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

Vision and Aims

The New Walk School policy framework

Policy	Vision and Aims	**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

Our vision is built on PACE. Pupils who have struggled in education arrive at The New Walk School needing to be met before they can be taught:

- 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.

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3. Our vision

The New Walk School exists to give children and young people who have been let down by previous education a place that meets them, holds them, teaches them and launches them. Our vision is for every pupil to leave us with a stronger sense of who they are, a meaningful set of qualifications, the practical skills to live well, and a confident plan for what comes next.

We are a specialist setting for pupils aged 7 to 19 with SEMH needs, autism spectrum conditions, learning difficulties and communication difficulties. We are based on New Walk in Leicester — a setting with a long-standing tradition of academic life — and we draw on that environment to lift our pupils' horizons. Bespoke support. Brighter futures.

4. Our aims

For our pupils, we aim:

- To build trusting relationships in which they feel safe enough to learn.
- To provide a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum that opens, rather than narrows, their futures.
- To develop their literacy, numeracy and digital fluency to functional levels and beyond.
- To develop their emotional regulation, resilience and self-awareness through embedded therapeutic work.
- To prepare them for adulthood — for work, further study, independence and citizenship.
- To give them experiences beyond the classroom that broaden their aspirations.

For our families, we aim:

- To work in genuine partnership, with open communication and shared planning.
- To be honest about progress, challenges and what we are doing to address them.
- To make the school a place that families can rely on.

For our staff, we aim:

- To provide high-quality training, supervision and support, including in PACE practice.
- To create a workplace where adults are also held with care, so that they can extend that care to pupils.

5. Our values

- Relationships first — every pupil deserves to be known.
- Curiosity, not judgement — about pupils, families and one another.
- High expectations, scaffolded support — we never lower the ceiling, but we always reinforce the floor.
- Honesty and repair — we tell the truth, and when we get it wrong, we put it right.
- Bespoke support, brighter futures — the strapline is the standard.

6. The learning environment

The school is organised into small teaching groups with a high adult-to-pupil ratio. Every pupil has access to quiet, sensory-considered spaces. The day blends academic teaching, therapeutic input, life skills and enrichment. Trips into Leicester and beyond are a planned part of the curriculum, building on the city's cultural, civic and natural assets to give pupils real-world learning.

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.