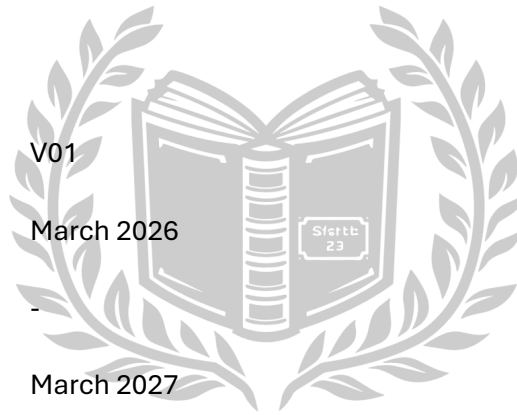




# Accessibility Policy and Plan

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**Policy Author:** Eve Bartlet – Director of Education

**Ratified by** Fitri Brock - Proprietor

# Helm Academy

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's documentation, including particulars of employment, it is non-contractual.*

### Policy Issues and Updates

Version Number	Created/ Reviewed/ Amended By	Date Created/ Reviewed/ Amended	Comment	Next Review Date
1	E.Bartlet	March 2026	Policy implemented – new framework aligned	01/03/2027



# Helm Academy

EMPOWERING MINDS. NAVIGATING FUTURES

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## Aims

This Policy aims to:

- Set out our commitment to equal opportunities in employment at Helm Academy School.
- Set out how we will avoid unlawful discrimination in our recruitment, promotion, training, pay and benefits, discipline, dismissals, performance management and selection for redundancy.
- Set out how we meet our legislative requirements under the Equality Act 2010.

## Legislation and Statutory requirements

- Statutory Policies for Schools & Academic Trusts (Jan 2020).
- The Equality Act 2010.
- The Equal Pay Act 2010.

## Principles

Helm Academy is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all employees and job applicants. We aim to create a supportive and inclusive working environment in which all individuals can make best use of their skills, free from discrimination or harassment, and in which all decisions are based on merit.

**We do not discriminate against employees based on age, race, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, religion, faith, or belief.** (Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics). The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to the way in which staff and Directors treat visitors, volunteers, contractors, and former employees.

All employees have a duty to act in accordance with this Policy and always treat colleagues with dignity, and not to discriminate against or harass other members of staff, regardless of their status. Please refer to Bullying and Harassment policy for further information.

This Policy has been agreed following consultation with employees.

This Policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment.

This Policy covers all individuals working at all levels and grades, including senior managers, employees, trainees, part time and fixed term employees, volunteers, casual workers, agency staff and Directors collectively referred to as "employees" in this Policy.

The Head of School has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this Policy and for ensuring compliance with discrimination law.

All managers must set an appropriate standard of behaviour, lead by example, and ensure that those they manage adhere to the Policy and promote our aims and objectives regarding equal opportunities. Managers will be given appropriate training on equal opportunities awareness and equal opportunities recruitment and selection best practice. The Head of School has overall responsibility for equal opportunities training and may

delegate management and delivery of this to an appropriate member of the Senior Leadership Team.

All members of staff are personally responsible for ensuring that they adhere to the Policy and promote our aims and objectives about equal opportunities. In certain circumstances the Board of Directors could be held to be vicariously liable for actions of their staff. All employees should be aware that they may be personally liable if they are found to have discriminated against another person whilst in School or on School-related business.

## Definitions

**“Head of School”** also refers to, where appropriate, another senior manager delegated to deal with the matter by the Head of School.

**“Employee”** refers to any employee employed to work at Helm Academy including senior managers, employees, trainees, part time and fixed term employees, volunteers, casual workers, agency staff and Directors.

**“Senior Manager”** refers to any senior team member, delegated by the Head of School to deal with an employment matter.

## Scope of the Policy

This Policy applies to all aspects of our relationship with employees and to relations between employees at all levels. This includes job advertisements, recruitment and selection, training and development, opportunities for promotion, conditions of service, pay and benefits, conduct at work, disciplinary and grievance procedures, and termination of employment.

We will take appropriate steps to accommodate the requirements of different religions, cultures, and domestic responsibilities and other HR policies refer and support this e.g., Safer Recruitment Policy and Procedure, Code of Conduct, Pay Policy, Bullying and Harassment, Appraisal, Supervision and Performance Management Policies.

