



**CURRICULUM
OVERVIEW
2018 – 2019**

**Our handbook helps our community
understand how AISC operates**



Mission Statement

The American International School in Cyprus inspires students to become enthusiastic life-long learners who value integrity, cultural diversity, and the pursuit of excellence. Using an American and international curriculum, our qualified professionals work with the school community to prepare students to be creative, critical thinkers, and socially responsible world citizens.

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AISC BELIEF STATEMENTS

We believe that:

- Everyone must be valued as a unique individual
- Everyone deserves an education, which respects his or her differences
- Understanding and appreciation of diversity and critical to peace and harmony
- The development of all aspects of the individual is essential
- Critical thinking and problem solving are vital in a changing world
- Participation in activities and service learning fosters a sense of self-worth, community, and school ethos
- Technology must be an integral part of the education process
- Learning must be a life-long process for everyone
- Everyone is entitled to have his/her opinion heard and considered
- Everyone has a right to safety, love, and learning

AN INTRODUCTION TO KG3/KG4

KG3/KG4 is a year of growth and discovery for the children physically, socially, intellectually and personally. They discover that they are capable of many new things. During this important time, children's physical development is influenced by their ability to control their own bodies through movement and by their physical well-being and strength. They can kick a ball harder, balance block constructions better and manage more of their personal needs. Teachers help the children to use these skills and to develop respect for themselves and others. As they learn about being a member of the classroom community, the children build cooperation skills. Teachers encourage them to use "words" when asking for help instead of reacting in a physical way when interacting with each other. Teachers model how to resolve conflicts and make compromises. The KG3/KG4 program helps children to become risk takers by providing a comfortable environment for them to explore and experiment with new materials and concepts. Daily routines are introduced to students and provide a consistent and safe environment from which the children can assume responsibilities such as washing their hands, setting up their own snacks and cleaning up after themselves. We highly encourage independence.

The KG3/KG4 program includes

- Blocks
- Drawing Activities
- Art Activities
- Dramatic Activities
- Small and Gross Motor Activities
- Music Activities
- Sand/Water Table Activities
- Cooking Projects
- Circle Time
- Science and Social studies integrated projects involving interests of the children
- Pre-literacy and numeric skills and exposure to print and story
- Phonetic awareness
- Utilizing appropriate software in the classroom to enhance grade level curriculum

ACADEMIC AND BEHAVIOURAL EXPECTATIONS

The American International School in Cyprus' code of behavior for elementary students centers on the three 'B's. At the start of each school year, the children explore the three 'B's with their classroom community and identify their importance whether on a school bus, at Big Toy, in the cafeteria, or in the classroom.

The three 'B's are:

- Be Respectful
- Be Kind
- Be Responsible

Each child has the right to be treated fairly and with respect. Students who attend AISC are expected to:

- Be honest and trustworthy
- Respect the rights, beliefs, and attitudes of others
- Respect school property and property belonging to others
- Come to school prepared to work
- Complete homework and class assignments to the best of his/her ability
- Be regular and punctual in attendance

The AISC Human Rights Policy forms the foundation for respectful interactions in every classroom, workplace and play area across the school. This is the elementary school version of the policy.

AISC HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY The 7 Rights & Freedoms of students as AISC

1 I have the right to be myself

2 I have the right to be free from name calling or physical harassment

3 I have the right to feel proud of what makes me different

4 I have the right to my privacy

5 I have the right to learn, make mistakes without embarrassment and be proud of my success

6 I have the right to my own opinion and the right to agree or disagree with others respectfully

7 I have the right to feel safe at school



ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

The primary purpose of assessment and evaluation is to improve student learning. Information gathered through assessment helps teachers to determine students' strengths and areas for growth in the achievement of expectations in each subject in each grade.

Assessment is the process of gathering information from a variety of sources (including assignments, day-to-day observations, conversations or conferences, demonstrations, projects and performances), that accurately reflect how well a student is achieving the expectations in a subject.



In Kindergarten, the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) is used to monitor and assess acquisition of early literacy skills.

