accessing your apps and personal information. You shouldn't give it out, even to close friends – after all, you wouldn't hand them a key to your house and let them go in for a nosy around! If a friend wants to use your phone, ask them why and make sure you can see what they're doing with it.

RESPECT PARENTAL CONTROLS

If you're allowed to have a smartphone, it's because your parents or carers feel that you're mature and responsible enough to use it safely. They might set controls and boundaries on your device – not to spoil your fun but to help you avoid hazards like too much screen time or costly in-app purchases. Following these rules means you can enjoy using your phone while respecting their wishes.

TALK TO A TRUSTED ADULT

Whether it's to listen to music, play games, create content or chat with friends, using a smartphone should be fun. If you're ever feeling anxious, worried or scared about going on your phone, then something isn't right. It's important not to ignore these feelings; instead, talk to a trusted adult about what's happening and how it's making you feel.

STAY ALERT

Two words: look up. It might sound obvious, but it's so easy to get immersed in what we're looking at or listening to on our phones that we can become unaware of our surroundings – or who might be around us. People often walk with their head down, focusing on their phone, and forget to check for obstacles in their path, cars or other pedestrians coming towards them, which is clearly dangerous.

DEVELOP HEALTHY HABITS

Phones offer a vast amount of content and the chance to chat with friends whenever we feel like it, which can make it difficult to take time away from the screen. If that's something you struggle with, you could try setting time limits on certain apps. Putting our phones down for a while gives us more time to interact with others or do something physical that helps keep us fit and healthy.

IGNORE UNKNOWN NUMBERS

There are some scammers who might call or text asking you to share personal data or to click on a link and provide your details. Some may claim to be from a genuine company, but trustworthy businesses don't spontaneously call or message to ask for your information. It's safest to ignore calls or texts from unknown numbers, and never give your personal details out over the phone.

ONLY USE AGE-APPROPRIATE APPS

Before downloading a new app or game, check what age rating it has. Don't feel pressured into getting a particular game or app just because your friends are using it. If it's intended for older people, there's a definite risk that it could include content (which is violent or frightening, for instance) or language which isn't suitable and may leave you feeling upset or disturbed.

REMOVE TEMPTATION

A good night's sleep is so important for concentration, mood and overall health. Unwinding properly before going to bed – which means not staring at a screen late at night – can often improve sleep quality. Put your phone on charge overnight, but not in your room. This means you'll have a lot less temptation to check any notifications, reply to messages or get caught up scrolling on social media.

THINK ABOUT OTHERS

Watching videos, listening to music or calling someone can all help to pass the time while we're on the bus, waiting in a queue or walking down the street. It's important to remain mindful of other people, though: they might not want to hear your tunes or your conversation. Likewise, if you're calling from a public place then don't forget that anyone could overhear something personal about you.

SWITCH OFF GEOLOCATION

In your phone's settings, you'll be able to disable geolocation for individual apps and photos: this means that people online (including strangers) can't see information about where you are when you share or post a pic. On the subject of images, it's also important to ask permission before taking or sharing a photo of someone – and don't share embarrassing images of your friends with others.

Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety policies for schools. She has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian government comparing internet use and sexting behaviour of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.



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What Children & Young People Need to Know about

FREE VS SPEECH

HATE SPEECH

Everyone in the UK has the right of "freedom of expression". That's the right to voice your opinions and share information and ideas with others. It's not the right to say whatever you want without regard for others' feelings and values. We all have a responsibility to use this right properly: being respectful and inclusive to others. Whether online or offline, communication attacking or discriminating against groups or individuals (because of protected characteristics like race or religion) is hate speech, not free speech.

Free speech is a person's legal right to share information, opinions and ideas without fear of retaliation, censorship or legal consequences. This freedom of expression is recognised in international human rights legislation, and here's what it does for us in our day-to-day lives ...

The Human Rights Act 1988 states that everyone has the right to express themselves freely – even if their views are unpopular and might offend others.

Freedom of expression encourages listening to others and allowing opposing views to be heard. It's important to respect someone's opinion, even if we disagree with it. Free speech lets us engage in meaningful discussions with people who feel differently.

Any concept could potentially offend someone. Galileo's ideas were incredibly offensive to many at the time, while not everyone agrees with Darwin's theory today. Freely exchanging ideas promotes progress.

Free speech allows us to engage people we disagree with in a debate. The ability to challenge others' views is healthy – while having ours challenged helps us learn how to deal with criticism and think deeply about what we say and believe.

Free speech is a powerful tool for change, justice and reform. Many modern UK rights – such as women being allowed to vote or decent working conditions – couldn't have been achieved without it.

Freedom of expression includes the right not to do something, like not standing up for – or singing – the national anthem. Even though some people would find that offensive, it isn't illegal.

Hate speech refers to any communication – like talking, texting or posting online – which displays prejudice against someone's identity. Derogatory, demonising and dehumanising statements, threats, identity-based insults, offensive name-calling and slurs would all count as hate speech. Here are some common forms it takes ...

