*MRASP*

*Parent*

*Handbook*

*149 Pleasant Street*

Newton Centre, MA 02459

*MR 617-244-7260*

*Hut 617-244-9434*

*mrasp.org*

*joshuafriedman@mrasp.org*

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**GENERAL INFORMATION**

### *Mission Statement and Goals*

The mission statement of the Mason-Rice Afterschool Program is to provide a high quality out-of-school time program for school age children and to support families.

The main goals of the program are:

* To provide a safe, nurturing, comfortable environment for children with a neighborhood-like

 atmosphere of mixed age groups.

* To provide comprehensive programming that includes diverse activities for recreation, learning,

 exploration, growth, and just plain fun! Programming includes activities in arts & crafts, sports,

 games, drama, and hands-on science. Clubs, special events, and field trips are also

 part of the program.

* To provide the option of "hang-out-time" - time to relax, chat with friends, read a book with a

 teacher, play chess, etc. With sometimes hectic schedules of school, afterschool, soccer,

 Scouts, etc., this unstructured time is essential to the children.

* To promote the social and emotional development of the children - to help them gain in self-

 confidence, self-esteem, positive relationships, conflict resolution skills, cooperation, sense of

 responsibility, decision-making ability, and independence.

* To provide an environment that respects individual differences, celebrates diversity, and promotes

 anti-bias and anti-racist education.

***Organization***

MRASP is a private, non-profit, parent cooperative organization serving school-age children of the Mason-Rice community during after school hours. A Board of Directors comprised of MRASP parents governs the program. MRASP is administered independently and is funded entirely by parent tuition, not by the public schools or the City of Newton.

The professional staff includes a full-time administrative director, full time assistant director, full-time program coordinators, and part-time teachers. Teachers have diverse experience with children and varied educational degrees and backgrounds - early childhood, elementary, art, and outdoor education; recreation; etc. Some teachers also have expertise in a specialized area such as dance, sports, drama, or art.

***Department of Early Education and Care***

The Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) is the licensing authority for MRASP. The EEC School Age Child Care Regulations are available in the MRASP office or on the EEC website. https://www.mass.gov/orgs/department-of-early-education-and-care

### *Notice of Non-Discrimination*

MRASP does not discriminate on the basis of race, religious creed, national origin, ancestry, disability, gender, sexual orientation or gender identity/expression. MRASP will make reasonable accommodations to welcome or continue to serve any child with a disability. If it is determined by MRASP that a child requires the use of an aide in order to safely attend and participate in MRASP, MRASP will work with the parents or guardians and, if necessary, with permission from the parents or guardians will solicit and receive information about the child from the school district, to reasonably accommodate the child.

If the parents or guardians of a child applying to MRASP or already enrolled in MRASP believe that any accommodation is necessary for the child to attend MRASP, MRASP requests the parents or guardians inform MRASP in writing. MRASP will work with the parents or guardians to reasonably accommodate the child.

### *History*

MRASP was founded in 1980 by a small group of Mason-Rice parents; in its first year, the program served 18 children in grades 1st-4th. In 1981-82, enrollment increased, and a Kindergarten program was established. In 84-85, when the Hyde School was closed, the program expanded. In addition, the Hut component for older children was initiated with the Bowen After School Care Program on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The Hut program expanded to all five days in 1998. As of the 07-08 year, after many years of a successful collaboration, the Bowen After School Care Program decided to keep all grades at Bowen.

### *Location*

MRASP is located in the Mason-Rice School at 149 Pleasant Street, Newton Centre, MA 02459. Space used is the downstairs Octagon, the Centre, the gym, art room, music room, teachers’ room, and shared classroom space. The Hut program is located in the Jeanette West Recreation Center (the "Hut") on Tyler Terrace.

MRASP can be reached at 617-244-7260 between 10:00-6:00; messages can be left on the answering machine at any time. The Hut can be reached directly at 617-244-9434. The Director’s is joshuafriedman@mrasp.org.

### *Relationship with the City of Newton*

MRASP is a private organization, administered independently and funded entirely by parent tuition, not by the public schools or the City of Newton. The MRASP pays occupancy fees to the Newton Public Schools and to the City of Newton for use of space at Mason-Rice and at the Hut.