BEGINNING OF THE YEAR

Each child is unique and needs different levels of support and time in settling in at the start of the school year. For some students, it can take only one to two days to settle, while others can take up to a month. Our Kindergarten teachers recognize the importance of allowing ample time for each child to bond with the teachers and his/her peers. To ensure a smooth transition, during the first two weeks of the school year, we will create a special schedule where KG3/KG4 Kindergarteners can gradually and smoothly adjust to the new setting and eventually to their full day schedule. Parents will be asked to join their children in the classroom for a few activities in the morning the first days of school. During those first days, it is important that your child knows that his/her parents are nearby. Parents are welcome wait in the cafeteria until your child feels secure at school. We are continuously reassuring the children, and would like our parents to be our partners in this transition. Parents are welcome in the classroom and there are many opportunities during the year for parents to take an active part in the kindergarten program.

HOMEWORK

Homework in the elementary grades reinforces learning at home and provides parents with an opportunity to talk to their children about what they are doing in school each day. The purpose of homework is to support the learning of skills and concepts that have been taught in the classroom, to establish habits in organization and responsibility, and to develop a love for reading and learning. At the same time, we recognize that elementary-aged children need to be allowed time for play and relaxation, socializing with peers, and engaging in sports and other activities which facilitate a healthy and balanced lifestyle.

The KG3/KG4 homework routine includes the following:

- Daily reading with parents - 10 minutes per day
- Weekly home practice packet, including educational games and fine motor practice activities

Overall: KG3/KG4 students should expect no more than 10 minutes of homework + 10 minutes of reading with an adult helper

How Parents Can Help their Children in KG3/4

- Minimize distractions, including tv, music, and internet. For expert advice on limiting screen time, especially at this young age, please refer to the [American Association of Pediatrics](#), and [Common Sense Media](#).
- Spend quality time with your child each night.
- Listen to your child read to you or read aloud to your child.
- Be supportive and available to your child, always encouraging them to do try their very best.
- Remind them that it's ok to make mistakes.
- Communicate regularly with your child's teacher.
- Attend the Director's Coffee Mornings at AISC in order to receive information about our curriculum, communication procedures, counselling program, and assessment practices.

PARENT/TEACHER COMMUNICATION

At AISC, we believe that regular and consistent communication between home and school is vital to student success. Parents are encouraged to email teachers anytime or to schedule an appointment to speak in person. While AISC has an open-door policy, to be sure you receive the attention and time you require, it is best you book an appointment ahead of time.

When parents have a question or concern regarding a school issue, the person or persons most directly associated with the concern involving the welfare of an individual student should be most directly involved with its response. When a concern arises, we believe concerns and problems are best solved at the level where they occur. Thus, we ask parents and students to first speak with those involved to seek solutions. If at that level concerns are not resolved, the School Counselor, Principal or Director, are happy to assist in a problem-solving and guidance-oriented approach.

AISC communication occurs in a variety of ways. As an elementary parent, be sure to read the weekly newsletter sent out by the classroom teacher every Monday. Each week the newsletter will highlight the concepts and keys skills covered in our instructional units as well as dates for upcoming events and other important announcements.

Additional means of communication include:

- **Conference Days** are scheduled each year to ensure that parents have regular contact with their child's teachers.
- **Open House** is held at the start of each school year. This is an opportunity for parents and students to meet their teachers and visit their classrooms.
- **Curriculum Evening** is held each fall. Parents are invited to come in to meet their child's teachers and receive information about the curriculum expectations and other information about the school.
- **Weekly Director's Coffee Mornings** are hosted each week in the library. Each meeting is dedicated to a specific grade level. Topics of discussion may include school programming, educational issues, and current educational research affecting specific grade levels. Topics are communicated in advance by email and in the Islander Newsletter.
- **Special Information Meetings** are held throughout the school year to provide information to special sections of our school community.
- **The Islander Weekly Newsletter** contains important information and notices of upcoming events at the school. The Islander is the main channel of communication and is updated on the AISC website and is emailed home each week.
- **The AISC Website** is regularly updated with news, events, policy handbooks, educational programs, and a variety of other important information, www.aisc.ac.cy.

