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

Recruitment, Selection and Vetting Policy

The New Walk School policy framework

Policy	Recruitment, Selection and Vetting 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

Staff who work at The New Walk School need to be able to work in a PACE-informed way. We assess for this from the moment of application onwards — alongside the rigorous safer recruitment checks required of every specialist school:

- 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 KCSIE Part 3, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (Part 4), the Education Act 2002, the Childcare (Disqualification) and Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) (Amendment) Regulations 2018, the Equality Act 2010 and the UK GDPR.

4. Statement of intent

The New Walk School Ltd is committed to safer recruitment. Every recruitment exercise is led by a panel including at least one person who has completed accredited safer recruitment training within the last five years. The school applies all the checks required by KCSIE before a person begins work, and treats safeguarding as the central thread of the process — from advert to induction.

5. The recruitment process

- Safeguarding is named in every job advert and explicitly addressed in every job description.
- Application packs include a clear statement of the school's commitment to safeguarding and the requirement for an enhanced DBS check.
- All applicants complete the school's standard application form, which captures full employment history with explanations for any gaps.
- Curriculum vitae alone are not accepted in lieu of the application form.
- References are sought in writing on shortlisted candidates before interview, including from the most recent employer working with children.
- Interviews include scenario-based questions exploring safeguarding awareness, attitudes to children with complex needs, and capacity for PACE-informed practice.

6. Pre-employment checks

The following checks are completed before a candidate begins work:

- Identity, including verification of right to work in the UK.
- Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, including children's barred list check for posts in regulated activity.
- Prohibition from teaching check (TRA) for teaching posts.
- Prohibition from management check (Section 128) for senior leadership and Director-level appointments.
- Verification of professional qualifications relevant to the post.
- Overseas checks where the candidate has lived outside the UK.
- Childcare disqualification self-declaration where relevant.

- Health, fitness for role, and reasonable adjustments.
- Two satisfactory references, at least one from the current/most recent employer working with children.

7. Single Central Record

The school maintains a Single Central Record (SCR) in line with KCSIE. The SCR is updated within one working day of any new appointment or check, and audited each term by the DSL and the Headteacher.

8. Volunteers, contractors and supply staff

Volunteers and contractors who work in regulated activity have the same level of check as employees. Supply staff are sourced through agencies that confirm in writing the checks they have undertaken; the school cross-checks identity on arrival.

9. Induction

Every new member of staff completes an induction that includes: safeguarding (KCSIE Part 1, Annex B and the school's Safeguarding Policy); the Staff Code of Conduct; PACE training; behaviour and relationships; data protection; health and safety; and role-specific training. Induction is recorded and signed off by the line manager.

10. Ongoing safeguarding

The school operates a continuous culture of safer practice through regular training, low-level concerns reporting (see Managing Allegations and Low-Level Concerns Policy), reflective supervision, and an annual re-issue of safeguarding documentation.

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.