

# Assessment and Admissions Policy

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Ratified by: Anita Cameron – Executive Headteacher



# 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 Virtual School 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	May 2025	Policy implemented	01/05/2026



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## Aims

Helm Academy Virtual School is registered for pupils aged 11-16 years with special needs. It operates as an independent co-educational special day school.

The aims of the assessment and admissions policy are to provide clarity regarding the criteria for admissions for Local Authorities, parents/guardians, and carers to ensure that the process and decisions are fair, consistent and that all parties are involved in the assessment and admissions processes, work in partnership enabling informed decisions in the best interests of the pupil.

The Policy has been written with reference to the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice January 2015) and approved by the Headteacher. The policy is reviewed annually, or when required by changes in legislation or revised school procedures. It can be viewed on the school's website, or a copy may be obtained by contacting the school's reception for a copy.

## Admissions Criteria

Helm Academy Virtual School is a co-educational school for pupils with special needs, including pupils that typically may have one or more of the following needs:

- ✓ Autism Spectrum Condition
- ✓ High Anxiety
- ✓ Social communication needs – difficulties building and sustaining relationships
- ✓ Sensory Processing needs
- ✓ Mental health needs
- ✓ Social emotional mental health needs

- ✓ ADHD/ADD/OCD/PDA/Tourette's syndrome/dyslexia/dyspraxia as a secondary diagnosis
- ✓ Low self-esteem and poor resilience
- ✓ School phobia
- ✓ Academically able with gaps in prior learning
- ✓ Has an EHCP (Education, Health & Care Plan) or is in the process of applying for one

## Referrals Pathway

Helm Academy Virtual School welcomes enquiries from Local Authorities, parents/carers and other professionals working with the prospective pupil.

Parents/carers and professionals are encouraged to contact the school at the earliest opportunity to enable them to consider whether it may be a suitable provision for the prospective pupil. **Visits to the school are essential** and are planned carefully to provide an opportunity for prospective families to see our provision without disrupting the day-to-day running of the school.

During visits there will be the opportunity to discuss the prospective pupil's needs with our Admissions Lead and have a tour of the school.

Referral Consultation Papers are received from the Local Authority. If, from reading the initial consultation papers, we believe Helm Academy Virtual School may be an appropriate provision that can meet the needs of the prospective pupil, the Head of Admissions will arrange for an assessment to be carried out.

## Assessment Process

An initial screening of all relevant documents (including the EHCP, school annual review reports, prior academic attainment, previous therapeutic interventions, and any relevant other professional reports) is undertaken by lead practitioners within the school.

An assessment is carried out to gather further detailed information from parents/carers and key professionals involved with the child, this includes contact with their previous or current education placement. Please note, **intimate care is not something that we can ordinarily provide and is not part of our DfE registration**. However, we recognise at times a child may require emergency intimate care needs to be met. Should there be an instance that requires the delivery of this it will be appropriately risk assessed and managed by the pastoral care team which will include staff paired as the same gender as the child in need. The appropriate recording of the event will be captured within our Safeguarding database (Iris Adapt).

Once sufficient information has been gathered to ensure the child's needs fall within the profile of the school, at the earliest opportunity they will then be invited to attend an onsite informal assessment which will be undertaken by the school's experienced team of lead practitioners.

The availability and compatibility of an appropriate age and peer group and the academic/social dynamics of the available group is also taken into consideration. These considerations are formalised through the completion of observation reports which form part of the assessment process.

The findings from the documentation screening, dialogue with previously supporting professionals, feedback from lead practitioners from the in-school visit will then be reviewed by the school's senior management team and lead practitioners to determine whether the school will be able to offer a placement and be able to meet the child's needs. If all agree that Helm Academy Virtual School can meet the individual needs of the child, the offer of placement is then made in writing to the referring Local Authority and/or parent.

If the school believes that it is unable to meet the needs of the child, the Local Authority and parent/carer will be advised as to the reasons for this decision.

**Failure to disclose information during the assessment process may affect the validity of the assessment and lead to the process being terminated.**

## Prior to Admission

Once funding has been formally agreed the school will arrange a pre-admission planning meeting.

Parents/carers and key professionals will be invited to attend this meeting where a transition plan will be agreed. The support plan will be finalised at this meeting in preparation for admission. Each transition plan will be personalised dependent on the individual needs of the child. The contract will be raised for all parties to sign.

## On Admission

The child's details will be entered into the Helm Academy Virtual School Admissions Register and the accompanying information and communications placed on file. If relevant, the Local Authority arranges transport in accordance with its own Home to School Transport Policy.

## Equality Impact Statement

All relevant persons are required to comply with this policy and must demonstrate sensitivity and competence in relation to diversity in race, faith, age, gender, disability, and sexual orientation.

If you, or any other groups, believe that you have been disadvantaged by this policy please contact the Headteacher who will then actively respond to your enquiry.

## Monitoring and Review

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 Virtual School Board proposals for amendments to this Policy

## Other Relevant Documents

- ✓ Exclusion Policy
- ✓ Attendance Policy
- ✓ Special Educational Needs and Disability Act
- ✓ Equality and Diversity Statement



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