DAILY ROUTINE

Classes begin daily at 8:05 am. Getting to school on time is important for students of all ages. Children require a few minutes in the morning to organize themselves for the school day. Coming to school late may result in a confused and disorganized start that may be felt for the entire day. Parents who drive their children to school must ensure that their children arrive on time. While we understand that there may be rare times when tardiness cannot be avoided, we expect that all children will arrive ahead of the 8:05 am start time each day. Students are dismissed daily at 3:05 pm except on Wednesdays when classes end at 2:05 pm to allow for faculty meetings.

The following class periods are based on a 10-day cycle:

MORNING MEETING	DAILY
LITERACY	DAILY
MATHEMATICS	DAILY
SOCIAL STUDIES/SCIENCE	6 TIMES
MUSIC	4 TIMES
LIBRARY	2 TIMES
PHYSICAL EDUCATION	6 TIMES
ART	4 TIMES
MIND UP/ COUNSELLING PROGRAM	2 TIMES

FIELD TRIPS

AISC schedules field trips to supplement and enhance the educational program. Students are expected to participate in field trips unless they are ill. Parent chaperones may be requested to provide adequate supervision of students on field trips. The school will determine the cost for transportation and any fees, and notify parents in advance. Students will dress in school uniform on field trips unless notified otherwise.

KG3/KG4 field trips may include visits to:

- Cultural heritage sites
- Local Museums
- A Farm
- Local parks
- A bike shop
- A Local Market
- The Fire Station
- The Beach
- The Dentist
- The Bakery



SERVICE LEARNING

AISC has a tradition of community service which has been extended into a service learning concept. The intent is for service projects to come as a natural extension of the curriculum. These are student-centered activities where planning, action, reflection, and demonstration are all a part of the learning cycle.

Each student from Kindergarten through Grade 5 is a participant in service learning. It is through these activities that staff, students, and parents work together to experience the concept of service which we hope will continue throughout their futures.

Some of the service learning activities for the elementary may include:

- Beach clean-up
- Troodos nature walk and clean-up of nature trail
- Visit to a nursing home

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

The Common Core and Virginia State Standards, as well as the curriculum maps for all subjects, can be found on the Atlas Rubicon [website](#). (Login password: inspire)

LITERACY

Literacy development is a significant focus at the KG3/KG4 level because children are learning to express themselves through words and sentences. The program provides direct and exploratory instruction in reading, writing, speaking, listening, phonics, and handwriting all at the child's stage of development. We are aiming to meet the needs of the students. A Balanced Literacy Approach is implemented to ensure that whole group instruction in literacy includes modeled, shared and guided instruction. Interactive writing is used to engage students in the writing process and conferences are regularly scheduled to work with students collaboratively. Even at this young age we model connection-making, help students make predictions, and develop their comprehension strategies. Phonics is an important part of the curriculum and is taught both explicitly and implicitly.



We follow the Jolly Phonics Program where children learn the sounds of the letters through songs, movement, puppets, games, cards and Big Books. It is a multisensory program and students of a very young age are actively involved and learn to read small words quickly. Creativity is highly regarded, and it is understood that children develop at their own individual rates. We differentiate our program based on need and ability and strive to meet individual needs. We challenge students who are already reading, and support students who are still at an emergent level.

KG3/KG4 literacy activities may include:

- Songs
- Rhymes
- Short Plays
- Books and other environmental print
- Oral language activities and experiences
- Teacher modeling correct language use, reading comprehension strategies and writing

A balanced literacy approach is used to teach reading and writing in a developmentally appropriate way.

READING

There are various stages KG3/KG4 students pass through as they learn to read. AISC differentiates instruction to meet the needs of all students in their Kindergarten years. Access to leveled books and instruction in small reading groups facilitate a differentiated approach. However, by the end of KG3/KG4 our goal is for students to be able to:

