



Brighter Futures Educational Trust



Chair of Trustees: Daniel Login | BA (Hons) |

LARWOOD DRIVE, STEVENAGE, HERTFORDSHIRE, SG1 5BZ

Email: admin@larwood.herts.sch.uk **Telephone:** 01438 236333

Website: www.larwood.herts.sch.uk

Larwood School

Brandles School

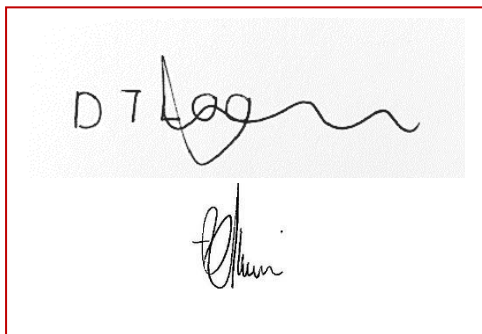
Executive Headteacher: Mr Pierre van der Merwe | BA, NPQH |

Headteacher: Mr Paul Smith | BA (Hons), AVCM |

Dan Login
Chair of Trustees

Pierre van der Merwe
Executive Headteacher

CODE OF CONDUCT



Policy Number: 10c
Review Committee: Finance and Resources
Type of Policy: Statutory
Review Period: Annually
Approved: April 2025
Next Review: April 2026

Registered office:

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Version Control

V1.1	April 2024	Version Control added Staff expectations section added
V2.1	April 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Updated safeguarding information• Enhanced digital communication protocols• AI usage guidelines• staff wellbeing support mechanisms• inclusive practice guidance• Updated Dress Code

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OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND PRINCIPLES

This Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour that all school employees are expected to observe. School employees are role models, are in a unique position of influence, and must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all the pupils within our school. As a member of a school community, each employee has an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the school, whether inside or outside working hours.

This Code of Conduct applies to all employees of the school. This Code of Conduct does not form part of any employees' contract of employment.

In addition to this Code of Conduct, all employees engaged to work under Teachers' Terms and Conditions of Employment have a statutory obligation to adhere to the 'Teachers' Standards 2012' and in relation to this policy, Part 2 of the Teachers' Standards - Personal and Professional Conduct.

1 SETTING AN EXAMPLE

All staff who work for the Brighter Futures Educational Trust set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by pupils. Staff must therefore for example avoid using inappropriate or offensive language at all times. Staff at the Brighter Futures Educational Trust will always consider and choose their words carefully, so what is said is as encouraging and as positive as possible. We know that one sentence from a member staff can be used to turn around a situation and help. It may well be remembered for a lifetime and the same can be applied to a negative comment or sentence.

1.1 All staff must, therefore, demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils to do the same. Examples can be seen via day to day behaviour, attendance, punctuality, manners and the way that staff interact with each other and pupils in a variety of situations.

1.2 Model professional behaviour that demonstrates respect for diversity, including:

- Using inclusive language that acknowledges and respects all individuals
- Avoiding stereotypes or discriminatory language
- Being mindful of different cultural perspectives and practices

1.3 Support neurodiversity in our school community by:

- Recognising and accommodating different learning styles and needs
- Making reasonable adjustments for neurodiverse colleagues and students
- Avoiding language that stigmatises neurological differences
- Supporting students and colleagues with various cognitive styles and processing needs

1.4 Maintain professional standards by:

- Being punctual and well-prepared for all duties

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- Following through on commitments and deadlines
- Communicating clearly and professionally with all stakeholders
- Maintaining appropriate boundaries in all professional relationships

1.5 All staff must also avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct. Please ensure you have read and are aware of our practice related to Behaviour management (Policy), Restrictive Physical Intervention (Policy), Steps, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023, and Child Protection. It is available electronically on our server but you are also provided with a hard copy of this every year.

Staff can access copies of the policies via the school & trusts website.

1.6 This Code helps all staff to understand what behaviour is and is not acceptable. Regard should also be given to the disciplinary rules set out in the Schools' Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

1.7 All staff are expected to familiarise themselves and comply with all school policies and procedures.

2 STAFF EXPECTATIONS

Things We Encourage:

2.1 Constructive feedback and open dialogue are encouraged, as long as it is communicated respectfully and professionally.

2.2 Colleagues who are willing to collaborate, share ideas, and work together towards common goals.

2.3 Taking ownership of tasks, meeting deadlines, and fulfilling responsibilities is essential for maintaining trust and accountability within the team.

