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

Fire Safety Policy

The New Walk School policy framework

Policy	Fire Safety 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.

3. Statutory framework

This policy meets the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, the Fire Safety Act 2021, the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022, and the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, Part 3.

4. Statement of intent

The New Walk School Ltd is the Responsible Person under the Fire Safety Order for the school's premises on New Walk, Leicester. The school maintains a current fire risk assessment, takes all reasonable steps to prevent fires, and ensures that pupils, staff, visitors and contractors can be evacuated safely if a fire occurs.

5. Fire risk assessment

A suitable and sufficient fire risk assessment is in place, completed by a competent assessor and reviewed at least annually and after any significant change to the premises, occupancy or activities. Significant findings are recorded and acted upon, with progress tracked by the Health and Safety Lead.

6. Fire prevention

The school controls fire risk by: managing combustible materials and storage; planned electrical and gas safety inspections; safe management of cooking, science practical work and any other ignition sources; and a smoke-free policy across the site.

7. Fire detection and alarms

The premises are protected by an addressable fire alarm system with detection in all areas, weekly call-point tests, six-monthly servicing and annual certification. Emergency lighting is tested monthly (function) and annually (full duration).

8. Means of escape

Escape routes are kept clear at all times. Final exits are unobstructed. Travel distances are within the limits in the fire risk assessment. Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) are produced for any pupil, staff member or regular visitor whose mobility, sensory or communication needs require a tailored plan.

9. Fire drills and assembly

Fire drills are held at least once per term, including at least one drill per year that simulates an unexpected blocked exit. Drills are recorded, debriefed and used to refine the evacuation plan. The assembly point is communicated to all pupils, staff and visitors.

10. PACE-informed evacuation

Although fire safety is a regulatory matter, the school recognises that fire alarms and evacuations can be highly distressing for pupils with autism, sensory needs and trauma histories. Staff prepare pupils through pre-warning where drills are scheduled (without compromising the unannounced element), use known regulating phrases during evacuation, and provide post-drill debriefs that allow pupils to talk about how it felt. This is integral to making fire procedures workable for our pupil population.

11. Fire wardens and training

A team of trained fire wardens is in place, including at least one warden per teaching area. All staff receive fire safety training at induction and annually thereafter.

12. Records

The fire log book records risk assessment reviews, drills, alarm tests, equipment inspections, training, false alarms and any actual fire events.

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.