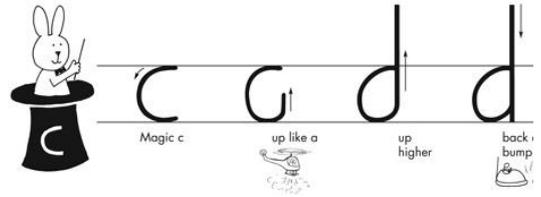
- Understand that print contains a meaningful message
- Use the Jolly Phonics Program to sound out and read words
- Demonstrate an understanding of concepts about print
- Imitate reading-like behaviors
- Reproduce language patterns orally from familiar books or texts
- Show the front and back of books and understand left – right directionality
- Use illustrations and prior experience to help predict and bring meaning to text
- Take on the role of characters in a story
- Imitate actions and sounds of characters
- Act out the story to understand the sequence
- Practice all the sounds and the names of the letters
- Be exposed to short picture books with sight words
- Begin to use the 8 Comprehension Strategies (Questioning, Prior Knowledge, Visualizing, Summarizing, Making Connections, Evaluating, Synthesizing, Inferring)



WRITING/HANDWRITING

By the end of KG3/KG4, students will be able to make basic handwriting strokes, trace letters and print his/her own name. All KG3/KG4 students will:

- Draw zigzag, curvy and straight lines
- Use pictures, scribbles, symbols and letters to communicate a message
- Understand that pictures symbolize speech
- Practice sound out words
- Be encouraged to use "inventive spelling" to describe their pictures
- Know how to write their first name
- Practice writing all letters of the alphabet and short words
- Practice printing numerals 1 to 10



SPEAKING & LISTENING

By the end of KG3/KG4, students will:

- Follow 1, 2, and 3-step instructions
- Respond appropriately to a speaker
- Recognize beginning and ending consonant sounds
- Contribute to class discussions
- Recite songs from memory
- Interpret pictures using expressive language
- Tell about events using simple sequence
- Contribute responses to a reading selection
- Use appropriate language to express needs



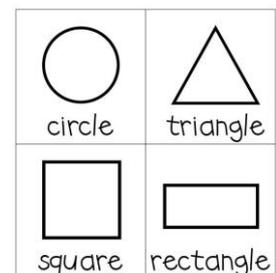
MATH

Math learning in the 21st century is comprised by creativity, rich collaborative tasks, the use of mathematical tools, critical thinking, and problem solving. In addition to using a variety of open source instructional materials, AISC teachers are guided by the following documents to inform instruction and develop learning experiences in math:

- Common Core State Standards of Learning
- National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) Focal Points.
- K-8 Progressions and Critical Areas by Erma Anderson, Math and Science Education Consultant
- The 8 Common Core Standards for Mathematical Practice

The 8 Standards for Mathematical Practice include:

1. Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.
2. Reason abstractly and quantitatively.
3. Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.
4. Model with mathematics.
5. Use appropriate tools strategically.
6. Attend to precision.
7. Look for and make use of structure.
8. Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning.



In KG4, instructional time in math focuses on 2 critical areas:

1. Developing an understanding of whole numbers to 10, including concepts of one-to-one correspondence, counting, cardinality (the number of items in a set), and comparison.
2. Recognizing two-dimensional shapes, describing spatial relationships, and sorting objects by one or more attributes. Relatively, more learning time is devoted to developing children's sense of number as quantity than to other mathematical topics.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Pre-school is a special time for social-emotional development. Children are learning how to make friends and form relationships and they are learning to become independent people. KG3/KG4 students are being exposed to a number of concepts and skills in their first years of school. Although the following list is not expected to be mastered by the end of KG3/KG4, it is a preparation year for the next level in KG5. The following social concepts & skills are developed in KG3/KG4:

- Show an individual awareness of self as a member of the family and community
- Play and work cooperatively
- Respect self, others and the environment
- Share and take turns
- Seek appropriate amount of adult attention
- Follow classroom rules
- Accept roles of leader and follower
- Display self-control
- Accept responsibility for behavior and work
- Make good decisions
- Show an awareness of different cultures



SOCIAL STUDIES

Each year the KG3/KG4 program plans and selects from the following themes within our social studies units:

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| • All About Me | • Thanksgiving Celebration |
| • My Family | • People and Languages Around the World |
| • My Friends | • Transportation |
| • Halloween Celebration | • Cyprus |
| • Feelings | |

