

# Attendance Policy

Version: V02  
Date of issue: July 2026  
Reviewed: July 2026  
Date of Review: July 2027

Policy Author: Eve Bartlet – Director of Education

Ratified by: Fitri Brock - Proprietor

Outcome: The purpose of the plan is to:  
Promoting and modelling good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence.

Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.

Acting early to address patterns of absence.

Rewarding regular attendance.

EMPOWERING MINDS, NAVIGATING FUTURES

This policy is one of a series of school policies that, taken together, are designed to form a comprehensive statement of the school's aspiration to provide an outstanding education for each of its students and of the mechanisms and procedures in place to achieve this. Accordingly, this policy should be read alongside these policies. In particular it should be read in conjunction with the policies covering equality and diversity, Health and Safety, safeguarding and child protection.

All of these policies have been written, not simply to meet statutory and other requirements, but to enable and evidence the work that the whole school is undertaking to ensure the implementation of its core values.

While this current policy document may be referred to elsewhere in Helm Academy documentation, including particulars of employment, it is non-contractual.

### Policy Issues and Updates

| Version Number | Created/<br>Reviewed/<br>Amended By | Date<br>Created/<br>Reviewed/<br>Amended | Comment                                             | Next Review<br>Date |
|----------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1              | E. Bartlet                          | March 2026                               | Policy updated – new framework aligned              | 01/03/2027          |
| 2              | E. Bartlet                          | July 2026                                | KCSIE 2026 updates and July 2026 attendance updates | 01/07/2027          |
|                |                                     |                                          |                                                     |                     |

### Policy Statement

Helm Academy maintains uncompromising expectations regarding attendance, punctuality and behaviour. Excellent attendance is fundamental to safeguarding, academic success, wellbeing and personal development.

Attendance is treated as a whole-school priority and a core leadership responsibility. Attendance is everyone's responsibility: leaders, governors, staff, pupils and parents.



# Helm Academy

EMPOWERING MINDS, NAVIGATING FUTURES

## Contents

|                                                                                        |           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Aims .....                                                                             | 4         |
| Legislation and guidance .....                                                         | 4         |
| Definitions.....                                                                       | 4         |
| Roles and responsibilities .....                                                       | 5         |
| The Governing Body.....                                                                | 5         |
| The Deputy Head Teacher .....                                                          | 5         |
| The Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy DSLs.....                                      | 6         |
| Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers will be responsible for: ..... | 6         |
| School office staff .....                                                              | 6         |
| Recording attendance.....                                                              | 7         |
| Attendance register .....                                                              | 7         |
| Unplanned absence .....                                                                | 8         |
| Planned absence .....                                                                  | 8         |
| Lateness and punctuality .....                                                         | 8         |
| Following up absence.....                                                              | 9         |
| Reporting to parents.....                                                              | 9         |
| Authorised and unauthorised absence .....                                              | 9         |
| Approval for term-time absence.....                                                    | 9         |
| Valid reasons for authorised absence .....                                             | 9         |
| Reducing persistent absence .....                                                      | 9         |
| Legal sanctions.....                                                                   | 10        |
| Strategies for promoting attendance.....                                               | 10        |
| <b>Attendance monitoring .....</b>                                                     | <b>10</b> |
| <b>Behaviour, Culture and Attendance .....</b>                                         | <b>11</b> |
| Review of implementation.....                                                          | 12        |
| Links with other policies.....                                                         | 12        |
| Appendix 1: Attendance codes .....                                                     | 14        |
| Appendix 2: Contacts .....                                                             | 15        |
| Appendix 3: Attendance Road Map .....                                                  | 16        |

## Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- ✓ Promoting and modelling good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence.
- ✓ Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.
- ✓ Acting early to address patterns of absence.
- ✓ Rewarding regular attendance.
- ✓ Establish a culture where excellent attendance is the norm
- ✓ Identify barriers early and remove them swiftly
- ✓ Reduce persistent absence (15%+) and prevent severe absence (50%+)
- ✓ Ensure vulnerable pupils receive targeted support
- ✓ Promote punctuality and readiness to learn
- ✓ Hold all stakeholders accountable for attendance standards
- ✓ Attendance below 95% is treated as a concern and triggers review

Through our school team, we will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Where attendance concerns emerge, Helm Academy will adopt a graduated response that prioritises support, Family Help, early intervention, partnership with parents and carers, and multi-agency working before enforcement measures are considered, unless safeguarding risk requires immediate escalation.

