The New Walk School *Bespoke support. Brighter futures.*

Anti-Bullying Policy

The New Walk School policy framework

Policy	Anti-Bullying Policy	**Version**	V1
Issue date	08 May 2026	**Next review**	08 May 2027
Policy owner	Headteacher	**Approved by**	Directors of The New Walk School Ltd

1. About The New Walk School

The New Walk School is an independent specialist day school for pupils aged 7 to 19 who have Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs, autism spectrum conditions, learning difficulties and communication difficulties. The school is located on New Walk in Leicester — a setting with a long-standing association with academic life — and is operated by The New Walk School Ltd, a Company Limited by Guarantee.

The majority of our pupils hold an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and many have experienced previous educational placements that did not meet their needs. Our offer combines a broad academic curriculum with an in-built therapeutic provision rooted in the PACE model — Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy — developed by Dr Dan Hughes. PACE is a relational approach designed to build trust, regulate distress and create the safety from which learning can take place. It informs how every adult in the school speaks to, listens to and works with our pupils.

2. The PACE therapeutic model in practice

Bullying is a relational injury, and The New Walk School treats it as such. PACE shapes our response to both the pupil who has been hurt and the pupil who has caused harm:

- Playfulness — staff use a light, warm tone to reduce shame and de-escalate distress, using humour appropriate to the pupil and the moment.
- Acceptance — pupils' feelings and inner experiences are accepted unconditionally, even where specific behaviours are not. Acceptance is communicated before any limit is set.
- Curiosity — staff seek to understand the meaning behind a pupil's behaviour rather than reacting to its surface, asking 'what is this telling me?'
- Empathy — staff name and stay with the pupil's emotional experience, communicating that the pupil is not alone with what they feel.

PACE is not a behaviour-management tool layered on top of practice; it is the relational foundation from which all other aspects of the school operate.

3. Definition of bullying

The New Walk School adopts the definition used in the DfE's Preventing and Tackling Bullying advice: bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. It often involves an imbalance of power.

Bullying can take many forms, including: physical (hitting, pushing, taking belongings); verbal (name-calling, insults, threats); social or relational (deliberate exclusion, spreading rumours); cyber (using technology to harass or humiliate); and prejudice-based (targeting protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, including race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability or SEND).

3a. A note on our pupil population

Many of our pupils have communication differences and may not always read social cues in the way other pupils do. Some interactions that look like bullying are in fact dysregulation, mis-attunement or unmet sensory needs. Staff investigate carefully and respond to what is actually happening, while never minimising the experience of a pupil who feels they have been bullied.

4. Prevention

Prevention starts with relationships. The school's relational climate, daily check-ins and PACE-informed practice are the first line of defence against bullying. In addition, the curriculum explicitly teaches:

- Healthy and unhealthy friendships, in PSHE and RSHE.
- Respect for difference, in tutor time, assemblies and SMSC enrichment.
- Online safety, in Computing and PSHE.
- Conflict resolution and restorative skills, modelled across the school day.

5. Reporting and response

Pupils are encouraged to tell any trusted adult if they or another pupil are being bullied. Reports can also be made by parents, carers and other pupils. Every report is taken seriously, recorded on the bullying log, and responded to within 24 hours by a member of staff named on the school's pastoral structure.

The response includes: separate, regulated conversations with each pupil involved; involvement of parents/carers; a written agreement about what happens next; targeted support for the pupil who has been hurt; and structured therapeutic work with the pupil who has caused harm, focused on understanding impact and repairing the relationship.

6. Recording, monitoring and reporting

All bullying incidents are logged. The DSL reviews logs at least half-termly to identify patterns by individual, group, type or protected characteristic. Trends are reported to the Directors and used to inform PSHE and RSHE planning.

7. Roles and responsibilities

- Headteacher — overall responsibility for implementation and review.
- DSL — review of safeguarding implications of all bullying reports.
- Pastoral lead — day-to-day response and family liaison.
- All staff — proactive relational climate, prompt reporting, follow-through.

Monitoring and review

This policy is reviewed annually by the Headteacher in consultation with the senior leadership team and the Directors of The New Walk School Ltd. It will be reviewed earlier where there is a material change in legislation, statutory guidance or the operational needs of the school. The most recent version is held on the school's policy register and is made available to parents, carers and staff on request.

Linked policies and documents

This policy should be read alongside the school's wider policy suite, including: Safeguarding and Child Protection; SEND; Behaviour and Relationships; Anti-Bullying; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion; Health and Safety; Curriculum; and Complaints.