2.4 Upholding professional standards in behaviours, expectations, and communication, that fosters a positive and professional work culture.

Things We Won't Tolerate:

2.5 Bullying, harassment, discrimination, or any form of disrespectful behaviour will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

2.6 Engaging in gossip or spreading negativity about colleagues or the organisation undermining morale and trust within the team, including nepotism.

2.7 Consistent failure to meet deadlines, fulfil responsibilities, or take ownership of mistakes without accountability is unacceptable.

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2.8 Any behaviour or attitude that creates a toxic or hostile work environment, including passive-aggressiveness or excessive negativity, will not be tolerated.

2.9 Refusal to follow Trust policies, directives from line managers, or undermining authority is not acceptable and could lead to further action.

2.10 Breaching confidentiality, whereby information is shared without the consent of the parties involved.

2.11 It is essential that we lead by example and addressing any violations of these boundaries promptly and impartially to maintain a healthy and productive work environment for everyone.

Please note: There are times when you should just ignore a grievance...and times when it's much better to deal with the problem head on and seek advice and a resolution!

3 SAFEGUARDING PUPILS/STUDENTS

3.1 Staff have a duty to safeguard pupils from physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect

3.2 The duty to safeguard pupils includes the duty to report concerns about a pupil/student or colleague to the school's Designated Senior Person (DSP) for Child Protection.

Larwood school's DSP is Bianca Osobu Head of School. The Deputy DSPs are Sian Brooks-SEN and Trust mental health lead, Pierre van der Merwe Executive Headteacher, Molly Heritage – Trainee Teacher and FSW/Jenny Bryant – LASA and FSW/Joe Scales – Assistant Headteacher, Gemma Burton - FSW

Brandles school's DSP is Paul Smith Headteacher. The Deputy DSP's are Natalie Springham, Lisa Tollervey, Gary Wiggins, Ian Reid and Jake Grover.

Staff are provided with personal copies of the school's Child Protection Policy, Behaviour Management, Restrictive Physical Intervention, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019 (Full version) and Keeping Children Safe In Education-2024 (25)-Part 1 and part 4- 5, and Whistleblowing Policy/procedure. Staff must be familiar with these documents, as well as implement them in a consistent manner.

3.3 Staff should treat children and all members of our community, with respect and dignity and must not seriously demean or undermine pupils, their parents or carers, or colleagues.

3.4 Staff should not demonstrate behaviours that may be perceived as sarcasm, making jokes at the expense of students, embarrassing or humiliating students, discriminating against or favouring students.

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3.5 Staff must take reasonable care of pupils under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare. This includes during lessons, between lessons, during assemblies, playtimes, lunch times and for all activities. Therefore, if a child became anxious during an assembly, staff would be expected to sit with them on the floor and use caring gestures and positive reinforcement.

3.6 Allegations that may meet the harm threshold

This section is based on 'Section 1: Allegations that may meet the harm threshold' in part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

This section applies to all cases in which it is alleged that anyone working in the school, including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor, has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, and/or
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, and/or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children, and/or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children – this includes behaviour taking place inside or outside of school

We will deal with any such allegation quickly and in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.

A 'case manager' will lead any investigation. This will be the headteacher, or the chair of trustees where the headteacher is the subject of the allegation.

3.7 Low-level concerns about members of staff

A low-level concern is a behaviour towards a child by a member of staff that does not meet the harm threshold, is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, and may be as simple as causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt'. For example, this may include:

- Being over-friendly with children
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs of children on a personal device
- Engaging in 1-to-1 activities where they can't easily be seen
- Humiliating pupils

Low-level concerns can include inappropriate conduct inside and outside of work.

All staff should share any low-level concerns they have using the reporting procedures set out in our child protection and safeguarding policy. We also encourage staff to self-refer if

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they find themselves in a situation that could be misinterpreted. If staff are not sure whether behaviour would be deemed a low-level concern, we encourage staff to report it.

All reports will be handled in a responsive, sensitive and proportionate way.

Unprofessional behaviour will be addressed, and the staff member supported to correct it, at an early stage.

This creates and embeds a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which our values and expected behaviour are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff, while minimising the risk of abuse.

Our procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied with common sense and judgement.

Reporting and responding to low-level concerns is covered in more detail in our child protection and safeguarding policy. This is available in the staff room, on BW, via the school's respective websites and on staff share.

Our procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied with common sense and judgement.