## Legislation and guidance

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- ✓ Education Act 1996
- ✓ Equality Act 2010
- ✓ The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)
- ✓ DfE 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026)'
- ✓ DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- ✓ DfE 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSiE)'
- ✓ DfE Working together to improve school attendance July 2026
- ✓ DfE (2023) 'Providing remote education'

Attendance is integral to safeguarding procedures.

Attendance, persistent absence, repeat absence and prolonged absence are recognised as potential indicators of abuse, neglect, exploitation, child criminal exploitation, child sexual exploitation, mental health concerns and children missing education. Staff will maintain professional curiosity and respond in line with safeguarding procedures and KCSiE 2026.

## Definitions

The school defines "absence" as:

- ✓ Not attending school for any reason.

The school defines an "authorised absence" as:

- ✓ An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.

- ✓ Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time for which the school has granted leave.
- ✓ Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave.
- ✓ An absence due to a family emergency.
- ✓ Exceptional circumstances

The school defines an “unauthorised absence” as:

- ✓ Parents keeping children away from school unnecessarily or without reason.
- ✓ Truancy before or during the school day.
- ✓ Absences which have not been properly explained.
- ✓ Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- ✓ Leaving school for no reason during the day.
- ✓ Arriving after registers close
- ✓ Term-time holiday without approval

Persistent Absence (PA): 10% or more absence across the academic year.

Pupils who miss 10% or more of sessions are considered persistently absent and will receive targeted attendance support.

Severe Absence (SA): 50% or more absence across the academic year.

## Roles and responsibilities

### **The Governing Body**

The Governing Body reviews attendance data termly, challenges leaders on trends, conducts attendance deep dives and ensures statutory compliance.

- ✓ Promoting the importance of school attendance across the schools with the use and implementation of policies and ethos
- ✓ Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- ✓ Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- ✓ Monitoring attendance figures for the whole group
- ✓ Making sure the schools are providing staff with adequate training on attendance
- ✓ Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

### **The Executive / Headteacher**

The Executive Headteacher provides strategic oversight and ensures attendance is embedded within the School Development Plan.

Is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school. They also hold the Senior Leadership Team to account for the implementation of this policy.

### **The Deputy Head Teacher**

The Deputy Headteacher oversees operational monitoring, intervention and formal processes.

The is Deputy Head Teacher responsible for:

- ✓ Day to day implementation and management of this policy at the school.
- ✓ Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to wider SLT and Headteacher.
- ✓ Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

## **The Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy DSLs / Attendance Champion (Eve Bartlet)**

The Designated Safeguarding Lead monitors attendance as a safeguarding indicator and oversees multi-agency support where required, and holds the position of Attendance Champion.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead acts as the School Senior Attendance Champion and provides strategic leadership for attendance improvement, intervention and analysis.

The DSL will ensure that attendance information is routinely triangulated with safeguarding records, behaviour information, SEND data, mental health concerns, child protection plans, Children in Need plans, Family Help involvement, children with a social worker, looked after children and any indicators of exploitation. Attendance will not be considered in isolation and will form part of the School's wider safeguarding oversight arrangements. The DSL will ensure that attendance concerns are discussed during safeguarding meetings and that emerging patterns of risk are identified and addressed promptly. The DSL will maintain oversight of vulnerable pupils whose attendance may place them at increased risk of harm, abuse, neglect, exploitation or becoming missing from education.

The DSL will:

The DSL will ensure attendance concerns are triangulated with safeguarding, behaviour, mental health, SEND, children in need, child protection and children with a social worker information to identify vulnerability at the earliest opportunity. The DSL will also consider Family Help and multi-agency intervention where attendance concerns indicate emerging need.

- ✓ Monitor attendance data across the School and at an individual pupil level where there is a concern.
- ✓ Report concerns about attendance to the Headteacher.
- ✓ Work with the Deputy Head Teacher, Pupil Wellbeing Lead and Local Authority Attendance Team to tackle persistent absence.
- ✓ Arrange calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.
- ✓ Advise the Headteacher when/whether to issue fixed-penalty notices.