EMPOWERING MINDS. NAVIGATING FUTURES

## Forms of Discrimination

Discrimination by or against an employee is generally prohibited unless there is a specific legal exemption. Discrimination may be direct or indirect and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally.

Direct discrimination occurs where someone is treated less favourably because of one or more of the protected characteristics set out in Section 3 above. For example, rejecting an applicant on the grounds of their race because they would not "fit in" would be direct discrimination.

Indirect discrimination is where there is a provision, criterion or practice that applies to everyone but adversely affects people with a particular protected characteristic more than others and is not justified. For example, a requirement to work full time adversely affects women because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement will be discriminatory unless it is objectively justified.

Harassment related to any of the protected characteristics is prohibited. Harassment is unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. Harassment is dealt with further in our Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure.

Victimisation is also prohibited. This is less favourable treatment of someone who has complained or given information about discrimination or harassment or supported someone else's complaint.

Disability discrimination; this includes direct and indirect discrimination, any unjustified less favourable treatment because of the effects of a disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.

## **Staff Training and Promotion and Conditions of Service**

Staff training needs will be identified through regular employee appraisals. All staff will be given appropriate access to training to enable them to progress within the organisation and all promotion decisions will be made based on merit. The composition of our workforce and promotions will be regularly monitored to ensure equality of opportunity at all levels of the organisation. Where appropriate, steps will be taken to identify and remove unjustified barriers and to meet the special needs of disadvantaged or underrepresented groups.

Our conditions of service, benefits and facilities are reviewed regularly to ensure that they are available to all staff who should have access to them and that there are no unlawful obstacles to accessing them.

## **Discipline and Termination of Employment**

The school will ensure that disciplinary procedures and penalties are applied without discrimination, whether they result in disciplinary warnings, dismissal, or other disciplinary action.

We will ensure that redundancy and restructuring criteria and procedures are fair and objective and do not discriminate directly or indirectly.

## **Disability Discrimination**

If you are disabled or become disabled, we encourage you to tell us about your condition so that we can support you as appropriate.

If you experience difficulties at work because of your disability, you should speak to your line manager to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. Your line manager may wish to consult with you and your medical adviser(s) about possible adjustments. We will consider the matter carefully and try to accommodate your needs. If we consider a particular adjustment would not be reasonable, we will explain our reasons and try to find an alternative solution where possible.

We will monitor the physical features of our premises to consider whether they place disabled workers or job applicants at a substantial disadvantage compared to other employees. Where reasonable, we will take steps to improve access for disabled employees.

## Fixed Term employees, casual and agency workers

We monitor our use of fixed-term employees, casual and agency workers, and their conditions of service, to ensure that they are being offered appropriate access to benefits, training, promotion, and permanent employment opportunities. We will, where relevant, monitor their progress to ensure that they are accessing permanent vacancies.

## Part Time Work

We monitor the conditions of service of part-time employees and their progression to ensure that they are being offered appropriate access to benefits, training, and promotion opportunities. We will ensure requests to alter working hours are dealt with appropriately through our Flexible Working Policy.

## Breaches of this Policy

If you believe you have been discriminated against you are encouraged to raise the matter through our Grievance Policy. If you believe that you have been subject to harassment or bullying, you are encouraged to raise the matter first through our Bullying and Harassment Policy.

Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the relevant procedure. Staff who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result. False allegations which are found to have been made in bad faith will, however, be dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.

Any employee of Helm Academy who is found to have committed an act of discrimination or harassment will be subject to disciplinary investigation and action. Such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct and, as such, may result in summary dismissal. We take a strict approach to serious breaches of this policy.

## Roles and responsibilities

### **The Board of Directors:**

- The Board of Directors is responsible for monitoring this policy's effectiveness and holding the Head of School to account for its implementation.

### **The Head of School:**

- Is responsible for reviewing this policy in conjunction with the Board of Directors.
- Will approve this, policy.
- Will ensure that the school environment encourages treatment of concerns raised under this policy in line with its principles.

- Will monitor how staff implement this policy to ensure it is applied consistently.

