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

Whistleblowing Policy

The New Walk School policy framework

Policy	Whistleblowing 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.

3. Purpose

This policy provides a clear route for any member of staff, volunteer, contractor or Director who has serious concerns about wrongdoing within The New Walk School to raise those concerns confidently and safely. It is in line with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (as amended by the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013) and complements the Safeguarding Policy and the Managing Allegations and Low-Level Concerns Policy.

4. What is a qualifying disclosure?

A qualifying disclosure under the Public Interest Disclosure Act includes: a criminal offence; a failure to comply with legal obligations; a miscarriage of justice; risks to health and safety; environmental damage; or deliberate concealment of any of these. At The New Walk School, this also covers serious safeguarding concerns about leaders and the conduct of the school.

5. How to raise a concern

- Internally to the Headteacher in the first instance.
- To the Chair of the Directors where the concern is about the Headteacher or where the matter has not been resolved.
- Externally to the LADO, Ofsted, the DfE, or the police, where the concern is about leadership at all levels of the school or where internal escalation is unsafe or has failed.

Concerns may be raised in writing or verbally. The school will not require concerns to be raised in any specific format.

6. Protection from detriment

Staff who raise concerns in good faith are protected from detriment under the Public Interest Disclosure Act. This includes protection from dismissal, disciplinary action, or any form of retaliation. Anonymous disclosures will be considered, although the school encourages openness because it makes investigation more effective.

7. How concerns are handled

On receipt of a concern, the Headteacher (or Chair) will: acknowledge the concern within five working days; assess whether it falls within this policy or another (e.g. complaint, grievance, allegation); appoint an investigator with no conflict of interest; investigate and report findings within a reasonable timescale; communicate the outcome to the discloser to the extent that confidentiality permits.

8. False or malicious disclosures

This policy protects disclosures made in good faith. Disclosures made maliciously or for personal gain may be a disciplinary matter.

9. External support

Staff considering a disclosure may seek confidential advice from the charity Protect (formerly Public Concern at Work) — protect-advice.org.uk — or from their trade union.

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.