Ensure that prolonged, repeated or unexplained absence is considered within the context of possible safeguarding concerns, including neglect, child criminal exploitation, child sexual exploitation, mental health concerns, domestic abuse, serious violence, online harm and contextual safeguarding risks.

Lead and coordinate multi-agency responses where attendance concerns indicate an emerging safeguarding need. Ensure timely referrals to Family Help, Early Help services, Children's Social Care, health professionals or other agencies where concerns meet local thresholds.

Exercise professional curiosity where attendance patterns, explanations for absence or changes in attendance do not align with known information about the child or family.

### **Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers will be responsible for:**

- ✓ Following the attendance policy, and for ensuring pupils do so too. They will also be responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- ✓ Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- ✓ Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- ✓ Designated members of staff will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of each afternoon session.

### **School office staff**

Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes.

School office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system. Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils, to actively

seek out on the day the DSL, Deputy DSL, Form Tutor or Headteacher if they believe there may be any welfare concerns.

**Attendance forms part of performance management discussions.**

## Recording attendance

### Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register. Pastoral Support staff (taxi duty) are responsible for taking the attendance register during morning arrival and tutors take the register during afternoon tutor time. Morning Pastoral Support staff pass information on to the reception team, to input on to our School MIS (Iris Adapt). Any unknown absences will be forwarded to our Senior team to follow up. This will be completed by 9:30. Registers are retained for six years. Amendments include the original entry, amended entry, reason, date and staff member responsible

Staff will mark whether every pupil is:

- ✓ Present.
- ✓ Attending an approved off-site educational activity.
- ✓ Absent.
- ✓ Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- ✓ The original entry.
- ✓ The amended entry.
- ✓ The reason for the amendment.
- ✓ The date on which the amendment was made.
- ✓ The name and position of the person who made the amendment.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for six years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school building is open to pupils from 8am each day. Monday – Thursday lessons finish at 4pm, when pupils are expected to be collected, and the building is closed by 4:30pm – Fridays pupils finish lessons and lunch by 1pm ready for collection and the building is closed by 1:30pm.

Pupils must arrive in school by 0830 on each school day. The school is open to all pupils at 0800 each morning.

The register for the first session will be taken at 08:30 and will be kept open until 08:50. The register for the second session will be taken at 13:00 and will be kept open until 13:20; on Friday afternoons between 13:00 and 13:20.

Our receptionist and senior staff will follow up any unknown absence by 9:30 We will follow up any absences to:

- ✓ Ascertain the reason.
- ✓ Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken.
- ✓ Identify whether the absence is approved or not; and,
- ✓ Identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the school's electronic register, or management information system which is used to download data to the School Census.

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

### **Unplanned absence**

The pupil's parent/carers must notify the school by telephone on the first day of an unplanned absence by 08:45 or as soon as practically possible (see also Section 7). If the notification is by email the school office may confirm the absence by telephone.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carers to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the School is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

Where no reason is provided, immediate contact is made and safeguarding checks initiated if required. Medical evidence may be requested where concerns arise.

Where a pupil is expected to miss 15 days or more through illness, the School will notify the Local Authority and coordinate continuity of education.

Unexplained, repeated or prolonged absence will be treated as a safeguarding concern. Staff will consider whether the child may benefit from Family Help, require targeted intervention, or meet thresholds for referral to children's social care. Information will be shared promptly where it is necessary to safeguard and promote the welfare of a child.

### **Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carers notifies the school in advance of the appointment prior to the appointment or before 08:45 on the morning of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carers must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to Section 6 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

Leave during term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Headteacher. Applications must be submitted in advance. Term-time holidays will not normally be authorised.

Attendance, SEND and Medical Needs: The School will implement reasonable adjustments, phased reintegration plans, Family Help and multi-agency support where attendance barriers relate to SEND, physical health or mental health.

Remote education is not a substitute for attendance and will only be used as a last resort as part of a planned reintegration strategy.

### **Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late:

- ✓ Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code. (L)
- ✓ After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code. (U)
- ✓ Persistent lateness triggers monitoring and parental engagement.



### **Following up absence**

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the senior leadership will:

- ✓ Contact the parent/carer to ascertain the reason and explore ways in which the parent/carer can be supported, if necessary.
- ✓ Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.
- ✓ Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- ✓ Identify the correct attendance code to use.