### **Senior Leaders:**

- Will provide appropriate induction, training, and support.
- Manage employees in a fair and professional way.
- Ensure all concerns are taken seriously. ü
- Implement the procedures in a timely, consistent, and effective manner.
- Record, monitor and report.

### **Employees:**

- Will be aware of and comply with the general rules and procedures referred to in their contract and conditions of service and the specific working rules and procedures related to their area of work and workplace.
- Comply fully with disciplinary and other procedures and to co-operate with these processes.

### **Monitoring arrangements**

This Equality and Diversity Policy will be reviewed by the Head of School and Board of Directors every year or more frequently if changes to legislation or the needs of the school demands. At each review, the policy will be approved by the Head of School.

### **Links with other policies**

This policy is linked to the following policies:

- Bullying and Harassment Policy.
- Grievance Policy.
- Managing Allegations of Abuse Against Staff.
- Safer Recruitment Policy and Procedure.
- Code of Conduct and Pay Policy.
- Appraisal, Supervision and Performance Management Policy.

## Appendix 1: Definitions

### **Direct discrimination**

Occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic. Direct discrimination could involve a decision not to employ someone, to dismiss them, withhold promotion or training, offer poorer terms and conditions, or deny contractual benefits because of a protected characteristic.

Example: Not employing a woman because she is pregnant.

### **Discrimination by Perception**

Is where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed based on a perception that he/she has a particular protected characteristic when he/she does not, in fact, have that protected characteristic. Discrimination by perception does not apply in law to marriage and civil partnership or pregnancy and maternity.

Example: A heterosexual employee is taunted about his sexuality by colleagues who perceive him to be gay.

### **Discrimination by Association**

Is discrimination against a person because they have an association with someone with a particular protected characteristic. Discrimination by Association applies to **race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age, disability, gender reassignment and sex.**

Example: Not offering a job to the parent of a disabled child because the employer thinks they will need more time off due to the child's disability and there is no evidence to support this.

### **Indirect discrimination**

Is where a provision, criteria, policy, or practice in the school is applied to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic compared with people who do not. Indirect discrimination can be justified if the school can show it acted reasonably, for example that it is a 'proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim'.

Indirect discrimination applies to **age, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, disability discrimination and gender reassignment. Pregnancy and maternity are covered by indirect sex discrimination.**

Example: Having a policy not to employ anyone with facial hair in a kitchen for health and safety reasons. This policy may indirectly discriminate against certain religious groups.

### **Proportionate means of meeting a legitimate aim**

There are limited circumstances where an employer may act in a way which is discriminatory, but where it can objectively justify discrimination as 'a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim'. In attempting to demonstrate a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim, an employer must show that:

- there is a legitimate aim such as a good business reason, but employers should note that cost alone is unlikely to be considered sufficient; and
- The actions are proportionate, appropriate, and necessary.

## Appendix 2: Equality and pay Equal Pay

The Equal Pay Act (2010) provides that men and women should receive equal pay for equal work. This means that in most circumstances a challenge to pay inequality and other contractual terms and conditions still must be made by comparison with a real person of the opposite sex in the same employment. However, the Act allows a claim of direct pay discrimination to be made, even if no actual comparator can be found. This means that a claimant who can show evidence that they would have received better remuneration from Helm Academy if they were of a different sex may have a claim, even if there is no-one of the opposite sex doing equal work with the school. This would be a claim under sex discrimination.

### **Pay Secrecy**

Helm Academy will not prevent or restrict its employees from having discussions to establish if they believe pay differences exist that are related to a protected characteristic. The school may require its employees to keep pay rates confidential outside the workplace e.g., a competitor organisation.

### **Gender Pay Gap reporting**

The Government introduced mandatory gender pay gap reporting for public sector employers with 250+ employees in April 2018. Helm Academy as an independent School is not obliged to report this but will monitor.

The data required is:

- mean and median hourly rates by gender.
- mean and median bonus payments (unclear what will constitute bonus pay) by gender.
- the proportions of each gender in each salary quartile.

## Appendix 3: The Protected Characteristics Age

The Equal Pay Act (2010) protects people of all ages from unlawful discrimination.

