

# **Effort Christian School and Preschool**

## **Parent and Student Handbook**

**2022-2023**



A Ministry of Effort Church

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# Welcome

Thank you for choosing Effort Christian School and Preschool (ECSP) for the academic and spiritual growth for your child. Effort Christian School and Preschool stands out amongst the competition in our community because we are family focused and are dedicated to sharing the love of Christ to all you. ECSP's staff stand out as being dynamic, compassionate, and loving individuals that put the care of our children as a priority. ECSP is an amazing and fun place to be for children and God will continue to bless us because above all else, we are called to share His love and light foremost.

Effort Christian School and Preschool provides a structured, academically rich environment where students are encouraged to create, engage with the world around them, and explore their unique gifts in a faith-centered community. The vision we share with our students and the attitudes with which we equip them will enable them to become principled adults whose lives are lived in relationship with God, and who bless their fellow humans by their commitment to love and justice.

*Bring up a child in the way they will go and when they are old they will not depart from it.*

Proverbs 22:6

*And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. Micah 6:8*

## Mission & Core Values

The mission of Effort Christian School is to educate students in the light of God's Word to equip them for a lifetime of learning, leadership, service and worship.

ECSP's Core Values are:

- To seek wisdom through learning, by interacting with the world in light of God's word with intellectual humility, worship, and wonder.
- To provide families within our community a Bible-centered academic education that challenges students to submit to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in thought, word, and deed.
- To encourage students to draw closer to God and to practice Biblical principles.
- To strive for academic excellence and Biblical knowledge, resulting in the discipleship of others.
- To act as an extension of both the church and home, while remaining a primary institution for learning.

## **ECSP Governing Body**

The Church Council is the governing body of Effort Christian School and Preschool. The School reports directly to the Effort Church Council who has the final decision-making responsibility.

The Church Council meets regularly. All parents of ECSP students are welcome to attend regularly scheduled monthly meetings if they wish to discuss issues or concerns. Check with the school office or website for meeting dates and times.

## **Admission and Enrollment**

Effort Christian School and Preschool is a ministry of Effort Baptist Church. Effort Christian School and Preschool seeks to admit students who are committed to spiritual, personal, and academic growth. All children of parents who desire a Christian education for their children are welcome to submit an application, which is available online at [www.effortchristianschools.com](http://www.effortchristianschools.com) and in the office. Completed applications should be returned to the ECSP office. ECSP is in compliance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and makes no distinction concerning an individual's gender, race, color, or ethnic origin. We acknowledge that there is no preferential treatment with God (Romans 2: 11). It extends to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities made available at the school.

## **Instructional Hours and Programs**

Early Drop Off:	7:00 AM – 8:20 AM
Preschool full day hours:	8:30 AM - 3:00 PM
Preschool half day hours:	8:30 AM - 12:00 PM
Preschool Afterschool hours:	3:00 PM – 6:00 PM
School Day hours:	8:30 AM – 3:00 PM
After School hours:	3:00 PM – 6:00 PM

Students will be grouped according to age levels for After School activities.

## **Preschool Programs**

### **2 Year Old Program:**

This program focuses on learning through play. This class is a great first step into preschool. It gives a child the opportunity to learn to transition from one activity to another, and develops self-help skills in a loving and nurturing environment. This class is offered as either a full- or half-day program. You may choose from 5, 4, or 3-day programs. Children should be potty trained or on their way to becoming potty trained (disposable underwear should be worn until fully potty trained). Any families that have a child not potty trained will incur a \$50 per month potty training fee. When potty training is complete, please notify the office so the fee can be removed.

### **3 Year Old Program:**

This program focuses on learning colors and shapes, basic counting skills and the alphabet. Self-help skills, such as separating from family, learning to share, and following directions are emphasized to prepare a student for Pre-K. This class is offered as either a full- or half-day program, and you may choose from 5, 4, or 3-day programs. Children should be potty trained for this program.

### **4 Year old Program:**

This program focuses on pre-kindergarten skills, such as facility with oral language, ability to listen, a desire for independence, and an ability to play well with others. Academically, it will focus on basic letter and number recognition. As the letters are introduced, the sounds will be emphasized. There will be a focus on fine motor skills through pre-writing and art activities. This class is offered as either a full- or half-day program. You may choose from 5, 4, or 3-day programs. We recommend the 5-day program to ready K4 students for a smooth transition to elementary school.