### **Reporting to parents**

Parents/carers will be advised of the pupil's previous term's attendance data through a termly report. The report will identify trends of any periods of absence, if applicable, and record actions and strategies employed to support the improvement of the pupil's attendance if required.

## **Authorised and unauthorised absence**

### **Approval for term-time absence**

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Head Teacher's discretion.

The School considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

For any request for leave of absence during term-time, we ask that parents complete a 'request for leave of absence' form and submit this in advance of the absence.

### **Valid reasons for authorised absence**

- ✓ Illness and medical/dental appointments (see Sections 5.2 and 5.3 for more detail).
- ✓ Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the School will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- ✓ Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travelers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travelers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveler family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the School, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.
- ✓ Possible approval of term time holiday.
- ✓ Study Leave.
- ✓ Flexi-Schooling requests to support pupils back into full time education, following a period(s) out of School.

### **Reducing persistent absence**

The Deputy Head, Pastoral Lead and form Tutor will monitor all pupil attendance on a weekly basis, and report back to the Headteacher any notable cases of unauthorised or persistent absences.

Concerns of regular absences, leading up to persistent absences will be addressed as soon as a pattern or trend is identified. The attendance management will initially involve a call home, a letter of support, a letter of concern followed by a home visit, then School visit with a member of the SLT/Head Teacher.

Persistent absences will be discussed, and working closely with the family and the pupil, the Family Liaison Lead will agree a programme of actions and strategies to support the pupil and the family to improved attendance. These strategies may include daily reviews, support pickups and drop offs, reward-based incentives, and positive reinforcement and encouragement.

The School recognises that persistent absence is often an outcome rather than a cause and may indicate unmet need, vulnerability or safeguarding risk. Attendance interventions will therefore seek to understand and address underlying barriers through collaborative working with pupils, families and relevant agencies. Attendance concerns may result in Family Help assessment, safeguarding intervention, SEND review, mental health support, contextual safeguarding assessment or referral to specialist services where appropriate.

### **Legal sanctions**

**Notice to Improve:** Where support has been offered but attendance concerns remain, the Local Authority may issue a Notice to Improve as a final opportunity to secure improved attendance before a Penalty Notice is considered.

The School or Local Authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

In the unlikely event that the School's attendance support strategies have not been effective or not implemented, the School reserves the right to issue a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the Local Authority. Penalty notices can be issued by the Headteacher, Local Authority officer or the Police.

The decision on whether to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- ✓ The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year.
- ✓ One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission.
- ✓ Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason
- ✓ If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

### **Strategies for promoting attendance**

The promotion and benefits of regular attendance will be structured, planned, and delivered through tutor time, assemblies, Life Skills and PSHE learning.

- ✓ Pupils demonstrating regular attendance in excess of 98% over a half term will participate in an incentive reward scheme to motivate their continued high levels of attendance.
- ✓ Pupils who show improved attendance will also participate in an incentive reward scheme to motivate their continued increasing levels of attendance.
- ✓ According to the needs of the pupil, their attendance will be publicly or privately celebrated.

### **Attendance monitoring**

The Headteacher at our school monitors pupil absence on a daily, weekly and termly basis. A pupil's parent/carers is expected to call the School in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see Section 5.2).

If a pupil's absence over a six-week period goes above three days, the School will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this, if a particular cause is not known/recorded, or a pattern is emerging.

If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving the Local Authority Attendance Team.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. Where absence reaches or exceeds this level, targeted intervention will be implemented.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and Local Authority level through the DfE's School Absence National Statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The School will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the Board of Directors.

When attendance falls below 95%:

Attendance data will be reviewed alongside safeguarding information to identify children who may be vulnerable to abuse, neglect, exploitation or poor outcomes. Particular attention will be paid to children with a social worker, children subject to Child Protection or Child in Need plans, Looked After and Previously Looked After Children, pupils with SEND, pupils experiencing mental health difficulties, pupils at risk of Child Criminal Exploitation, Child Sexual Exploitation or serious violence, and pupils who are repeatedly or persistently absent. Attendance information will form part of safeguarding risk assessments and planning.