### **Direct discrimination**

Treating someone less favourably because of their actual or perceived age, or because of the age of someone with whom they associate. For example, advertising for job applicants under 25 years old only. This treatment can only be justified if it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

### **Indirect discrimination**

This can occur where there is a provision, criteria or practice which applies to all employees, but particularly disadvantages people of a particular age. For example, a requirement for job applicants for a teaching post to have five years teaching experience may disadvantage younger people. Indirect discrimination can only be justified if it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim, e.g., if the school can demonstrate this level of experience is necessary to achieve the desired knowledge and skills.

### **Disability**

Under the Act, a person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. These include things like using a telephone, reading a book, or using public transport. Long term means that the impairment has lasted or is likely to last for at least 12 months or for the rest of the affected person's life. Substantial means more than minor or trivial. In most circumstances, a person will have the protected characteristic of disability if they have had a disability in the past, even if they no longer have the disability. **Individuals who are HIV positive, have cancer or MS are automatically protected.**

Employers must make reasonable adjustments in the recruitment and employment of disabled people. This can include, for example, adjustments to recruitment and selection procedures, to terms and conditions of employment, to working arrangements and physical changes to the premises or equipment. In assessing the reasonableness of the adjustment, the employer should consider:

- Proportionality and impact of the adjustment on the role.
- The costs/financial support available.
- Medical opinion from the employee's doctor and the occupational health advisor, and impact on the operational requirements of the school.

### **Direct discrimination**

For example, not offering a job because someone is a wheelchair user.

### **Indirect discrimination**

This is where a provision, criterion or practice is applied that is discriminatory in relation to individuals who have a particular disability such that it would be to the detriment of people who share that disability compared with people who do not, and it cannot be shown to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Discrimination arising from disability occurs where an individual has been treated unfavourably because of something arising in consequence of a disability. There is no need for a comparator, and the reason for the unfavourable treatment is irrelevant. For example, not considering a teacher for promotion as they have been diagnosed with depression without considering whether the condition would impact on their ability to do the job and if it would, whether reasonable adjustments could be made to negate that impact.

This type of discrimination is unlawful where the employer or other person acting for the employer knows or could reasonably be expected to know that the person has a disability.

There is an obligation on employers to make reasonable adjustments where a physical feature or a provision, criterion or practice puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared with someone who does not have the protected characteristic or disability. The duty to make reasonable adjustments aims to make sure that a disabled worker has the same access to everything that is involved in doing and keeping a job as a non-disabled person.

All the relevant individual circumstances must be considered when deciding what adjustments to make and the individual must be involved in discussions to ensure they are as effective as possible.

### **Sharing health and absence information**

In accordance with the Equality Act, employers may not request information concerning an individual's sickness and attendance record prior to the selection stage. Once the preferred candidate has been selected, then sickness and attendance records can be obtained from the referee and applicant, as part of the pre-employment checks prior to a firm offer. The applicant must give their explicit consent for this information to be released. The interview panel may not ask general questions about the individual's sickness and attendance record but may ask relevant questions to establish whether the applicant will be able to carry out a function that is intrinsic (e.g., majority of the work involves manual handling) to the work concerned once reasonable adjustments are in place.

### **Gender reassignment**

Gender reassignment is a protected characteristic under the Act. This applies to people who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing, or have undergone a process (or part of a process) to reassign their gender by changing physiological or other attributes of sex. Gender reassignment is a personal process, that is moving away from one's birth sex to the preferred gender, rather than a medical process. The law does not require a person to undergo a medical procedure to be recognised under the protected characteristic of gender reassignment.

Protection is provided where, as part of the process of reassigning their gender, an individual lives in a gender identity, which is different to the gender they were assigned at birth, for at least two years. Throughout this period, they are protected by the Act.

To be protected under the Act, there is no requirement for an employee to inform their employer of their gender reassignment status or their gender at birth. However, if an employee is proposing to undergo gender reassignment or is still in the process of transitioning, they may want to discuss their needs with their employer so the employer can support them during the process. Once a transgender person has received gender reassignment surgery and is fully living in the gender, they identify with there is no requirement to inform an employer of their gender at birth.

#### Direct discrimination

This is treating someone less favourably than other employees because of their gender reassignment, whether actual or perceived, or because they associate with someone who intends to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone gender reassignment.