### **Nap Time**

All preschool classes have a nap time during the day. ECSP follows all recommendations from the American Association of Pediatrics for safe sleep recommendations.

## **School Program (K)**

Effort Christian School offers a complete academic curriculum, integrated with Christian character formation, for students in kindergarten. We begin each day with the Pledge of Allegiance, Bible reading and prayer. We incorporate Christian curriculum such as Abeka and Purposeful Design, to enhance the learning experience. Hands-on activities are also a part of our classroom's daily routine.

The teaching staff at ECSP is highly qualified and thoroughly dedicated to helping each student achieve positive spiritual, mental, and academic growth. We see ourselves as partners with parents/guardians in helping children learn to trust God and grow academically.

Our goal is to provide students with a strong academic foundation. In kindergarten, our phonics-based reading program ensures students read with fluency, accuracy, and comprehension. Mathematics instruction focuses on developing both number sense and critical thinking skills through hands-on activities.

## **Children with Special Needs**

ECSP does not have a Special Education Program. However, we strive to meet the individual needs of each child within the structure of our program, while maintaining a healthy and safe environment for all children and staff. We will make reasonable accommodations to afford children with special learning styles equal enjoyment of our programs. We will make individual assessments to determine if we can meet each student's needs in our school setting. Once enrolled, a child may be released if ECSP subsequently determines we cannot meet the student's optimal educational needs.

## **Continued Care**

ECSP closes promptly at 6pm. In the event that you are running late to pick up your child, please contact the school by phone or send a message through Procure. Two staff members will remain with a child until the parent or guardian arrives to pick up the child. Fees will be assessed and applied to accounts for families that do not contact the school, or if it happens continually. Repeat offenders will be charged \$25 the first event and \$50 an event moving forward.

## Special Activities

Children at ECSP will participate in special enrichment activities, which may include: Chapel, Art, Library, and Physical Education.

## Communication

We will do our best to keep lines of communication open with our parents/guardians. Most communication is delivered through email and Procure. Teachers will send home weekly newsletters and other information that pertains to our classroom activities. In an effort to encourage our teachers' full, undivided attention to all aspects of each child's school life, we ask that parents do not have unscheduled or informal conferences with teachers. At the request of the parent or teacher, conferences may be scheduled at mutually convenient times when discussion is necessary.

School report cards will be issued four times per year. Preschool assessments are completed in the fall and spring. Parent and Teacher conferences will occur throughout the school year and will be announced by your child's teacher.

## Attendance

### Arrival

Please arrive on time for class. Teachers are not responsible for early arrivals. Late arrivals happen, however consistently become a distraction to class. ECSP expects students to be on time or parents will have to drop students off at the school office. Excessive tardiness may result with a conference with student's teacher and school director

### Dismissal

Full-day preschool and school children will be dismissed at 3:00 PM. Please arrive by 2:55 PM. Teachers will inform you of the procedures for picking up your child.

Half-day preschool parents should arrive by 11:55 AM and wait for children in the designated gathering space. Dismissal is 12:00 PM.

## **Pickup Authorization**

We will not release your child to anyone that is not authorized by you. If your child will ride home with someone else other than his usual ride, please add this authorized pickup through the Procure app as well as notify the teacher with a note.

Please let the teacher and the office know if you will be picking up your child early.

## **Attendance**

Regular attendance is important to your child's educational experience.

No allowances, credits, refunds, or make-up days shall be made for occasional absences or snow days. Tuition must be paid in full.

Absences should be reported to the teacher or school office with the reason for the absence.

\*\*\*For School students, see Attendance Responsibilities Addendum at the end of this handbook.