Stage 1 – Informal parental contact

Stage 2 – Attendance meeting and support plan

Stage 3 – Formal monitoring and multi-agency support

Stage 4 – Legal intervention where necessary

## **Persistent and Severe Absence Strategy**

Persistent Absence (15%+):

- ✓ Attendance Support Plan
- ✓ Parent meeting
- ✓ Mentor allocation
- ✓ Targeted pastoral intervention
- ✓ Fortnightly review

Severe Absence (50%+):

- ✓ Immediate DSL oversight
- ✓ Home visit
- ✓ Multi-agency planning
- ✓ Phased reintegration plan
- ✓ Daily check-in/check-out
- ✓ Curriculum re-engagement strategy

## **Behaviour, Culture and Attendance**

Attendance and behaviour are inseparable. Helm Academy maintains calm, structured starts to the day, consistent routines and immediate follow-up for absence. Learning time is protected and high expectations are upheld.

The School recognises that technology, online harms, exploitation, mental health difficulties, bullying, child-on-child abuse, serious violence and wider safeguarding concerns can all contribute to attendance difficulties. Attendance analysis will therefore form part of the wider safeguarding and wellbeing oversight framework.

### **Promotion of Excellent Attendance**

We celebrate:

- ✓ 98%+ half-term attendance
- ✓ Most improved attendance
- ✓ Form attendance champions

Recognition may include certificates, letters home and rewards. Attendance improvement is also celebrated to ensure inclusion.

### **Legal Sanctions**

Where support has not secured improvement, formal warning and penalty notices may be issued in line with statutory guidance. Sanctions are proportionate and follow supportive intervention.

### **Data Analysis and Impact Evaluation**

Leaders evaluate overall attendance (target 96%+), persistent absence, severe absence, vulnerable group attendance, punctuality and intervention impact.

**Attendance forms part of the annual self-evaluation cycle.**

## **Review of implementation**

Helm Academy recognises that improving attendance is rarely achieved through the actions of a single service. Effective attendance practice requires strong partnership working between education, families and external agencies. Where attendance concerns indicate additional needs or safeguarding risks, the School will work proactively with Local Authority Attendance Services, Children's Social Care, Family Help and Early Help services, health professionals, CAMHS and mental health services, SEND and inclusion services, Virtual School colleagues, Police and community safety partners where appropriate. Information will be shared in accordance with safeguarding and data protection legislation where necessary to safeguard and promote the welfare of a child. Multi-agency meetings, attendance panels, safeguarding discussions and family support planning may be used to coordinate intervention and ensure children receive the right support at the right time.

### **Multi-Agency Working**

The implementation of this Policy is reviewed annually by the school's Senior Leadership Team in consultation with staff and a report is made to the Governance Body.

The school may submit to The Helm Academy Board proposals for amendments to this Policy.

## **Links with other policies**

This policy should also be read alongside the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Online Safety Policy, Behaviour Policy, Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, SEND Policy, Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy, Children Missing Education procedures and any local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

This policy links to the following policies:

- ✓ Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- ✓ Positive Behaviour Support Policy

- ✓ SEND Policy
- ✓ Equality and Diversity Policy

## School Attendance Contact Details -

Helm Academy School office and School Attendance Champion (Eve Bartlet)

Email - [Info@helmacademy.co.uk](mailto:Info@helmacademy.co.uk)

Telephone – 03333458854

If your child is absent, please contact the school office by 8am or as soon as is possible. Unless otherwise requested, or discussed with staff, please let us know each day of absence.