#### Indirect discrimination

An example would be where an employer starts an induction session for new staff with an icebreaker designed to introduce everyone in the room to the others. Each employee is required to provide a picture of themselves as a toddler. One employee is a trans woman who does not wish her colleagues to know that she was brought up as a boy. When she does not bring in her photo, the employer criticises her in front of the group for not joining in. It would be no defence that it did not occur to the employer that this employee may feel disadvantaged by the requirement to disclose such information. Indirect discrimination can only be justified if it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

#### **Marriage and civil partnership**

The Act protects employees from discrimination on the grounds of being married or in a civil partnership.

Marriage covers any formal union of a man and woman which is legally recognised in the UK as a marriage. It also covers same sex couples who opt for a marriage. A civil partnership refers to a registered civil partnership under the Civil Partnership Act 2004, including those registered outside the UK. This is only open to same sex couples.

Only people who are married or in a civil partnership are protected against discrimination on this ground. The status of being unmarried or single is not protected. People who only intend to marry or form a civil partnership, or who have divorced or had their civil partnership dissolved, are not protected on this ground.

#### Direct Discrimination

This is where someone is treated less favourably than other employees on the grounds of them being married or in a civil partnership, actual or perceived, or because they are associated with a person who is married or in a civil partnership. An example of this could be where an applicant for a job is treated less favourably because it is considered that they will not be as committed to the job as a single person because they have marital or partnership commitments.

#### Indirect Discrimination

This occurs if an employer has a policy or way of working that puts people who are married or in a civil partnership at a disadvantage.

## **Pregnancy and maternity**

A woman is protected against discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity during the period of her pregnancy and any maternity leave to which she is entitled. During this protected period, pregnancy and maternity discrimination cannot be treated as sex discrimination.

Direct discrimination covers the unfavourable treatment of a woman, during the "protected period" in relation to her pregnancy or any illness suffered by her because of that pregnancy. Unfavourable treatment during the protected period because a woman is on compulsory maternity leave or she is exercising or seeking to exercise, or has exercised or sought to exercise, the right to ordinary or additional maternity leave, is also covered. An example could be where an employee has been off work because of pregnancy complications since early in her pregnancy. Her employer has dismissed her in accordance with the sickness absence management policy. This policy is applied regardless of sex. The dismissal is unfavourable treatment because of her pregnancy and would be unlawful even if a man would be dismissed for a similar period of sickness absence, because the employer considered the employer's pregnancy related sickness absence in deciding to dismiss.

Discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy/maternity can only be justified if it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. For example, it would be legitimate to dismiss a pregnant employee who had been found to have committed an act of gross misconduct as the reason for the dismissal was unconnected to the pregnancy.

## **Race**

For the purposes of the Act, 'race' includes colour, nationality or ethnic or national origin. A person has the protected characteristic of race if they belong to a particular racial group. A racial group can be made up of two or more different racial groups (for example Black Britons).

### **Direct discrimination**

Treating someone less favourably because of their race. The less favourable treatment can also relate to the person's perceived race, even where the perception is wrong, or to the person's association with someone who has, or is perceived to have, the protected characteristic.

### **Indirect discrimination**

This can occur where there is a provision, criterion or practice which applies to all employees, but particularly disadvantages people of a particular race. An example could be a requirement for all job applicants to have GCSE Maths and English. People educated in countries which don't have GCSEs would be discriminated against if equivalent and recognised qualifications were not accepted. Indirect discrimination can only be justified if it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. <https://www.enic.org.uk/>

## **Religion or belief**

In the Act, religion includes any form of religion which has a clear structure and belief system. It also includes a lack of religion - in other words employees or jobseekers are

protected if they do not follow a certain religion or have no religion at all. Discrimination because of religion or belief can occur even where both the discriminator and recipient are of the same religion or belief.

Belief means any religious or philosophical belief and covers non-belief. To be protected, a belief must satisfy various criteria, including that it is a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour. Denominations or sects within a religion can be considered a protected religion or religious belief. Political beliefs are not protected.

A belief need not include faith or worship of a God but must affect how a person lives their life or perceives the world. A belief which is not a religious belief may be a philosophical belief. Examples of philosophical beliefs include Humanism and Atheism.

For a philosophical belief to be protected under the Act:

- it must be genuinely held.
- it must be a belief and not an opinion or viewpoint based on the present state of information available.
- it must be a belief as to a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour.
- it must contain a certain level of cogency, seriousness, cohesion, and importance.
- it must be worthy of respect in a democratic society, not incompatible with human dignity and not conflict with the fundamental rights of others.