4 RELATIONSHIPS WITH STUDENTS

4.1 Relationships with students must be professional at all times. Physical relationships with students are not permitted and may lead to a criminal conviction.

4.2 Contact with students must be via school authorised mechanisms. At no time should personal telephone numbers, email addresses or communication routes via personal accounts on social media platforms be used to communicate with students.

4.3 If contacted by a student by an inappropriate route, staff should report the contact to the Headteacher immediately.

4.4 Use inclusive language by:

- Addressing students and colleagues by their preferred names and pronouns
- Avoiding gender-specific language unless relevant
- Using person-first or identity-first language according to individual preferences
- Being mindful of cultural sensitivities in communication
- Promote inclusive practices through:
 - Creating accessible learning environments
 - Providing materials in alternative formats when needed
 - Ensuring all students can participate in activities
 - Challenging discriminatory language or behaviour appropriately

4.5 Support diverse learning needs by:

- Implementing recommended accommodations consistently
- Seeking guidance when unsure about specific needs

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- Maintaining confidentiality about individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and updating support strategies

5 PUPIL/STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

- 5.1 Staff must comply with school policies and procedures that support the well-being and development of pupils.
- 5.2 Staff must co-operate and collaborate with colleagues and with external agencies where necessary to support the development of pupils.
- 5.3 Staff must follow reasonable instructions that support the development of pupils

6 HONESTY AND INTEGRITY

- 6.1 Staff must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of school property and facilities.
- 6.2 All staff must comply with the Bribery Act 2010. A person may be guilty of an offence of bribery under this act if they offer, promise or give financial advantage or other advantage to someone; or if they request, agree or accept, or receive a bribe from another person. If you believe that a person has failed to comply with the Bribery Act, you should refer to the Whistleblowing procedure for schools. For further information see Brighter Futures Educational Trusts Anti Bribery Policy.
- 6.3 Gifts from suppliers or associates of the school must be declared to the Headteacher, with the exception of “one off” token gifts from students or parents. Personal gifts from individual members of staff to students are inappropriate, could be misinterpreted, and may lead to disciplinary action. A record will be kept of all gifts received that fall within the remit of the ‘Gifts and Hospitality’ Policy.

7 CONDUCT OUTSIDE OF WORK

- 7.1 Staff must not engage in conduct outside work which could damage the reputation and standing of the school, or the employee’s own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community.
- 7.2 In particular, criminal offences that involve violence or possession, or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are likely to be regarded as unacceptable.
- 7.3 Staff may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the school nor be to a level, which may contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual's work performance in the school.

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8 E-SAFETY, INTERNET USE AND DIGITAL SAFEGUARDING

8.1 Staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Regard should be given to the schools' E-Safety and technology and digital tools Acceptable Use Policy at all times both inside and outside of work. There is some excellent advice provided by various Teaching Unions on this matter and staff may wish to read and consider this alongside this document.

8.2 Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites, which may bring themselves, the school, school community or employer into disrepute. **Staff should use first and middle names only on social profiles to reduce searchability.** Staff should ensure that they adopt suitably high security settings on any personal profiles they may have. **Personal social media profiles should be set to private and not accessible to pupils. Staff must not accept or initiate friend requests from current pupils or their parents/guardians.**

Prohibited Platforms and Activities

- Staff must not use personal accounts for any school-related communication or to connect with pupils/parents on platforms including but not limited to:
- TikTok
- Snapchat
- Instagram
- Facebook
- Twitter/X

Professional Social Media Use

School-approved professional accounts must:

- Be registered with school email addresses
- Be approved by senior leadership
- Have transparent content visible to supervisors
- Maintain professional boundaries at all times
- Follow school branding and communication guidelines

8.3 Staff should exercise caution in their use of all social media or any other web based presence that they may have, including written content, videos or photographs, and views expressed either directly or by 'liking' certain pages or posts established by others. This may also include the use of dating websites where staff could encounter students either with their own profile or acting covertly.

8.4 Contact with pupils should only made via the use of school email accounts or telephone equipment when appropriate. Staff should not attempt to contact pupils or their parents via social media, or any other means outside school, in order to develop any sort of relationship. They will not make any efforts to find pupils' or parents' social media profiles.

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Please see the school's/trusts AI Policy, Online Safety Policy, ICT Acceptable Use Policy, Data Protection Policy, and Child Protection Policy.

9 ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

As part of our commitment to maintaining professional standards while embracing educational innovation, this section provides guidance on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) and emerging technologies within our school environment.