Targeting people or groups because of who they are – including but not limited to aspects such as race, sexuality, religion or a disability – and verbally abusing them with slurs and name-calling. The Equality Act 2010 has more information on this.

Content that dehumanises people based on those same attributes; referring to them as if they were animals, objects or other non-human entities, for example.

Calling for violence or hatred against certain people or groups and justifying and glorifying those actions.

Claiming that specific types of people are physically, mentally or morally inferior (or even that they are criminals) to encourage others to view them in the same way.

Making up or repeating insults about a person or group because something about their identity is different to the person who's posting.

Promoting the segregation of certain groups, or discrimination against them, because of who they are.

Meet Our Expert

The Global Equality Collective is an online community for homes, schools and businesses, a collective of hundreds of subject matter experts in diversity, equality and inclusion, and the organisation behind the GEC app, the world's first app for diversity, equality and inclusion.

GLOBAL
EQUALITY
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Source: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1988/42/schedule/1/13/text-1/Everyone%20has%20the%20right%20to%20freedom%20of%20expression>

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about PERSUASIVE DESIGN ONLINE

'Persuasive design' refers to the techniques that companies employ to influence our thoughts and behaviours when we're on the internet. These approaches can be spotted on websites, in apps and even as part of some video games. Persuasive design means that this content has been deliberately presented in a way that's intended to encourage you to spend your time or money (or both). These methods often prove highly effective at keeping people engaged and invested for longer than we might expect.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

POTENTIAL ADDICTION

In the digital world, persuasive design can make certain activities more addictive and harder to walk away from: some people may begin to feel anxious or irritated without access to their device or their favourite app, for example. It can also often leave users feeling isolated, as – if they spend most of their time on social media – they may start to find it difficult to talk to other people in real life.

MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS

Scrolling online or gaming without regular breaks is proven to be harmful to our mental health. The constant bombardment of news stories (many of them negative), images and influencers' posts can create sensations of unease, uncertainty and FOMO (fear of missing out). Young people can get so immersed in this environment that they become less likely to spot misleading posts.

PROLONGED SCROLLING

Social media can draw any of us – regardless of age – into a continuous pattern of refreshing our screen, following posts and links down rabbit holes or reading countless comments made by others. This aimless scrolling can eat up time which could have been spent on more productive activities. It could also lead younger users into areas of the online world which aren't age appropriate.

SENSORY OVERLOAD

Repetitively scrolling, clicking on links or playing games can create an unending stream of new information and visual stimuli. Put it this way: social media isn't exactly renowned as a carefree, chilled-out environment. Such overstimulation can become too much for young people to handle, resulting in sensory overload and causing them to feel stressed, overwhelmed and exhausted.

COSTLY ADDITIONS

Video games sometimes display offers for downloadable content or loot boxes which can be bought with real money. While these 'microtransactions' temptingly promise to improve a player's gaming experience, most of the time they are money sinks. Young people in particular, excited by the chance of enhancing their game, could spend quite a sizeable sum very quickly indeed.

PHYSICAL CONSEQUENCES

Hours spent sitting and scrolling means far less time moving around and getting exercise: hardly ideal for a young person's physical health. Additionally, prolonged exposure to the light given off by a phone's screen can lead to eye fatigue and discomfort, especially if viewing it in the dark. Extended phone use before bed can also impact on sleep quality, affecting mood and energy levels over the following days.

Advice for Parents & Carers

ESTABLISH LIMITS

Talk to your child about setting some time limits on how long they can use their phone, tablet or console in the evenings or at weekends – or perhaps how often they can go on a specific app, game or website. You could also decide to involve the whole family in creating this shared screen time agreement, making things fair (and healthier) for everyone.

NIX NOTIFICATIONS

Stop knee-jerk responses at the source by turning off push notifications and alerts. Whether it's a gaming notification or a social media update, these not-so-gentle reminders are designed to catch our attention and lure us back to our device. Switching them off – or even deleting any particularly intrusive apps – can help prevent your child from being reeled back into the online world.

ENCOURAGE MINDFULNESS

Acknowledging any addiction is key in overcoming it – and compulsive scrolling is no different. If anything mentioned in this guide sounds familiar, it could help to have an honest, open chat with your child about how much time they spend online. Get them to think about how often they scroll through social media aimlessly or habitually open it up whenever they have a spare moment.

MAKE A CHECKLIST

Considering a list of relevant questions can be an effective way of helping children figure out why they're scrolling on certain sites or consuming particular pieces of content. A checklist can prompt young people to ask themselves if they're learning anything or benefiting from this activity – or if they're wasting their time. Taking a step back can sometimes help us to see things more clearly.

Meet Our Expert

Rebecca Jennings has more than 20 years' experience in the field of relationships, sex and health education (RSHE). As well as delivering workshops and training for young people, parents and schools, she is also a subject matter expert on RSHE for the Department of Education.



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