#### Direct discrimination

This is where, because of the protected characteristic of religion or belief, a person treats another person less favourably than that person treats or would treat other persons. The less favourable treatment can relate to the person's actual or perceived religion or belief, even where the perception is wrong, or to the person's association with someone who has, or is perceived to have, the protected characteristic.

#### Indirect discrimination

This can occur where there is a provision, criterion or practice which applies to all employees, but particularly disadvantages people of a particular religion or belief and which the employer cannot show to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

An example would be where an employer announces that staff cannot wear their hair in dreadlocks, even if the locks are tied back. A policy amounts to a provision, criterion, or practice. The decision to introduce the policy could be indirectly discriminatory because of religion or belief, as it puts Rastafarian employees at a particular disadvantage. The employer must show that the provision, criterion, or practice can be objectively justified and is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

#### **Sex**

A person's sex refers to the fact that they are male and female.

#### Direct discrimination

Treating someone less favourably because of their actual or perceived sex, or because of the sex of someone with whom they associate.

#### Indirect discrimination

This can occur where there is a provision, criterion or practice that applies to all employees, but particularly disadvantages employees of a particular sex. For example, a requirement that job applicants must be six feet tall could be met by significantly fewer women than men.

#### **Sexual orientation**

Sexual orientation is a protected characteristic. It means a person's sexual orientation towards:

- persons of the same sex (i.e., the person is a gay man or a lesbian).
- persons of the opposite sex (i.e., the person is straight/heterosexual); or
- persons of either sex (i.e., the person is bisexual).

Sexual orientation relates to how people feel as well as to their actions. Sexual orientation discrimination includes discrimination because someone is of a particular sexual orientation, and it also covers discrimination connected with manifestations of that sexual orientation. These may include someone's appearance, the places they visit or the people they associate with. It also includes a perception that someone has a particular sexual orientation based on their appearance, regardless of whether they do or do not.

#### Direct discrimination

Treating someone less favourably because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation, or because of the sexual orientation of someone with whom they associate.

#### Indirect discrimination

This can occur where there is a provision, criterion or practice which applies to all employees, but particularly disadvantages people of a particular sexual orientation and which the employer cannot show to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

An example would be a particular family friendly policy that does not apply to same sex couples.

## Appendix 4: Supporting Organisations Equality and Human Rights Commission

The Equality and Human Rights Commission is the independent advocate for equality and human rights in Britain. It aims to reduce inequality, eliminate discrimination, strengthen good relations between people, and promote and protect human rights. It provides guidance for employers and education providers.

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance> A detailed list of further sources of advice and information is available at Section 5 of the following guidance:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/good-equalitypractice-employers-equality-policies-equality-training-and>

### Department for Education Non-statutory Advice

Non-statutory Guidance is available from the Department for Education relating to the Equality Act in the following publication:

The Equality Act 2010 and Trusts. Departmental advice for Trust leaders, Trust staff, governing bodies, and local authorities

### Other Organisations offering support and information

ACAS provides information, advice, training, conciliation and other services for employers and employees to help prevent or resolve workplace problems, include detailed guidance on Equality and Diversity at Work. <http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1363>

### Age

<http://www.ageuk.org.uk>

### Gender (sex)

<http://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/>

### Sexual orientation and gender identity Disability

<http://www.stonewall.org.uk>

For more information on disability, you may be interested in looking at the following websites:

- ECL Sensory Team [www.eclsensoryservice.org](http://www.eclsensoryservice.org)
- Support4sight [www.support4sight.org.uk](http://www.support4sight.org.uk)
- Deafblind UK [www.deafblind.org.uk](http://www.deafblind.org.uk)
- Disability Rights UK [www.disabilityrightsuk.uk](http://www.disabilityrightsuk.uk)
- Scope [www.scope.org.uk](http://www.scope.org.uk)
- MIND [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

## Review of implementation

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.



# Helm Academy

EMPOWERING MINDS. NAVIGATING FUTURES



# Helm Academy



## ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

# Helm Academy

### March 2026

EMPOWERING MINDS, NAVIGATING FUTURES

This plan seeks to meet the responsibilities laid upon the school by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 and The Equality Act of 2010.. The plan details three accessibility aspects, Curriculum, Physical Environment and Information and covers a three year cycle with opportunity for annual review.

