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

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

The New Walk School policy framework

Policy	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion 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

Equality, diversity and inclusion are not a separate workstream at The New Walk School; they are intrinsic to the PACE-informed culture. Acceptance of every pupil — exactly as they are — is the foundation:

- 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. Statutory framework

This policy is in line with the Equality Act 2010, including the Public Sector Equality Duty as it applies to schools, and the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

4. Statement of intent

The New Walk School is committed to advancing equality of opportunity, eliminating discrimination, and fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. Protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

5. Equality objectives

The school sets and reviews equality objectives at least every four years. Current objectives are:

- To narrow gaps in attendance, attainment, behaviour outcomes and progression destinations between groups of pupils.
- To embed diverse representation across the curriculum, particularly in literature, history, art and PSHE.
- To make the school's environment, information and activities accessible to pupils with all categories of SEND.
- To monitor and respond to any patterns of discriminatory or prejudice-related incidents through staff training and curriculum content.

6. Anti-discrimination

Discrimination, harassment and victimisation by any member of the school community are not tolerated. Pupil incidents are addressed under the Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policies; staff incidents are addressed under the Staff Code of Conduct and disciplinary procedures.

7. Reasonable adjustments

The school makes reasonable adjustments for pupils, staff, parents/carers and visitors with disabilities. Adjustments are anticipatory wherever possible; specific adjustments are agreed in writing as part of EHCP review, recruitment, or visitor planning as relevant.

8. Curriculum

The curriculum reflects diverse experiences, identities, histories and contributions. PSHE and RSHE address equality, identity and respect for difference in age-appropriate ways. The British values curriculum addresses tolerance and mutual respect.

9. Recruitment and employment

Recruitment, selection, training and promotion are conducted on the basis of role-related criteria. The school monitors workforce diversity and acts on any patterns of inequality.

10. Monitoring and review

Equality data — attendance, exclusions, attainment, complaints, recruitment — is reviewed at least termly by the Headteacher and reported annually to the Directors. Equality objectives are published on the school's website.

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.