MRASP enjoys a cooperative and supportive relationship with the Mason-Rice School administration and staff. Teachers work together as needed to provide consistency for the children, discuss space sharing issues, and share resources, etc. The Director and Board also maintain communication with the school administration and PTO.

### *Newton After School Association*

MRASP is a member of the Newton After School Association (NASA). NASA is a professional organization providing support, resources, advocacy, and professional development, etc. to the afterschool programs in Newton. MRASP’s use of space is guided by NASA's agreement with the Newton Public Schools.

**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### *Enrollment*

MRASP currently has almost 200 children enrolled throughout the week; the program serves approximately 40% of the total school population. MRASP provides 606 full days of care weekly.

Enrollment in the Afterschool is guided by space, programmatic considerations, and staffing requirements.

Prior to enrollment, the Director will attend the Mason-Rice K registration in order to meet in-coming families. Parents receive an enrollment packet with information regarding the program and enrollment (available schedules, priorities, timeline, etc.).

If an MRASP program component reaches capacity and cannot accept all applications, parents will be notified and children will be put on a wait list.

In the spring, parents are welcome to arrange to visit MRASP with their child. At that visit the child and family can meet teachers, speak with the Director, and see the space. Parents and the Director also have the opportunity to communicate via phone or email regarding any questions, concerns, information to share, etc.

The last week in August, the Mason-Rice School has a Kindergarten Orientation for children and parents; the MRASP Director, Assistant Director, and K-4th Program Coordinators attend.

If the parents or guardians of a child applying to MRASP or already enrolled in MRASP believe that any accommodation is necessary for the child to attend MRASP, MRASP requests the parents or guardians inform MRASP in writing. MRASP will work with the parents or guardians to reasonably accommodate the child. If your child has an IEP, please give us a copy so that we may better serve your child.

See the Director for more detailed information regarding enrollment.

### *Parent/Staff Communication*

Parent/staff communication is an integral part of MRASP. This communication aids the staff in providing high quality care—both in meeting individual children's needs and programming in general. Parents are encouraged to speak with MRASP staff to share information about their child, discuss concerns, input about the MRASP, etc. Progress reports are written annually for each child.

Parents are welcome to visit the program unannounced while their child is there. Parent visits at pick up time are also encouraged. Additional parent visits are welcome.

*GOOD COMMUNICATION IS ESSENTIAL IN PROVIDING THE BEST QUALITY CARE FOR YOUR CHILD. PLEASE REMEMBER…*

* SHARE IMPORTANT INFORMATION. Information that is important to you and your child is also important to us—a parent going out of town, the death of a pet, an impending move of a loved friend or relative, any learning difficulties or special needs, etc.
* UPDATE HOME, WORK, & CELL PHONE NUMBERS AND EMAIL AS NEEDED. We need to be able to reach you with ease.
* PARENT CONFERENCE. If you are interested in having a conference, please see the Director, Assistant Director, or the Program Coordinators.
* GIVE ANY PERTINENT INFORMATION TO BOTH THE AFTERSCHOOL AND YOUR CHILD'S CLASSROOM TEACHER. We work cooperatively with the Mason-Rice staff, but MRASP and the Mason-Rice School are independent bodies. Information given to one of us will not necessarily be communicated with the other. (This includes daily notes re: pick up, etc.)
* GIVE ANY LONG-TERM INFORMATION IN WRITING. For example - soccer every Tuesday, Community Education class, etc. Long-term note forms are available.
* FOR DAILY CHANGES IN YOUR CHILD'S SCHEDULE, PLEASE NOTIFY MRASP DIRECTLY BY PHONE, NOTE IN THE MRASP MAIL SLOT IN THE MAIN OFFICE IN THE MORNING, OR BY EMAIL. Parents must notify MRASP of any special circumstances including the following: absence, late arrival, early dismissal, pick-up/release to a person not on the authorized pick-up list, etc. For your child's safety and well-being, we must be able to EASILY account for all children who will not be attending, who will be arriving late, who will be picked up by someone different, etc.
* MAKE SURE THAT A STAFF PERSON KNOWS WHEN YOU ARE PICKING UP YOUR CHILD AND SIGN OUT YOUR CHILD WITH YOUR SIGNATURE AND TIME.
* READ MRASP COMMUNICATIONS. Important information is sometimes enclosed with your monthly statement. Also please read emails; we have moved towards electronic communication.
* EMAIL is also great for communication. However if you are contacting us close to/during program time with information for that day, please call – do not use email.