# Helm Academy

EMPOWERING MINDS, NAVIGATING FUTURES

## Appendix 1: Attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

| Code | SIMS Description                                                                           | DfE Description / Explanation                                                                                                 |
|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| /    | Present (AM)                                                                               | Present for school morning session                                                                                            |
| \    | Present (PM)                                                                               | Present for school afternoon session                                                                                          |
| B    | Attending any other Approved Education Activity                                            | Attending any other approved educational activity. Not to be used for Virtual learning                                        |
| C    | Other authorised circumstances                                                             | Leave absence for exceptional circumstance                                                                                    |
| C1   | Leave of absence – regulated performance                                                   | Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.      |
| C2   | Leave of absence – Temporary part-time timetable                                           | Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable                                           |
| D    | Dual registered                                                                            | Dual registered to another school                                                                                             |
| E    | Suspended or excluded without alternative provision                                        | Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision                                                                |
| G    | Family holiday (not agreed)                                                                | Unauthorised absence as pupil on a family holiday, not agreed, or is taking days more than an agreed family holiday           |
| I    | Illness                                                                                    | Illness (not medical or dental appointment)                                                                                   |
| J1   | Leave of absence – Interview for employment or transfer to another educational institution | Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution |
| K    | Alternative provision provided by LA                                                       | Attending education provision arranged by the local authority                                                                 |
| L    | Late (before registers closed)                                                             | Late arrival before the register closed                                                                                       |
| M    | Medical or dental appointment                                                              | Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment                                                 |
| N    | No reason yet provided for absence                                                         | Reason absence not yet established                                                                                            |
| O    | Absence in other or unknown circumstance                                                   | Absence in other or unknown circumstance                                                                                      |
| P    | Participating in sports activity                                                           | Participating in sports activity                                                                                              |
| Q    | Unable to attend – lack of access arrangements                                             | Unable to attend the school because of lack of access arrangements                                                            |
| R    | Religious observance                                                                       | Religious observance                                                                                                          |
| S    | Study leave for public examination                                                         | Study leave for public examination                                                                                            |
| T    | Traveling with parent for occupational purposes                                            | Traveling with parent for occupational purposes                                                                               |
| U    | Late (after registers closed)                                                              | Late (after registers closed)                                                                                                 |
| V    | Attending an educational visit or trip                                                     | Attending an educational visit or trip                                                                                        |
| W    | Attending work experience                                                                  | Attending work experience                                                                                                     |
| X    | Not required to attend non-compulsory school age pupil                                     | Not required to attend-non-compulsory school age pupil                                                                        |

|    |                                                 |                                                                           |
|----|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Y1 | Unable to attend – Transport not available      | Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being provided    |
| Y2 | Unable to attend – widespread travel emergency  | Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel                   |
| Y3 | Unable to attend – unavoidable partial closure  | Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed.         |
| Y4 | Unable to attend – unavoidable full closure     | Unable to attend due to the whole schools' site being unexpectedly closed |
| Y5 | Unable to attend – criminal justice detention   | Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention                |
| Y6 | Unable to attend – Public Health Guidance / Law | Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law         |
| Y7 | Unable to attend – Unavoidable other than Y1-Y6 | Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause.                  |
| Z  | Pupil not on roll                               | Prospective pupil not on admission requester                              |
| #  | Planned whole school closure                    | Planned whole school closure                                              |

This is a list of codes where a reason will be required with the attendance code:

| Code | SIMS Description                                | DfE Description / Explanation                                 |
|------|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| B    | Educated off-site (not Dual-Reg)                | Attending any other approved educational facility.            |
| K    | Alternative provision provided by the LA        | Attending education provision arranged by the local authority |
| Y7   | Unable to attend – Unavoidable other than Y1-Y6 | Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause.      |

Retired Codes no longer in use after 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024

| Code | SIMS Description                                    | DfE Description / Explanation                                                          |
|------|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| H    | Family Holiday (agreed)                             | Authorised absence due to agreed family holiday.                                       |
| J    | Interview                                           | Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances – not counted in possible attendance |
| Y    | Unable to attend due to an exceptional circumstance | Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances – not counted in possible attendance |

## Appendix 2: Contacts

Director of Education – Eve Bartlet (Attendance Champion)

Proprietor – Fitri Brock

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Tel - 0333 358 4485



# Helm Academy

EMPOWERING MINDS, NAVIGATING FUTURES



## Appendix 3: Practical Road Map

1. **Establish Whole-School Attendance Vision**  
Define attendance as a safeguarding, wellbeing and school climate priority.  
Create consistent language, expectations and leadership ownership.
2. **Build Tiered Attendance Systems**  
Tier 1: Prevention, belonging, routines, parent awareness.  
Tier 2: Early identification and targeted intervention.  
Tier 3: Intensive multidisciplinary support plans.
3. **Create Early Warning Systems**  
Weekly attendance banding reviews.  
Identify students declining from 96% → 94% → 92%.  
Cross-reference behaviour, wellbeing, SEND and safeguarding data.
4. **Clarify Roles & Accountability**  
SLT drives culture and systems.  
Tutors build relationships and daily monitoring.  
Attendance teams coordinate follow-up.  
Counsellors/pastoral teams address barriers.  
Safeguarding and SEND support complex cases.
5. **Improve Student Belonging**  
Ensure every student is connected to at least one trusted adult.  
Expand mentoring, clubs, leadership and student voice opportunities.  
Reduce emotionally unsafe spaces and anxiety triggers.
6. **Strengthen Family Partnership**  
Move beyond punitive communication.  
Build proactive parent engagement and early support conversations.  
Help families understand the long-term impact of absence.
7. **Introduce Weekly Attendance Action Meetings**  
Every student discussed should have:  
identified barriers,  
action plan,  
responsible adult,  
review timeline.
8. **Measure Impact Beyond Percentages**  
Track:  
engagement,  
reintegration success,  
wellbeing,  
participation,  
belonging,  
reduction in persistent absence.