SCIENCE

In Science, students will be collaborating in many small group experiments, as well as independent studies to facilitate learning, observing, discovering, experimenting and wondering about science concepts. Our hands-on, inquiry-based science program is enhanced by the *Engineering is Elementary Curriculum*, which encourages children to apply what they know about science and math to real-world learning experiences. Each year the KG3/KG4 program plans and selects from the following themes within our science units:

- Body Parts
- Five Senses
- Health and Hygiene
- Animals
- Food Pyramid
- Life Cycles
- Ocean Life
- Water Cycle

By the end of KG3/KG4, students will be expected develop skills in:

- Posing simple questions
- Measuring
- Sorting
- Classifying
- Communicating information about the natural world

Our School Garden

Our preschoolers love to plant, pull weeds, harvest, and eat the produce that comes from our organic raised-bed vegetable garden! They have the opportunity to see the life cycle of a plant from seed to harvest to table.



Science Fair

KG3/KG4 students are also expected to participate in the Annual AISC Science Fair by preparing one classroom experiment and presenting it to the AISC Community. Students prepare for their science fair experiment while being exposed to the scientific method of developing and testing a hypothesis, collecting information through observation of their experiments, and forming a conclusion.

ART

KG3/4 Students learn to creatively develop and express their ideas, experiences, and feelings.

Young Artists are exposed to beginning art concepts such as:

- Using a range of art tools, materials, and techniques to create personal responses to art-making problems
- Beginning to manipulate materials with a purpose to express ideas, experiences, and feelings in visual forms
- Beginning to learn simple elements of art concepts, including shape, primary colors, pattern, and line
- Respect for materials and attitudes about art
- Exploring the concept that people in all cultures create works of art
- Beginning to identify people who make art as “artists”



FINE MOTOR DEVELOPMENT

By the end of KG3/KG4, students will:

- Demonstrate motor skills including cutting, gluing, tracing, coloring and folding
- Demonstrate self-help skills including dressing, zipping, buttoning, snapping, etc.
- Demonstrate pencil control

MUSIC

In music classes, Students in KG3/KG4 are exposed to simple music concepts such as:

- Rhythm, using percussion instruments and body percussion
- Improving pitch through singing
- Basic note values
- Music interpretation and appreciation
- Music and movement
- Tempo, pitch, articulation and dynamic changes
- Performance
- Composing music to a story, color or graphic design
- Musical stories



PHYSICAL EDUCATION

During the Kindergarten years students should demonstrate continuous improvement in movement under very simple conditions. Students develop fundamental skill patterns and begin to learn key movement concepts that help them perform in a variety of educational games and activities. Students learn to use safe practices, cooperate with and respect others, and follow classroom rules.

In Physical education classes, students in KG3/KG4 are exposed to:

- Energetic outdoor activities
- A range of ways in which to use their bodies in physical activity and to use their bodies to express ideas and feelings
- Running, jumping, skipping, climbing, balancing, throwing and catching, with increasing skill and confidence
- Working with others cooperatively in physical play and games
- Activities using the fine motor movements of their fingers and hands
- Safely using equipment
- A love of physical activity and play and a positive attitude for leading a healthy, active lifestyle



LIBRARY TIME

Library time is an important component of the elementary schedule. Children come to the library to have a story read to them, read independently, research, and check out books to take home. They are given the freedom to explore the different areas and search for books of their choice with the guidance of the Librarian. The Librarian coordinates lessons with classroom teachers to provide optimum support materials and ideas for classroom activities and research. The children learn that books are meant to be cared for as well as shared and enjoyed. Children in the early elementary grades (K-2) check out one book at a time per week. Children in the later grades (3-5) check out two books at a time per week. The library does not charge fines for overdue books but lost books are the responsibility of each patron. The library is open from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm Monday to Friday. Books can be checked out over the summer. Suggested book lists for summer reading are sent home with the final report cards but are available at any time. Parents are welcome to use the library throughout the year to check out additional books for their children or for themselves.