joshuafriedman@mrasp.org

*THANK YOU!*

### *Parent Participation and Responsibilities*

Parent involvement is essential to the operation and development of the program, to the support of staff, and to the relationship between the school and afterschool. In the enrollment contract, parents agree to contribute 8 hours per family of volunteer work per year; parents may be asked to do more if the need arises. Suggestions for parent participation and volunteer work follow:

* Board of Directors: The Board meets monthly and is responsible for all policy-making for the program including programs offered, enrollment and staffing levels, yearly budget approval, and major personnel policies. Officers are generally a president, treasurer, and secretary. The Board is elected in the spring of each year for the following year; membership is open to all parents in the program and is by self-nomination.
* Board/Director Consultants: Consultants may include legal, health, insurance, etc.
* Staff Training: Parents share their expertise with staff in areas such as team building, health issues, special needs, etc.
* Activities with the Children: Parents run an activity with the children. Past activities have included a banjo-sing-a-long, slide show, art projects, etc.
* Participation in Parent Meetings and Conferences
* Involvement in Other Projects as Needed: These may include advocacy, carpentry, painting, etc.

### *Family Resources*

Below are some resources for families.

* Mason-Rice School 617-559-9570

Learning & literacy specialists, psychologist, social worker, nurse, etc.

* Newton Department of Health and Human Services 617-796-1420

**Director of Social Services: Pam Weissman**

**Case Manager:** Nancy Storer

Various other links are on the City website such as Food Pantries, Fuel Assistance, etc.

### <http://www.newtonma.gov/civicax/filebank/documents/83291>

### Newton-Wellesley Hospital 617-245-6000

* **MSPP INTERFACE Referral Service** <https://interface.williamjames.edu/>

Collects and categorizes a wide range of valuable resources related to mental health and wellness.

There is also a toll free mental health and wellness referral help line at **888-244-6843**

**Director: Margaret Hannah** Phone:(617) 327-6777 x 1295

* Parental Stress Line 1-800-632-8188

Provides counseling; is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

* Parents Helping Parents (PHP) 1-800-882-1250

PHP is a self-help program for parents who want to improve their relationships with their children. PHP relies on specially trained volunteers from professional health and human services to help guide discussions, suggest referrals to other services, and provide assistance when needed.

### *Tuition and Termination of Enrollment Contracts*

*Financial Assistance:* MRASP awards a limited number of partial financial assistance grants on the basis of financial need. MRASP also has a contract with the state for vouchers. The voucher agency for Newton is Community Care for Kids - <https://www.qcap.org/our-programs/early-childhood-education-care/community-care-for-kids/>

 The voucher agency for Boston is Child Care Choices. - <http://childcarechoicesofboston.org/>

See the Director with questions or for further information.

*Tuition in Arrears:* Parents agree to pay the designated annual tuition due on the first of the month. If a payment is not received by the 7th, the account will be charged a penalty fee of $5.00 per day; fees will accrue without notice by MRASP and will appear on monthly statements.

*MRASP Termination of Enrollment Contract Due to Non-Payment of Tuition:*  Parents are responsible for contacting the Director to arrange for a payment plan should tuition become arrears. MRASP reserves the right to terminate enrollment services due to tuition three or more months in arrears or due to the failure to arrange and comply with a payment plan.

*Parental Termination of Enrollment Contract:* If parents withdraw their child(ren) from the Program at any time after signing the annual contract, they are liable for an additional three months' tuition. The Program is not obligated to but may attempt to fill the vacancy created. If the program does fill the vacancy, the parents' tuition obligation will be reduced by the amount of the tuition obligation of the replacement, minus the original tuition deposit.

### *Confidentiality of Records and Communications Concerning a Child and Family*

A child's records will not be released to anyone without the written consent of his/her parents or legal guardians. Parents may request access to a child's file. Copies of a child's record may be obtained by parents for a nominal fee.

Communication between Afterschool staff and classroom teachers, specialists, and support personnel about children in their care is essential to provide consistency and continuity for the children. MRASP staff is instructed to respect the confidentiality of communications from families and of records. In the enrollment contract, parents provide the authorization to facilitate communication between MRASP and Mason-Rice staff.

