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

Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (RSHE) Policy

The New Walk School policy framework

Policy	Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (RSHE) Policy	**Version**	V1
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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

RSHE is, at heart, a subject about relationships. PACE shapes how it is taught — pupils need to feel accepted, listened to with curiosity, and held with empathy when discussing intimate or difficult topics:

- 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 Children and Social Work Act 2017, the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education Regulations 2019, and the DfE's statutory guidance on RSHE. RSE is statutory at secondary; Relationships Education is statutory at primary; and Health Education is statutory across both phases. Our policy is also informed by the SEND Code of Practice 2015, recognising that pupils with SEND need RSHE that is accessible, repeated, and personalised.

4. Definition and approach

RSHE at The New Walk School covers relationships of all kinds, healthy and unhealthy patterns, online safety, bodies and growing up, consent (developmentally appropriately taught), and physical and mental health. We teach RSHE in age- and stage-appropriate ways. For some pupils, this means content is taught at a developmental rather than chronological level.

5. Curriculum content

Primary phase (KS2)

- Families and people who care for me.
- Caring friendships and respectful relationships.
- Online relationships and being safe.
- Mental wellbeing and physical health.
- Changing adolescent body.

Secondary phase (KS3, KS4 and KS5)

- Healthy and unhealthy relationships, including intimate and sexual relationships.
- Consent, the law on sexual offences, and harmful sexual behaviours.
- Online safety, sharing nudes and pornography.
- Mental health and wellbeing across the lifecourse.
- Drugs, alcohol and tobacco.
- Contraception, sexual health and reproductive choice.
- Personal safety, including in relationships and online.

6. Pupils with SEND

Our pupils may need RSHE content that is taught using symbol-supported text, visual sequences, social stories, role-play, and explicit, repeated practice. Some content is taught individually rather than in groups. Materials are reviewed for accessibility before being used. Staff teaching RSHE to pupils with SEND receive specific training.

7. Right to withdraw

Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from non-statutory components of sex education within RSE. There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or Health Education. Where a parent requests withdrawal, the Headteacher meets with the parent to discuss the request and the impact, and ensures that the pupil receives the school's standard alternative.

8. Working with parents

Parents are consulted on the RSHE curriculum. Curriculum maps and key materials are made available on request and discussed at curriculum meetings. The school welcomes parents' perspectives and uses them to refine teaching, while maintaining its responsibility to teach the statutory content.

9. Safeguarding

RSHE lessons can prompt disclosures. All staff teaching RSHE are familiar with the school's safeguarding procedures, use ground-rules at the start of every lesson, and pass any disclosures to the DSL the same day.

10. Review

This policy and the RSHE curriculum are reviewed annually by the PSHE/RSHE lead and the Headteacher in consultation with parents.

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.