CHARACTER EDUCATION/COUNSELLING PROGRAM

The AISC Elementary Counseling program respects students' values, rights and beliefs while addressing academic, personal, social and emotional developmental needs of every student. The AISC Elementary Counseling Program is aligned with the Virginia State Standards for School Counseling which reflects the progression of student growth throughout the school experience and focuses on academic, career and personal/social development. The Elementary Counselor supports students in the following ways:

- 1. Positive Behavioral Intervention System:**
 - Implementation of a school-wide positive behavioral intervention system based on a philosophy of positive behavioral support, reinforced daily by staff members and secondary students.
- 2. Character Education:**
 - Weekly social and emotional well-being educational lessons which teach themes including, but not limited to: sharing, taking turns, societal and self-awareness, academic and social cues, and personal hygiene.
- 3. Intervention programs** for students needing extended support through small group counseling when extended support is needed. At times, a small group of children may need counseling support outside of the regular classroom setting in order to cope with emotional and social skills.
- 4. Individual extended support through:**
 - Individual counseling for students who may be struggling socially and emotionally
 - Learning Support services
 - Responsive Services – when a crisis arises and immediate counseling support is needed
- 5. Oversight and implementation of the AISC Child Protection Policy**

For more information on Counseling at AISC, please refer to the AISC Elementary Counseling Handbook.

RECESS

Elementary recess time provides our students with a much-needed break from the rigor of the academic day. Big Toy time at AISC is a safe and well-supervised play time which allows student to participate in free play and gives students opportunities to rest, move, imagine, problem-solve, cooperate, share, and socialize. The importance of free play time in a well-supervised setting is widely documented in the educational research and has been shown to have positive effects on children's concentration throughout the rest of the school day. At AISC, recess time will not be withheld for academic or punitive reasons. For more information on the importance of play time, please see the American Association of Pediatrics, <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/131/1/183>.

ASSEMBLIES

Elementary assemblies play an important role in the program as they provide a fun and educational venue for students to demonstrate the work they are doing in their classes. Assembly topics are aligned with the units of study at each grade level. Additional assemblies will include Character Development and Awards programs. These showcase events provide a great opportunity for students to develop leadership skills, act independently, and play an active role in their learning.

Parents are invited to attend assemblies at 2:25 pm each Friday afternoon. On rare occasions, assembly dates and times may be adjusted. Parents will be notified in such cases.

SUMMER WORK

Research has shown that over the summer months students often regress in their academic skills by one month or more. Each year, considerable instructional time is spent reviewing skills and knowledge lost over the summer months. The summer learning effect has been observed in schools around the world and can contribute to a widening gap in achievement over time. This data reinforces the importance of reading and practicing Math and Literacy skills over the summer holiday. For this reason, we have created calendars with fun Math and Literacy activities for your child to complete over the summer months.

These summer activities are optional in KG3 and KG4. They will enable your child to review concepts and reinforce skills learned during the past school year. Summer work can be found on the AISC Website at the end of each school year, <https://www.aisc.ac.cy/academics/summer-work/>.

MEMBERSHIPS AND ACCREDITATION



The American International School in Cyprus is accredited by the following organizations:

MIDDLE STATES ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS
COUNCIL OF INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS
INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE ORGANIZATION
CYPRUS MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

The American International School in Cyprus is a proud member of the following organizations:

EUROPEAN COUNCIL OF INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS
NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY
MEDITERANNEAN ASSOCIATION OF INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS
NEAR –EAST SOUTH ASIA ASSOCIATION OF INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS
CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION

Founded in 1987, The American International School in Cyprus is a private, coeducational, college preparatory school. We are proud to provide a first class American and international university preparatory education within the Cyprus local community that incorporates Greek as a First Language program for our Cypriot students. AISC serves a unique function in the Cyprus community, offering the only American system program in Cyprus while providing our students with the option of the International Baccalaureate program for the last two years of secondary school.

AISC is owned by Educational Services Overseas Limited (ESOL), a leading regional school operator headed by Mr. Walid Abushakra. ESOL has an established, twenty-five-year track record of operating some of the region's leading American and British curriculum schools. A large number of graduates from ESOL's schools have gone on to attend some of the world's leading universities in the United States of America and the United Kingdom.

Our program develops the whole child by nurturing sense of worth, leadership, academic excellence and independence. We have a strong focus on service learning. Our students participate regularly in community service and character-building life experiences, locally and abroad. An AISC education is rich with diverse learning experiences and opportunities for personal achievements.

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