	<u>Targets</u>	<u>Strategies</u>	<u>Outcome</u>	<u>Timeframe</u>	<u>Goals Achieved</u>
<b>Short Term</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• C1 : Monitoring and assessment strategies are developed to track and meet pupils individual progress and needs including those mentioned in EHCPs</li> <li>• C2: respond precisely to needs expressed in EHCPs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education and Care staff to undergo further training in assessing pupil's needs.</li> <li>• Staff trained to better utilise tracking software</li> <li>• Use of clinical team to guide teaching, assessment and management strategies</li> <li>• Increase direct role of therapy co-ordinator</li> <li>• Explore speech and language therapy if appropriate</li> <li>• Raise profile of literacy through published resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growth in staff confidence and expertise in meeting pupils needs</li> <li>• Improvements in recording individual pupil progress including personal development</li> <li>• Response to EHCP is precise</li> <li>• Specific barriers addressed</li> <li>• Therapy is well targeted</li> <li>• Coherent literacy provision for all pupils</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff training ongoing</li> <li>• From first admission</li> <li>• From September 2026</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhanced whole school expertise in better understanding and meeting individual pupils needs including those mentioned in EHCPs</li> <li>• Improved provision leading to secure personal development</li> <li>• Improved rates of progress in oracy and literacy for all learners, and especially those for whom communication is a barrier</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• C3: Improve communication skills and access to learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop support staff skills in and contribution to teaching and assessment and TA level 4 qualifications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribution of support staff to statements is significant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ongoing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• support staff can relate their impact to learning and progress</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• C4: Extend the role of support staff in supporting learning difficulties and other barriers</li> </ul>				

	<u>Targets</u>	<u>Strategies</u>	<u>Outcome</u>	<u>Timeframe</u>	<u>Goals Achieved</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>C5: Implement an Alternative Education provision for pupils whose behaviour is a barrier to standard placements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify individual needs</li> <li>Modify planned curriculum so as to meet individual interests and needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pupils are effectively engaged</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>From admission</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provision enables complex placements to be sustained and achieve and enjoy their education</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I1: secure the quality of classroom information to meet needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a range of visual prompts and reinforcements to support learners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better engagement in classroom for example for learners with Asperger's</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>From first admission</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better engagement leads to improved progress for learners with specific barriers</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>P1: Make reasonably practicable modifications to school buildings to improve accessibility for pupils in cooperation with Property and should Statement of Purpose of care home require so</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake an assessment of individual pupils needs at time of referral to ensure the physical environment meets their individual needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When necessary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved physical accessibility of parts of school for individual pupils</li> </ul>

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EMPOWERING MINDS, NAVIGATING FUTURES

	<u>Targets</u>	<u>Strategies</u>	<u>Outcome</u>	<u>Timeframe</u>	<u>Goals Achieved</u>
<b>Medium Term</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• C1: review and extend access to the curriculum on the site</li> <li>• C2; embed Alternative Education Provision</li> <li>• C3: raise awareness of disability through the curriculum</li> <li>• I1: produce a pupil handbook to complement the School Brochure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate new curriculum provision in terms of buildings (vocational) and best use of grounds</li> <li>• Evaluate provision and impact of year 1</li> <li>• Extend the number of learners in target group</li> <li>• Consider and extend disability issues through PSHE and Citizenship, and wider curriculum</li> <li>• Consult young people about key information and how to communicate it.</li> <li>• Produce Handbook.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New curriculum is inclusive, as are the range of teaching and learning strategies used.</li> <li>• Best use is made of site to promote curriculum</li> <li>• targeted provision, enabling school to sustain links with complex learners</li> <li>• Enhanced curriculum</li> <li>• Student friendly Handbook in place</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From September 2026</li> <li>• From September 2026</li> <li>• From September 2026</li> <li>• End of Oct 26</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curriculum and associated buildings are fit for purpose as are the grounds surrounding the school</li> <li>• Curriculum is fit for purpose, individualised and meets students' needs.</li> <li>• Awareness of and sensitivity to disability is raised.</li> <li>• Pupils are well informed and have a sense of ownership.</li> </ul>