Please see the school's/trusts AI Policy, Online Safety Policy, ICT Acceptable Use Policy, Data Protection Policy, and Child Protection Policy.

10. CONFIDENTIALITY

10.1 Where staff have access to confidential information about pupils or their parents or carers, staff must not reveal such information except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the pupil/student.

10.2 All staff are likely at some point to witness actions, which need to be confidential. For example, where a pupil is bullied by another pupil (or by a member of staff), this needs to be reported and dealt with in accordance with the appropriate school procedure. It must not be discussed outside the school, including with the student's parent or carer, nor with colleagues in the school except with a senior member of staff with the appropriate authority to deal with the matter.

10.3 However, staff have an obligation to share with their manager or the school's Designated Senior Person any information, which gives rise to concern about the safety or welfare of a pupil/student. Staff must **never** promise a pupil that they will not act on information that they are told by the pupil.

11 DRESS CODE

11.1 Purpose

Our dress code aims to ensure all staff present themselves professionally while maintaining an inclusive, comfortable, and safe working environment that allows staff to perform their duties effectively.

11.2 General Principles

All staff should dress in a manner that:

- Projects a professional image
- Is appropriate for their role and daily activities
- Ensures safety during educational activities
- Maintains dignity and respect for all members of our community

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11.3 Professional Attire Guidelines

As part of safeguarding for staff and pupils it is important that staff wear clothing which is:

- Appropriate to their role and garments are suitable for the activity e.g. 'moving and handling' or sitting on the floor decide whether trousers are more appropriate than a skirt
- Not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing or sexually provocative
- Does not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding
- Absent from any political or otherwise contentious slogans
- Not discriminatory

11.4 Appropriate Professional Wear

- Smart business or business-casual attire
- Clean, well-maintained clothing
- Comfortable, secure footwear appropriate for active work with students
- Professional-length dresses, skirts, or shorts
- Smart trousers or chinos
- Collared shirts, blouses, or smart tops
- Religious or cultural dress

11.5 Items Not Suitable for Work

- Clothing with inappropriate messages or imagery
- Revealing or excessively tight clothing
- Clothing that may present safety risks
- Beachwear or overly casual attire
- Damaged or heavily worn clothing

11.6 Activity-Specific Clothing

Physical Education and Sports Activities

Staff participating in PE should wear:

- Appropriate athletic footwear
- Professional sports/athletic wear
- School-branded sportswear (if provided)

Swimming Lessons

- Appropriate poolside footwear as required by facility guidelines
- Suitable poolside clothing

11.7 Footwear Guidelines

General Guidelines for All Staff

- Smart shoes/boots/trainers that are appropriate for the professional environment

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- Crocs or similar shoes are permitted, provided they are clean, professional-looking, and in good condition
- All footwear must be appropriate for the staff member's role and daily activities
- Footwear should not pose a safety risk to the wearer or others

Office-Based Staff

- May wear professional sandals and heels
- Open-toed shoes are permitted
- Heel height should be appropriate for an office environment
- Must maintain professional appearance

Teaching and Support Staff Working Directly with Students

- Must wear closed-toe shoes with secure fastenings
- Footwear must be suitable for potential physical activities, including tracking or chasing pupils
- Shoes must provide adequate support and protection
- High heels are not permitted due to safety considerations

Not Acceptable for Any Child Facing Staff

- Flip flops (except at Stevenage Indoor pool when supporting swimming lessons)
- Excessively high heeled shoes or boots
- UGG style boots
- Footwear in poor condition or with offensive designs
- Beach-style sandals or casual slip-ons

11.8 Health and Safety Considerations

- Jewellery should be minimal and secure
- Long hair should be tied back during practical activities
- Footwear should be appropriate for the activity and environment
- PPE must be worn when required

12.9 Additional Guidance

- ID badges/lanyards must be worn and visible at all times
- Staff should consider weather conditions and adapt clothing accordingly
- Non-uniform days should maintain professional standards while allowing more casual attire

12.10 Support and Clarification

Staff who need guidance on appropriate attire should consult their line manager. Reasonable accommodations will be made for religious, cultural, or medical requirements.

12 DISCIPLINARY ACTION AND GRIEVANCE POLICY.

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Staff should be aware that a failure to comply with the following Code of Conduct could result in disciplinary action including but not limited to dismissal.

Please see our trusts [Grievance Policy](#) and [Disciplinary Policy](#) for more information.

