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

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy

The New Walk School policy framework

Policy	Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) 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

Every pupil at The New Walk School has SEND, and our entire offer is shaped around this. PACE underpins how we identify, plan for and review provision:

- 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 written in line with: the Children and Families Act 2014, Part 3; the SEND Regulations 2014; the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (2015); the Equality Act 2010; the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014; and KCSIE.

4. Definition of SEND

In line with the Code of Practice, a child has SEND if they have a learning difficulty or disability that calls for special educational provision to be made for them — that is, provision different from or additional to that normally available to pupils of the same age.

5. Pupils served by The New Walk School

The school serves pupils aged 7–19 whose needs span:

- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs.
- Communication and interaction needs, including autism spectrum conditions.
- Cognition and learning needs, including moderate learning difficulties and specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia.
- Sensory and/or physical needs, where these can be reasonably met by the school.

The majority of pupils hold an EHCP. Many present with co-occurring needs and a history of educational placements that did not meet them. Several have experienced trauma.

6. The school's SEND offer

Therapeutic provision

Therapeutic provision is integral, not bolted on. The PACE model is embedded in classroom practice, pastoral support and the work of the school's clinical team. Pupils have access to:

- Daily PACE-informed relational support from teaching and support staff.
- A therapeutic mentor who works with pupils 1:1 and in small groups.
- Speech and language therapy input where indicated by EHCP or assessment.
- Occupational therapy input where indicated, including sensory diets.
- Educational psychology consultation.
- Access to low-arousal and sensory spaces during the school day.

Curriculum adaptation

All pupils access a broad and balanced curriculum, adapted to their starting points. Detail is set out in the Curriculum Policy. Adaptation strategies include differentiated tasks, small-step targets, multi-sensory teaching, scaffolded reading and writing, and explicit teaching of executive function and study skills.

Personalised planning

Every pupil has a Pupil Profile that summarises their strengths, needs, sensory profile, communication preferences, regulation strategies and EHCP outcomes. Pupil Profiles are co-produced with the pupil and family, shared with all staff who work with the pupil, and reviewed each term.

7. Roles and responsibilities

SENCO

The SENCO holds the National Award for SEN Co-ordination (or is working towards it within three years of appointment). The SENCO co-ordinates provision, advises teachers, manages EHCP annual reviews, liaises with families and external agencies, and reports termly to the Headteacher and Directors.

Teachers

Every teacher is a teacher of pupils with SEND. Teachers are responsible for the progress and development of every pupil in their class, supported by the SENCO and clinical team.

Headteacher and Directors

The Headteacher reports to the Directors on the impact of SEND provision at least termly. The Directors ensure that SEND provision meets statutory requirements and is appropriately resourced.

8. EHCP annual reviews and transitions

Annual reviews are held in line with statutory timescales and are co-produced with the pupil and family. The reviews from Year 9 onwards have a clear focus on Preparation for Adulthood, addressing employment, independent living, community inclusion and health. Transition planning starts early and is supported by careers guidance, college tasters, supported work experience and life-skills teaching.

9. Working with parents and carers

Parents and carers are full partners in their child's education. The school operates an open-door approach for parents/carers, holds termly review meetings, and ensures that all written communication is accessible. Where there are disagreements, the school works with the family to resolve them; where this is not possible, the family is signposted to local SEND mediation services and to SENDIASS.

10. Complaints about SEND provision

Concerns are raised in the first instance with the SENCO or class teacher. Unresolved concerns follow the school's Complaints Policy. Parents may also approach Leicester City Council and, where applicable, the SEND Tribunal.

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.