## **Sick Policy**

Please do not bring your child to school with a contagious illness. Children with the following symptoms should not come to ECSP:

- Earache
- Elevated temperature - over 100 degrees F
- Diarrhea
- Nausea or vomiting
- Persistent or serious cough
- Red, runny, or crusty eyes
- Skin rashes - undiagnosed or suspicious of being contagious
- Swollen glands or sore throat
- Thick colored mucus from eyes or nose
- Unusual lethargy or sluggishness
- Upset stomach
- Wheezing chest
- any other COVID related symptoms

A child must be symptom-free, without fever-reducing medication, for 24 hours before returning to school or preschool. If your child is seen by a doctor and put on antibiotics for a contagious infection (like strep throat), please keep your child at home until he/she is fever-free

and has been on antibiotics for at least 24 hours. If a child contracts or is exposed to a contagious disease (including but not limited to: chicken pox, flu, impetigo, lice, pink eye, ringworm, pinworm, or strep throat), you must report this information to your child's teacher or director immediately. Children with a contagious disease may not attend school until the child is no longer contagious, and a doctor's note is required for admittance. In the event of a possible exposure to the disease in a classroom, a notice will be given to other parents/guardians of children in the classroom. Confidentiality will always be maintained.

There will be no refunds, refunds, or rescheduling of missed days for occasional absences.

## **Injuries**

If a child is injured on campus, the child should report this injury to a teacher, a Director, or the church office staff immediately. When a child has been injured, we evaluate the situation on a case-by-case basis. When appropriate, we will apply ice packs to bumps and bandages to cuts and scrapes, etc. If the injury is more serious, we will notify the parent/guardian. Accident reports are completed for all injuries.

## **Medication**

If medication is necessary, or there is a special circumstance, please talk with the director. Certain documentation will be needed. Medication outside of its proper container will not be accepted. All medication will be secured and dispensed by a staff member who has completed Medication Administration Training (MAT).

In the event that a child needs to have an inhaler or Epi-pen on hand, it must be left at the school and accompanied by a doctor's note or prescription. No student is allowed to take medication of any kind by himself/herself or have any medication in his or her possession. This includes items such as lotions, lip balm and sunscreen.

## **Food Allergy and Sensitivity**

A food allergy is defined as an adverse health effect arising from a specific immune response that occurs reproducibly on exposure to a given food. ECSP is dedicated to providing the best care possible for every student. To properly manage the care of students with food allergies, ECSP has created a policy in an effort to mitigate allergic reactions and how to respond in the event of an allergy emergency.

ECSP will need full parental participation clearly communicating the nature of their child's allergy. Prior to the beginning of every school year, parents will be obligated to provide the school with documentation from their child's physician supporting the diagnosis of any food allergies, risk of anaphylaxis, if applicable; identifying any food to which the child is allergic; describing, if appropriate, any prior history of anaphylaxis; listing any medication prescribed for the child for the treatment of anaphylaxis; detailing emergency treatment procedures in the event of a reaction; listing the signs and symptoms of a reaction; assessing the child's readiness for self-administration of prescription medication; and a list of substitute meals that may be offered to the child by school or early childhood education program.

Individualized food allergy management plans will be created in consultation with both parents and physicians. These plans will be tailored to the needs of each child with a documented risk for anaphylaxis, including any procedures for the self-administration of medication by such children in instances where the children are capable of self-administering medication. Plans will include appropriate instructions for emergency medical response. These plans are to be kept confidential and will be kept in the school office.

MAT certified employees and teachers are responsible for the maintenance of information for each administration of epinephrine to a child at risk for anaphylaxis to the child's parents.

The physical safety and emotional needs of a child with allergies will be a priority for ECSP. Under no circumstances will ECSP tolerate any bullying, harassment, or exclusion of any student with food allergies.

A list of all staff that have a role in managing the risk of food allergy will be located in the school office. This list includes administrators, MAT certified employees, and teachers.

## **Lunch**

Students must bring their own lunches and snacks from home. Hot lunch may be available for purchase on Fridays during the school year. Forms for hot lunch orders are sent home monthly and are available on the website. There is no cold storage available for students. Please send lunches and snacks that can be eaten without preparation. Microwaves are not available for student use. Teachers are not permitted to heat student meals. Due to food allergies, sharing or trading food items is not permitted.

Parents will need to cancel their child's hot lunch/ice cream order by 9:30 a.m. when the child will be absent from school that day. When school is cancelled due to inclement weather, a credit will be given on the next month's lunch order.