**Attendance improves fastest when schools stop asking:  
“How do we make students come to school?”**

**And start asking: “How do we make students feel connected enough to want to come?”**

# ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT ROADMAP

## FROM EMPTY CHAIRS TO ENGAGED LEARNERS

A Practical Framework for Stronger Attendance, Belonging and Success

By Ibrahim



Empty chairs are filled when children feel **safe, known, supported, valued** and **expected**.

By Ibrahim



# INCLUSIVE ATTENDANCE: A MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORT

Right support, right time, for every child and young person



A Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) is an educational framework that offers a structured approach to addressing children's diverse needs. It involves delivering interventions and support in a tiered manner, with each tier representing a different level of intensity and targeted assistance.



EVERY CHILD, EVERY DAY, EVERY OPPORTUNITY | #EveryBagMatters







# POSITIVE SCHOOL CULTURE

## LOOKS LIKE • SOUNDS LIKE • FEELS LIKE



Strong classroom management builds safe, respectful, and engaging learning environments where **every student** can thrive.



### LOOKS LIKE



Clear expectations taught and re-taught consistently



Active supervision  
Scan • Move • Interact



Specific positive feedback  
Catch them doing it right!



Opportunities for all students to participate



Pre-corrections  
Prevent problems before they occur



Consistent, calm, and respectful error correction



Predictable routines and procedures  
Procedures save lives.



Acknowledgment system  
Recognize expected behavior.



Relationship building  
Connect • Greet • Check in



Data-based decision making  
Review • Adjust • Support



### SOUNDS LIKE



"Remember, our expectation is respect. Let's show it during group work."



"Thank you for raising your hand before speaking. That's being respectful."



"Let's try that again."



"What do you think is the first step?"



"Before we transition, remember to walk and use inside voices."



"I see everyone working hard. Thanks for staying on task."

#### TEACHER LANGUAGE MATTERS

- ✓ Clear
- ✓ Brief
- ✓ Respectful
- ✓ Positive
- ✓ Encouraging
- ✓ Solution-focused



### FEELS LIKE



Safe, respectful, and predictable for every student



Students are engaged and know what to do



High expectations with high support



Mistakes are part of learning



Every student can be successful



A classroom where everyone belongs and can thrive

#### RESULT:

Better behavior, stronger relationships, higher engagement, and deeper learning for **ALL!**



#### Remember:



Relationship comes first

+



Clear expectations create clarity

+



Consistent support builds trust

=



A positive culture where everyone can thrive



Every interaction. Every word. Every day.

*You shape the culture.*



#### SCAN TO CONNECT

Resources, strategies and tools for building positive school culture and student wellbeing.





# 10 ESSENTIAL INDICATORS OF A PSYCHOLOGICALLY SAFE SCHOOL

## A PARENT'S CHECKLIST FOR CHOOSING THE RIGHT SCHOOL

A truly great school does more than teach subjects—  
it creates an environment where children feel safe, valued,  
and inspired to learn.

1

### EMOTIONAL SAFETY COMES FIRST

Children feel secure, respected,  
and free from fear, humiliation,  
or ridicule.



2

### EVERY CHILD FEELS SEEN AND HEARD

Teachers pay attention not  
only to academic performance  
but also to students' emotions  
and well-being.



3

### OPEN COMMUNICATION IS ENCOURAGED

Students are comfortable  
expressing their thoughts,  
ideas, and concerns  
without hesitation.



4

### MISTAKES ARE TREATED AS LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Errors are viewed as part  
of growth, not as reasons  
for punishment or  
embarrassment.