### *Child Guidance and Behavior Management Policy*

The goal of child guidance and behavior management is to maximize the growth and development of each child and to protect the group and the individuals within it. The staff and teaching teams work together and discuss behavior management techniques in general and for individual children.

Following the Department of Early Education and Care Regulations, MRASP has a Child Guidance and Behavior Management Policy which MRASP staff follows. The policy is set forth below:

**Children’s Responsibilities**

 To respect the rights and feelings of others; to solve problems in a constructive way

 To listen to others and to follow MRASP rules & staff directions

* To refrain from actions that could be harmful to themselves and others
* To play cooperatively and fairly; to show good sportsmanship and teamwork

 To stay within defined boundaries and ask permission/inform staff if they need to leave the area.

 To be responsible for the care and maintenance of space, equipment, and supplies

###### Child Guidance and Behavior Management Procedures

###### Determine reasonable and positive behavior expectations that are appropriate to the children’s understanding and stage of development.

* Communicate these expectations and limits to the children in a clear, consistent, concrete manner.
* Explain rules and procedures and the reasons for them to children, and where appropriate and feasible, allow children to participate in the establishment of program rules, policies and procedures.
* Determine how to best communicate with each child.
* Recognize and reinforce children’s appropriate behaviors. Provide a great deal of positive feedback and encouragement.
* Teach and encourage self-control. Help children to learn social, communication, and emotional regulation skills they can use in place of challenging behaviors.
* Intervene quickly if children are physical with one another and help them develop positive conflict resolution skills.
* Promote positive limit setting; phrase rules, concerns, and discussions with the children in positive terms. For example, "These areas of the room are open for activities" rather than "Stay out of those areas".
* Use environmental modifications, activity modifications, adult or peer support, and other teaching strategies to encourage appropriate behavior and prevent challenging behaviors.
* Anticipate problems and try to prevent them by distracting or redirecting the child, giving gentle reminders, using humor, changing group composition, revising the activity or schedule, etc.
* Recognize any factors that may be adversely influencing a child's or group's behavior (i.e. from the hospitalization of a family member to five rainy days in a row) and rectify, if possible, any of the factors.
* If the negative behavior persists, point out the natural, logical consequences in a calm, non- threatening manner.
* If necessary, the child may be asked to leave the area, the activity, etc. as previously warned. If a “quiet/thinking time” is needed, it may be no longer than one minute for each year of a child’s age. It is important that the teacher re-establish positive contact with the child after this period.
* The below practices are prohibited according to the EEC School Age Child Care Regulations 7.05(8)

(a) spanking or other corporal punishment of children;

(b) subjecting children to cruel or severe punishment such as humiliation, verbal or physical abuse, neglect, or abusive treatment including any type of physical hitting inflicted in any manner upon the body, shaking, threats, or derogatory remarks;

(c) depriving children of outdoor time, meals or snacks; force feeding children or otherwise making them eat against their will, or in any way using food as a consequence;

(d) disciplining a child for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet; forcing a child to remain in soiled clothing or to remain on the toilet, or using any other unusual or excessive practices for toileting;

(e) confining a child to a swing, high chair, crib, playpen or any other piece of equipment for an extended period of time in lieu of supervision; and

(f) excessive time-out. Time-out may not exceed one minute for each year of the child's age and must take place within an educator’s view.

**Behavioral Service Plan**

#### In the event of persistent or serious problems, various possible solutions would be explored and made part of a service plan.

* All staff is responsible for informing the Program Coordinator/Assistant Director/Director of any concerns. Communication among MRASP staff (teaching teams, Program Coordinators, Assistant Director, and Director) is essential.
* Communication with parents is crucial. After initial meeting(s), communication may take the form of phone check-ins, daily chats, further conferences, emails, etc. Regular communication is essential, and is the shared responsibility of MRASP and the family.
* Conferences or check-ins with the child's school teacher or other involved Mason-Rice staff are important.
* If available and appropriate, options for supportive services to the program, such as consultation and staff training, would be pursued.
* The child’s behavior is observed and recorded by the appropriate MRASP staff.
* A behavioral service plan is established for the child for at home and at MRASP.
* Referral(s) to Newton Public School services or to outside agencies may be made; these could be for evaluation, diagnostic or therapeutic services. This would serve to both aid the child/family and MRASP in assessing the child's needs and developing support strategies. Parental consent would be obtained prior to contacting any outside social, educational or health care resource or service provider regarding a child. If the program makes such a contact, a written record of the contact and the results will be maintained in the child’s file.