## **Dress Code and Code of Conduct**

Preschoolers should wear clothing that is comfortable, washable, and suitable for running and playing. Avoid drawstrings, since this may be a safety hazard. Clothing should be marked with your child's name. Shorts should be worn under dresses and skirts. Play clothes should be worn to preschool because clothes may become soiled from art, outdoor activities, or other messy learning and play activities. Dresses with ruffles or bows and pants with difficult belts or fasteners should be avoided. Parents should choose clothing that the child can manage without adult help. Children who are potty training or children who struggle with fastening their pants/shorts should wear elastic waist pants/shorts.

We recommend that preschoolers wear tennis shoes or rubber-soled shoes to preschool because they are best suited for climbing, running, and playing outside. Our playground has several items on which children can climb. Shoes that are not securely fastened are a safety hazard. Please, no flip-flops, slippers or plastic dress-up shoes.

Please send in a complete change of clothes, labeled with your child's name, to be kept at preschool in case your child has an accident or spill. If an accident occurs, please send in a clean change of clothes, labeled with the child's name, the next day your child returns to preschool.

School-age girls are not permitted to wear spaghetti straps. Skirts should be of modest length (consider the fingertip length when deciding if the length is appropriate), and girls should wear shorts under their skirts for playtime. Short shorts are to be avoided as well. T-shirts with skulls or inappropriate humor should be avoided. Jeans with holes and rips should not be worn. Long blouses will be required with Yoga pants and leggings. Make-up is not permitted for school-age children. Flip-flops are not to be worn to school.

## **The Matthew 18 Principle**

We at ECSP encourage others to obey the teachings of Christ. Those teachings include "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22: 37- 39). In spite of our efforts, there are times when people have different views or perceive situations differently. Jesus, in His perfect wisdom, knew we would need instruction for these situations and provided this wisdom in Matthew 18: 15-17. When differences of opinion cause conflict, it is our policy to practice "The Matthew 18 Principle." Using this scripture passage as our guide, we have listed the appropriate steps that are to be taken by students, parents/guardians, teachers, and staff in the event of a misunderstanding or disagreement.

- Please keep the matter confidential. If you have a concern with a staff member or student, ECSP encourages you to reach out to the staff member or student teacher directly.
- If you feel the concern has not been resolved, please contact the Director directly by emailing, messaging through Procure, or calling the school office.
- The Director may request a meeting with the staff member to help clearly communicate the concern and work together to resolve any continued concerns.
- Understand that ECSP's primary purpose is to extend grace and understanding to all participants involved.

## Smoking Policy

The buildings on our campus are smoke-free environments. Smoking, vaping and the use of tobacco products is prohibited on all property, both indoor and outdoor.

## Volunteer Involvement

Effort Christian School and Preschool welcomes parent/guardian involvement. Please make arrangements in advance with your child's teacher. All volunteer involvement must be cleared by the Director.

Parent Volunteer requirements are as follows:

- \* All parents/guardians who volunteer for us, or attend field trips, must follow the dress code and abide by the ECSP standards of conduct.
- \* Those that volunteer on a continued regular basis or teach a special supplementary class must undergo a background check.
- \* Any subject matter taught by volunteers must be properly vetted through the classroom teacher and Director.

Parent Volunteers will maintain confidentiality in regards to children and agree not to discuss with other parents/guardians or community members things regarding teachers, students, or classroom procedures. We respect the right of privacy for the children. Please be aware of this when you are helping in the classroom. Children sometimes are the source of much information outside of the classroom. If you have any concerns, please direct those to the teacher or the director.

## Enrollment Information

Registration forms are available on our website and in both the school and church offices. Once a child is admitted, every family is given a contract to sign agreeing to the total amount due for the entire school year (tuitions, supplies and fees). ECSP uses Procure, a Web-based program, for payment.

Effort Christian School and Preschool reserves the right to charge additional fees for services that go above normal daily operating procedures. These services may include potty training, changing children upon arrival, late arrivals and continued care after hours.

1. We require a \$325 Non-refundable preschool activity fee for preschool families; \$650 non-refundable activity fee for school age families.
2. We require a completed application for each child, in each program, each year.
3. We require an official copy of your child's up to date immunization form/updated physical form or an immunization waiver form prior to the first day of attendance.
4. A copy of your child's birth certificate is necessary prior to the first day of attendance.