5

### RESPECTFUL TEACHER- STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS

Teachers build trust through  
empathy, encouragement,  
and understanding.



6

### POSITIVE PEER INTERACTIONS ARE PROMOTED

The school fosters friendship,  
inclusion, teamwork, and  
mutual respect among  
students.



7

### CURIOSITY IS CELEBRATED

Children are encouraged  
to ask questions, explore  
ideas, and think  
independently.



8

### CREATIVITY IS VALUED ALONGSIDE ACADEMICS

The focus extends beyond  
marks to innovation,  
imagination, and  
problem-solving skills.



9

### GROWTH MATTERS MORE THAN COMPETITION

Students are motivated to  
improve themselves rather  
than constantly compare  
with others.



10

### EVERY CHILD DEVELOPS A SENSE OF BELONGING

Children feel accepted,  
appreciated, and confident  
that they are an important  
part of the school  
community.



### THE GOLDEN QUESTION FOR PARENTS

"Will my child feel psychologically safe,  
respected, and happy in this school?"

Because children learn best where they feel safe,  
and they thrive where they feel valued.



### KEY MESSAGE



PSYCHOLOGICAL  
SAFETY



EMOTIONAL  
WELL-BEING



SUPPORTIVE  
RELATIONSHIPS



CONFIDENT LEARNERS  
AND FUTURE LEADERS

A school's true success is not just producing toppers—  
it is helping children grow into confident, emotionally healthy human beings.



PSPA

## Inspection-aligned enhancement

### Aims

**Inspection-aligned enhancement:** Attendance is treated as a core safeguarding priority and a key driver of pupil achievement, wellbeing and inclusion.

### Legislation and guidance

**Inspection-aligned enhancement:** Leaders demonstrate up-to-date statutory knowledge and ensure attendance practice aligns with current safeguarding expectations.

### Definitions

**Inspection-aligned enhancement:** Shared definitions ensure consistency, accuracy and timely safeguarding response.

Graduated responses prioritise support, early help and multi-agency working.

### Roles and responsibilities

**Inspection-aligned enhancement:** Clear accountability ensures swift action, oversight and challenge where attendance concerns arise.

Leaders use attendance data strategically and triangulate it with safeguarding information.

Accurate, timely recording supports early identification of risk and informs safeguarding decisions.

### Recording attendance

**Inspection-aligned enhancement:** Accurate, timely recording supports early identification of risk and informs safeguarding decisions.

### Unplanned absence

**Inspection-aligned enhancement:** Unexplained absence is treated with professional curiosity and followed up promptly.

### Planned absence

**Inspection-aligned enhancement:** Decisions balance parental requests with safeguarding, equity and pupils' right to education.

### Lateness and punctuality

**Inspection-aligned enhancement:** Graduated responses prioritise support, early help and multi-agency working.

### Authorised and unauthorised absence

**Inspection-aligned enhancement:** Graduated responses prioritise support, early help and multi-agency working.

### Persistent and Severe Absence Strategy

**Inspection-aligned enhancement:** Graduated responses prioritise support, early help and multi-agency working.

### Persistent Absence (15%+):

**Inspection-aligned enhancement:** Graduated responses prioritise support, early help and multi-agency working.

### Behaviour, Culture and Attendance

**Inspection-aligned enhancement:** A strong culture of attendance supports positive behaviour and engagement.

## Review of implementation

Helm Academy recognises that improving attendance is rarely achieved through the actions of a single service. Effective attendance practice requires strong partnership working between education, families and external agencies. Where attendance concerns indicate additional needs or safeguarding risks, the School will work proactively with Local Authority Attendance Services, Children's Social Care, Family Help and Early Help services, health professionals, CAMHS and mental health services, SEND and inclusion services, Virtual School colleagues, Police and community safety partners where appropriate. Information will be shared in accordance with safeguarding and data protection legislation where necessary to safeguard and promote the welfare of a child. Multi-agency meetings, attendance panels, safeguarding discussions and family support planning may be used to coordinate intervention and ensure children receive the right support at the right time.

## Multi-Agency Working

**Inspection-aligned enhancement:** Impact is evaluated regularly to strengthen practice and outcomes.



# Helm Academy

EMPOWERING MINDS, NAVIGATING FUTURES