 Plan for Referral Services

* Referrals may include an assessment for additional services - social, mental health, educational, and medical services, including but not limited to dental check-up, vision or hearing screening.
* Serious concerns and significant developments must be documented and brought to the parent’s attention as soon as they arise
* All MRASP staff is responsible for communicating any concerns about a child to the Director/Assistant Director/Program Coordinator. The team, Program Coordinator, Assistant Director, and Director would meet to discuss the concerns.
* A current list of referral resources in the school and the community for children in need of social, mental health, educational or medical services would be maintained.
* The Program Coordinator/Assistant Director/Director would develop a plan for observing and recording the child’s behavior – including which staff would document, what times of day, period of observation and documentation, etc. The Program Coordinator/Assistant Director/Director would communicate with Mason-Rice School staff to see if school staff shared concerns, if any referrals were already in process, etc. The plan would include the review of the child’s record and school information by the Program Coordinator/Assistant Director/Director and a recommendation for referral.
* The Program Coordinator, Assistant Director, or Director would set up a meeting with the parents to communicate the concern and the referral recommendation.
* MRASP will obtain parental consent prior to contacting any outside social, educational or health care resource or service provider on behalf of an individual child. If such direct contacts are made by the program, MRASP will maintain a written record of such contacts and the results of such contacts.

### Child in Crisis

If a child is emotionally upset and requires one-to-one supervision for any length of time or his/her behavior presents possible harm to self, other children, or staff, the Director will call the parent or designated emergency contact to pick up the child.

### Suspension

If the Director, with teaching staff input and recommendations, determines that the actions of a child put that child, other children, or the staff at risk, or if the child continues to need one-to-one supervision, or if the child needs to be separated from the group for a lengthy portion of the day, suspension may occur. Suspension of a child will only be used in extreme circumstances, and after the following steps have been taken:

1. Director provides an opportunity to meet with parents to discuss options other than suspension or termination
2. Referrals are given to parents for evaluation, diagnostic, or therapeutic services
3. The program pursues options for supportive services to the program, including consultation and educator training
4. Developing a formal plan for behavioral intervention at home and in the program

Actions in conflict with MRASP limits and policies that may require suspension include leaving MRASP without permission, fighting, committing bodily harm to another child or staff person, smoking, possession of illegal substances.

See the above Behavioral Service Plan for more information.

### Termination of Enrollment Contracts by MRASP

Should a child's needs and behavior put himself/herself, the other children, or staff at risk of harm, or if the child regularly requires one-to-one supervision, or if the behaviors disrupt the standard operation of the program, MRASP reserves the right to terminate the enrollment contract and Afterschool services by a decision of the Director and the President of the Board or his/her Board member appointee.

### *February and April Vacation Program*

Child care during the February and April vacation is available on a limited basis for a full day, generally Tuesday through Friday. Application forms are distributed in advance/available on the website; tuition is in addition to the yearly contracted amount. Parents who enroll their child for vacation care will be obligated to pay for it, even if they use none or less than the time requested. Field trips and special events are scheduled for the week.

### *MRASP Cancellations*

If the Mason-Rice School and/or the Newton Public Schools are closed due to snow or other emergency, MRASP will also be closed. In the event of a serious storm or other emergency, the Afterschool may need to cancel or close early; this notification would be made by Constant Contact email. MRASP expects parents to make every effort to pick up their children promptly in the event of a serious storm or other emergency.

### *Late Pick-ups*

MRASP closes at 6:00; the staff must leave at that time and the buildings must be cleaned and secured by the custodian. Parents must pick up their children promptly by 6:00 P.M. Children enrolled in the 12:30-3:00 kindergarten component must be picked up by 3:00.

If parents are late and cannot be reached, staff will contact individuals from the child’s authorized Emergency and/or Pick-Up list.