13 COMPLIANCE

All staff must complete the form in appendix 1 to confirm they have read, understood and agreed to comply with the code of conduct. This form should then be signed and dated.

15 PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

When using any form of TECHNOLOGY AND DIGITAL TOOLS, including the Internet, in school and outside school

16 FOR YOUR OWN PROTECTION, WE ADVISE THAT YOU:

- Ensure all electronic communication with students, parents, carers, staff and others is compatible with your professional role and in line with school policies.
- Do not talk about your professional role in any capacity when using social media platforms.
- Do not put online any text, image, sound or video that could upset or offend any member of the whole school community or be incompatible with your professional role.
- Use school TECHNOLOGY AND DIGITAL TOOLS systems and resources for all school business. This includes your school email address, school mobile phone and school video camera.
- Do not disclose any passwords and ensure that personal data (such as data held on MIS software) is kept secure and used appropriately.
- Only take images of students and/or staff for professional purposes, in accordance with school policy and with the knowledge of SLT.
- Do not browse, download, upload or distribute any material that could be considered offensive, illegal or discriminatory.
- Ensure that your online activity, both in school and outside school, will not bring the school or professional role into disrepute.
- Emails should be checked daily, as a minimum on working days or every other day if one day is particularly busy.

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- You have a duty to report any eSafety incident, which may impact, on you, your professionalism or the school.

17 PRACTICAL ADVICE FOR OUR PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

- Staff are to be constantly aware of what they say, when they say it and whom they say it to. In reality this means, that 'adult' conversations should always take place away from the pupils, behind a closed door and not in open corridors or in the admin corridor. When talking to each other and the pupils, it is essential to always consider the content and tone of our conversations. Everybody remembers a good teacher due to the positive way they behaved and were spoken to. Likewise, most people always remember their 'worst' teacher as they have usually said something quite negative to them.
- Larwood School - School badges **must** be worn at all times. If your badge is lost or damaged, please notify **Fran Lewis**.
- Brandles School - School badges/lanyards must be worn at all times. If your badge/ lanyard is lost or damaged, please notify **Fran Lewis**.
- Eating snacks or chewing gum is not permitted in class during school hours.
- Mobile phones must not be used during class time and must be kept on 'silent' in school, they should be kept out of sight in a bag or cupboard, if emergency calls are expected, this may be relaxed by arrangement with your line manager.
- All staff must attend Friday assemblies unless prior arrangements are made with the SLT. Seating will be provided at the sides of classes and not at the back of the hall
- A short break of up to 15 minutes in length may be taken only if all is calm with class and by arrangement with class teacher.
- It is expected that staff ensure that any outstanding paperwork regarding an incident is completed before leaving at the end of each day.

18 ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

The Trust is committed to environmental sustainability. Staff must:

Practice responsible resource use by:

- Minimising printing and using digital alternatives where possible
- Turning off lights and equipment when not in use

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- Using reusable materials instead of single-use items
- Properly sorting waste into recycling, composting, and landfill

Promote environmental awareness by:

- Including environmental considerations in lesson planning where appropriate
- Supporting school-wide sustainability initiatives
- Modelling environmentally conscious behaviours
- Encouraging students to participate in environmental projects

19 STAFF WELLBEING AND SUPPORT

The Trust recognises the importance of staff wellbeing. All staff should:

Maintain work-life balance by:

- Taking scheduled breaks during the working day
- Using allocated PPA time effectively
- Communicating workload concerns to line managers
- Accessing available support services when needed

Support colleague wellbeing by:

- Respecting others' break times and working hours
- Contributing to a positive work environment
- Offering peer support when appropriate
- Reporting concerns about colleague wellbeing to appropriate leaders

Access support through:

- The Trust's Employee Assistance Program
- Occupational Health services when needed
- Regular supervision and professional development meetings
- Wellbeing initiatives and activities organised by the Trust

Staff must sign to acknowledge understanding of these guidelines, and compliance will be monitored regularly through digital audits and supervision.

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APPENDIX 1

CONFIRMATION OF RECEIPT, UNDERSTANDING AND AGREEMENT

I hereby confirm that I have read, understood and agree to comply with the school's code of conduct.

Name

Position/Post Held.....

Signed

Date

APPENDIX 2

I hereby confirm that I have read, understood and agree to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 (with particular reference to Part 1 and Part 4 - 5).

Name

Position/Post Held.....

Signed

Date

ONCE COMPLETED, SIGNED AND DATED, PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO THE HEADTEACHER

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