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

Staff Code of Conduct

The New Walk School policy framework

Policy	Staff Code of Conduct	**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

The Code of Conduct is, in part, a description of what PACE looks like at adult-to-pupil level. Staff are expected to embody PACE consistently — not because it is on a poster, but because it is the way professional adults at The New Walk School relate to children:

- 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. Scope

This Code applies to all employees, agency staff, contractors, volunteers and Directors of The New Walk School Ltd. It is read in conjunction with KCSIE Part 4, the Safeguarding Policy, and the Recruitment, Selection and Vetting Policy.

4. Professional behaviour

- Treat every pupil, family and colleague with respect, dignity and equality.
- Maintain professional boundaries at all times — physical, emotional, social and digital.
- Use language that is respectful, non-discriminatory and proportionate to the situation.
- Speak about pupils as you would want them to be spoken about — including in private staff conversations.
- Model the expectations the school holds for pupils — including emotional regulation.

5. Safer working practice

- Do not be alone with a pupil in a closed space without a planned, recorded reason and visibility.
- Do not give your personal contact details, social media accounts or personal email to pupils or their families.
- Do not transport pupils in your personal vehicle without explicit written approval and a documented reason.
- Do not give gifts to or accept gifts from pupils or their families beyond modest cards or items appropriate to the relationship.
- Do not photograph, film or record pupils on personal devices.
- Do not use social media to communicate with current pupils.
- Be alert to grooming patterns, including in your own behaviour and that of colleagues — and raise low-level concerns under the Managing Allegations and Low-Level Concerns Policy.

6. Physical contact

Physical contact at The New Walk School is sometimes necessary and frequently helpful: comforting a distressed pupil, supporting intimate care, demonstrating in PE, supporting a pupil on a visit. All physical contact is purposeful, proportionate, age- and developmentally-appropriate, witnessable, and offered rather than imposed where the pupil can choose. Staff are reflective about their own use of physical contact and discuss it openly in supervision.

7. Confidentiality and information sharing

Staff handle pupil information in line with the Data Protection Policy. Information about pupils is shared only with those who have a legitimate need to know. Safeguarding information is shared without consent where necessary to protect a child.

8. Use of school equipment and IT

Staff use school IT equipment in line with the Acceptable Use Agreement. School devices are not used for personal matters except in line with that Agreement. Staff do not access pupil records outside of legitimate work tasks.

9. Conflicts of interest

Staff declare any potential conflict of interest — including pre-existing personal relationships with families admitted to the school — to the Headteacher in writing. The school will agree a plan to manage the conflict.

10. Behaviour outside work

Staff conduct outside working hours that brings, or could bring, the school into disrepute, or that raises questions about a person's suitability to work with children, may be a disciplinary matter. Staff are expected to use social media in a manner consistent with their professional role.

11. Reporting concerns

Staff have a duty to raise concerns about the conduct of colleagues — even minor concerns — under the school's Managing Allegations and Low-Level Concerns Policy and the Whistleblowing Policy. Raising concerns in good faith is protected.

12. Breach of the Code

Breach of this Code may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal, and where applicable, referral to the DBS, the TRA, the LADO and the police.

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.