## Tuition/Payment Information

Effort Christian School and Preschool is a ministry of Effort Baptist Church. All expenses are paid from tuition, fees and fundraising. Our tuition is competitive with other private schools in the area, as we offer outstanding Christian care to the students, as well as stellar educational programs.

Effort Christian School and Preschool is a non-profit entity. We strive to make Christian education available to those who desire a Christ-centered education for their children. All cash gifts and gifts-in-kind are income tax deductible, as long as they are not designated for an individual. We welcome and appreciate our friends and community neighbors who support the programs at Effort Christian School and Preschool. There will be several school fundraising events throughout each year that will give our friends opportunities to support the school and encourage the student body. We thank you in advance for your support.

Tuition is based on an annual commitment and is calculated by the program. We do not "pro-rate" monthly tuition amounts should your child's schedule change mid-month. Changes made prior to the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month will be effective on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the next billing cycle.

1. Tuition paid in full, in advance (prior to start date) will receive a 5% discount.
2. For families enrolled in ECSP, we offer a sibling discount of 10% for the preschool or school tuition portion only of the highest child for families with multiple children enrolled in either school or preschool.
3. A limited number of scholarships and discounts are available. These are awarded on a yearly basis and must be applied for and evaluated annually. See Director for more information.

### **Financial/Payment Information**

1. Payments are due on the 1st of each month, beginning in the first month of each program.
2. We use Procare for billing and receiving payments. Procare allows parents the option of making payments by electronic check or credit card. Parents are able to check their account online 24/7. Once your child(ren)'s registration form has been processed, you will receive an email with the student handbook and our disclosure statement. Monthly payments are not accepted at the church or school/preschool office.
3. A \$55 late fee will be assessed on past due accounts on the 5th day of the month. Delinquent families may be required to make future payments via credit card in order to stay enrolled in Effort programs.
4. Families with outstanding past due balances may be unenrolled beginning on the 7th day of the month.
5. Collection efforts will be pursued for any unpaid tuition. In the event that any tuition debt is "written off", you will receive a 1099-C for the amount forgiven, and that amount will be reported to the IRS as taxable income to you.
6. Returned payments will incur a \$50 return check charge by Procare, and all future payments may be required to be paid via credit card for the remainder of the school year.
7. Non-payment in one program will result in forfeiture of further participation in other Effort Christian School programs.
8. No allowances, credits, refunds, or make-up days shall be made for absences, inclement weather days, or unexpected closures. Tuition must be paid in full.
9. In the event of sudden closures due to local, state or federal orders (including states of emergency covering pandemics), Effort Christian School will continue to collect tuition for the school year and provide remote instruction to students. Effort Preschool will charge a monthly placement fee to continue holding your child's spot in our program.

## **Inclement Weather/School Closings or Delays**

When severe weather or other circumstances create hazardous conditions, the regular school and preschool schedule may be suspended or delayed to ensure student safety. While we follow the Fluvanna County Public Schools' closing schedule for inclement weather, we will make an independent decision. In the event of a delayed opening, we will open at 10:00 AM. Usually,

notification is sent via Procure directly from the school administration to the parents. There will be no refunds or credits for closures.

## **Emergency Drills**

We will conduct routine fire and safety drills on a regular basis as required. The Emergency Plan is located in the school office.

## **Field Trips**

Field trips of an educational nature are vital to the curriculum enrichment emphasis at Effort Christian School and Preschool. Each class will be going on field trips during the year. For each trip, every child must have a permission slip and a medical release form signed by the parent or guardian. Transportation is usually by van, bus, or parents/guardians providing transportation for their child. Parents will be notified in advance of any extra field trip expenses (admission fees, souvenirs, food, etc.). Since these fees are generally paid in advance, there will be no refund on field trip fees.

## **Lost and Found**

The best way to ensure the return of your child's belongings is to put his/her name on all items of clothing, lunch box, bags and backpacks, etc. Items marked with a name will be returned to the student. If your child finds something on the school grounds which does not belong to him/her, it should be turned in to the teacher for return to the rightful owner. Please make sure your child brings home only those things belonging to him/her.

Lost and found items not claimed within thirty days will be donated to a suitable charity.