A late fee of $5.00 will be charged for each 1-5 minute period after 3:00 or 6:00. Such late fees will accrue without notice by the MRASP and will appear on monthly statements. MRASP reserves the right to terminate the enrollment contract and afterschool services due to chronic lateness—more than three times in any one month or more than six times during the program's school year.

### *Dress*

Outdoor play is an important part of the Afterschool; the park adjoining the school is a source of many activities. Children should be dressed with appropriate clothing for the weather. In winter for sledding and snow play, children must have snow pants (or a change of pants), boots, hats, and mittens.

### *Health Care Policy*

MRASP has a written health care policy which addresses all health aspects of the program. Copies are available upon request.

####  Illness and Communicable Diseases & Conditions

* Children who do not attend school or who are sent home due to illness may not attend the Afterschool.
* Guidelines followed are the same as those for the Mason-Rice School. Children are excluded from participation in the program due to fever, vomiting, diarrhea, undiagnosed rash, persistent wheezing or asthma exacerbation, communicable diseases, and head lice.
* If a child has or has been exposed to a communicable disease, please inform the Director.
* Parents will be notified in writing of communicable diseases/conditions such as lice, scarlet fever, impetigo, ring worm, scabies, Fifth's Disease, and chicken pox. The Director will first check with the Mason-Rice School nurse to see she/he has notified parents. If so, MRASP will not send a duplicate notification.

#### Emergency Health Care

If emergency health care is needed, Newton-Wellesley Hospital is used or the hospital directed by the EMTs. On a field trip, the nearest facility would be used.

#### Mandated Reporting

MRASP staff is deemed mandated reporters by the State of Massachusetts. Any suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect must by law be reported to the Department of Children and Families (DCF).

#### Medication Dispensation

* Requirementsforthedispensationof *prescription* medication: The MRASP medication authorization form must be filled out and signed by the parent. Medication must be in the original bottle with the prescription label. Most pharmacies will give you two containers with a prescription label if you request it.
* Requirements for the dispensation of *non-prescription* medication: The MRASP medication authorization form must be filled out and signed by the parent. A Physician's note with information that is found on a prescription label must also be submitted.
* No child may self-administer prescription or non-prescription medication with the exception of inhalers for asthma (above a certain age). With the appropriate parental and physician's authorization, a child may carry his/her own inhaler and self-administer. However the child must still go to a staff person in order for the administration of medication to be logged. An extra inhaler must also be on-site at MRASP.
* If a child has a regular medication and the parent decides NOT to bring it to MRASP, written authorization from the parent and physician must be provided.
* *PLEASE* do not send any medication (with the exception of inhalers as explained above) in your child's lunch box, backpack, etc.

Individual Health Care Plans (IHC)

If a child has a chronic medical condition which has been diagnosed by a licensed health care practitioner, families must submit an IHC. The plan must describe the chronic condition, its symptoms, any medical treatment that may be necessary while the child is in care, the potential side effects of that treatment, and the potential consequences to the child’s health if the treatment is not administered. An IHCP form can be obtained in the MRASP office.

### *Snack and Lunch*

Any child enrolled for more than two and a half-hours per day will receive a snack provided by MRASP. Lunch is provided by the parents — either a lunch brought from home or purchased through the Mason-Rice School lunch program; milk/juice only may also be purchased through the lunch program. Questions regarding the purchasing of milk or school lunch should be directed Sodexo, the Newton Public Schools lunch provider. Children who are at the Hut are not able to purchase school, lunch or drink.

Nutritious suggestions for lunch include milk or juice, a protein (tuna, yogurt, cheese, etc.), a bread /rice/pasta, and fruit/vegetable.

### *Transportation Plan*

Kindergarten and 1st grade children are picked up from their classrooms or are met by MRASP staff. Second and third graders walk to their program components at Mason-Rice unsupervised; fourth through fifth graders walk unsupervised to the Hut.

Transportation for field trips includes walking, public transportation, and chartered buses. Staff vehicles are not used for field trips.

In an emergency requiring immediate medical attention, 911 would be called and an ambulance requested.

### *Student Interns and Research Projects*

Various local colleges may send education students to do an internship or observation in MRASP. These students are carefully supervised and work closely with MRASP staff. Requests to do a research project are reviewed by the Director. If a project is accepted, parents are notified and written permission is obtained.

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