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<b>Long Term</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• C1: continue to address inclusion issues through curriculum, teaching and learning</li> <li>• I1: respond to all individual requests for information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As a part of programme of internal and external review</li> <li>• Be ready to customise information to cater for physical and learning barriers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusive approaches</li> <li>• Individual needs of parents, carers and learners are met</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision is recognised for its inclusivity; all pupils are welcomed and engaged</li> <li>• Information is accessible to the range of individual needs</li> </ul>
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	<b>Date</b>
<i>Agreed</i>	March 2026
<i>To be reviewed</i>	March 2029

<b>I have read and understand this policy</b>		
<b>Name member of staff</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
Helm	Academy	

EMPOWERING MINDS, NAVIGATING FUTURES

## OFSTED ALIGNED STATEMENTS

### **Enhanced (Safeguarding & Inspection):**

In line with Working Together to Safeguard Children, barriers to access, unmet needs or failure to make reasonable adjustments may indicate increased vulnerability. Leaders ensure early identification, accurate recording and timely escalation through safeguarding procedures, with staff training and governance oversight evidencing clear intent, implementation and impact.

### **Enhanced (Safeguarding):**

In applying this policy across all aspects of employment and school operations, leaders recognise that barriers to access, exclusion from opportunity or failure to make reasonable adjustments may present safeguarding risks. In line with **Working Together to Safeguard Children**, accessibility concerns are treated as potential indicators of vulnerability, requiring early identification, accurate recording and timely escalation through safeguarding procedures where welfare, dignity or safety may be compromised.

### **Discipline and Termination of Employment**

#### **Enhanced (Safeguarding):**

Where disciplinary action, capability processes or termination of employment are considered, leaders recognise that exclusion from work, loss of role or power imbalance may increase vulnerability. In line with **Working Together to Safeguard Children**, any concerns indicating risk to welfare, dignity or safety are identified early, recorded accurately and escalated through safeguarding and whistleblowing procedures as appropriate. Decisions are subject to senior leadership and governance oversight to ensure proportionality, fairness and impact.

### **Fixed Term Employees, Casual and Agency Workers**

#### **Enhanced (Safeguarding):**

Leaders recognise that fixed-term, casual and agency workers may experience limited organisational familiarity, reduced access to support or increased vulnerability due to employment insecurity or isolation. In line with **Working Together to Safeguard Children**, equality of access to induction, information, training and reporting mechanisms is ensured. Any concerns relating to dignity, welfare or safety are identified early, recorded accurately and escalated through safeguarding or whistleblowing procedures as appropriate, with oversight to ensure consistency and proportionality.

### **Part Time Work**

#### **Enhanced (Safeguarding):**

*Leaders recognise that part-time working arrangements may limit access to informal communication, support or oversight and may therefore mask emerging concerns. In line with **Working Together to Safeguard Children**, arrangements are monitored to ensure part-time employees*

*have equitable access to information, supervision, safeguarding training and reporting routes. Where access or working patterns raise concerns relating to welfare, dignity or safety, these are recorded, reviewed and escalated appropriately.*

### **Breaches of this Policy**

#### **Enhanced (Safeguarding):**

*Leaders recognise that breaches of accessibility or equality duties may have safeguarding implications where they result in exclusion, harm, distress, loss of dignity or unmet need. In line with **Working Together to Safeguard Children**, all concerns are taken seriously, investigated promptly and recorded accurately. Where a breach raises safeguarding concerns, these are escalated through safeguarding procedures in addition to disciplinary or grievance processes, ensuring that protection and welfare remain the primary consideration.*

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

Insert **immediately after the heading** “Roles and Responsibilities” (before the sub-headings for Board / Head of School / Staff).

#### **Enhanced (Safeguarding):**

*All roles outlined in this section carry safeguarding responsibility where accessibility, discrimination or unequal treatment may affect welfare, dignity or safety. In line with **Working Together to Safeguard Children**, leaders ensure that responsibilities are clearly understood, that staff are trained to identify and respond to concerns, and that accountability arrangements support timely escalation, oversight and review. Governors receive assurance that accessibility responsibilities are embedded within safeguarding governance.*

# Helm Academy

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