## **Code of Behavior**

A very important part of the educational experience is helping children learn how to get along with other children, as well as following the direction of an adult other than their parent/guardian. Our teachers focus on the positive behaviors of children and reinforce those behaviors as often as possible.

At Effort Christian School and Preschool, we emphasize that discipline will always be in love and with grace. More than anything else, we want each child to know that he or she is loved. The following strategies will be used to help children who exhibit disruptive behavior:

- Encouraging small children to "use their words" when having a disagreement with another child
- Redirecting behavior
- Separating a child from the group -- one minute away for each year of age
- Counseling children individually about their behaviors
- Making parents/guardians aware of disciplinary concerns

Corporal punishment is not used at Effort Christian School and Preschool. While we do as much redirecting and instruction on behavior as we can, we must also make sure that the group at large is in a safe and healthy environment. Excess behavioral issues will be communicated with the parents, and will likely have to be addressed outside of school.

## **Violence & Harassment**

ECSP prohibits any student or adult behavior which could be construed as threatening, aggressive, confrontational or violent. Engaging in these behaviors could result in disenrollment from all ECSP and Effort church programs. These acts would include:

- Destruction of school/church property
- Destructive behavior such as throwing items
- All incidents of threats of violence, direct or indirect
- Sabotage
- Harassment or intimidation
- Assaults, attempted or challenged
- Presence or suspected presence of weapons
- Placing someone in fear of physical harm
- Use of obscene, abusive, or threatening language or gestures

## **Disenrollment**

In certain circumstances, it may be necessary to discontinue a child's enrollment. This decision is based on the best interests of the child concerned, other children in the class, and the well-being of everyone at the school. Every effort will be made to correct a situation before a

final decision is made (i.e., moving a child to another class, redirecting behaviors, providing choices, separating children who are not getting along, or other interventions).

Disenrollment may be the result of one of the following:

- Abuse of other children, staff or property by child or parent/guardian
- Continued violation of any school policies
- Disruptive or dangerous behavior
- School's inability to meet the child's needs or the parent/guardian's expectations
- Non-payment of tuition.

We reserve the right to end the enrollment of a child at any time and for any reason deemed appropriate. Prior to this event, we will work with families to remedy any of the above situations.

## **Withdrawal Procedure**

ECSP requires notice of 1 month's billing cycle to withdraw a child from any program. The director must be notified in writing of your plans to withdraw your child. Families will be charged the next month's tuition in full, if withdrawal notice is received after the 15th of the month.

Your director must be notified in writing of your plans to withdraw your child. Without notification, it will be assumed your child is still enrolled, and you will be charged accordingly.

## **Student Referral Incentive**

A family who refers another family who enrolls and attends for a minimum of six weeks will receive a credit to their account for an amount equal to one week's tuition.

## **SCHOOL POLICY ADDENDUM for Kindergarten: Attendance and Timeliness Responsibilities**

The teachers and administrators of Effort Christian School desire for students to get the best education possible. Parents are expected to cooperate with the school by assuring daily attendance at school. If a student is absent, a written excuse, signed by a parent, stating the reason for absence from school, must be sent to the teacher immediately upon the student's return to school.

Since tardiness is distracting and disruptive to teachers and classmates, any student arriving late to school must be signed in by a parent at the school office. Please make every effort to ensure prompt daily arrival for class.

Absences and/or tardiness in excess of five unexcused absences may lead to a conference between the parents, teacher, and director.

If an early dismissal from school is necessary, a written note signed by a parent or an email must be sent to the classroom teacher on the day such early dismissal is requested. Parents are encouraged to schedule a student's medical, dental, or other appointments after school hours (whenever possible),

Students with only minimal tardies and/or absences will be considered for an outstanding attendance award.

### **School Start Time**

Every minute in the classroom is important. Classes start at 8:30 a.m. The doors open at 8:20 a.m., providing adequate time for children to get settled before class begins.

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### **Acknowledgement of Receipt of Attendance and Timeliness Responsibilities Addendum**

I acknowledge that I have received and reviewed the Important Parent Responsibilities document and that I will partner with the teachers and administrators to ensure regular, consistent attendance.

**Name of Student:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Parent/Guardian:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_