


Helm Academy Virtual School Curriculum Guarantee Policy



Version: V01

Date of issue: May 2025

Date of Next Review: May 2026

Person Responsible: Eve Bartlet – Director of Education

Ratified by: Anita Cameron – Executive Headteacher

Helm Academy

EMPOWERING MINDS, NAVIGATING FUTURES

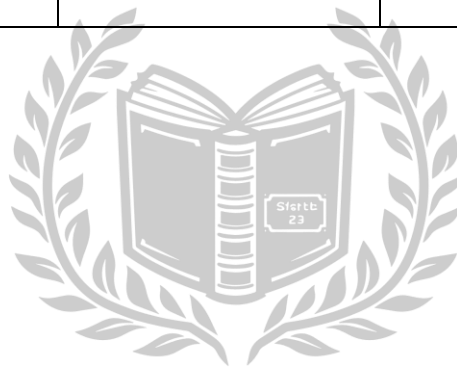
This policy is one of a series of school policies that, taken together, are designed to form a comprehensive statement of the school's aspiration to provide an outstanding education for each of its students and of the mechanisms and procedures in place to achieve this. Accordingly, this policy should be read alongside these policies. 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



Helm Academy

EMPOWERING MINDS, NAVIGATING FUTURES

Table of Contents

Section	Content
1	Curriculum Entitlement
2	Cross References
3	Curriculum Intent
4	Curriculum Implementation
5	Curriculum Impact
6	Legislation and Guidance
7	Roles and Responsibilities
8	Review of implementation
9	Accreditations and qualifications



Helm Academy

EMPOWERING MINDS, NAVIGATING FUTURES

Curriculum Entitlement

Pupils at Helm Academy Virtual School [HAVS] are entitled to a curriculum which contributes to a well-balanced education, developing the abilities, life skills and social competences of individual pupils so that they may take a valuable, positive, and active place in society. The entitlement is for each pupil, regardless of age, gender, race, religion, or disability.

Cross References

- ✓ Assessment Policy
- ✓ Non-Examination Assessment Policy
- ✓ SEND Policy and Information report
- ✓ Equality information and objectives

Curriculum Intent

The aims of our curriculum are to:

- ✓ Prioritise a broad and balanced curriculum that incorporates a strong set of core subjects, as well as opportunities for enrichment in areas not typically associated with a traditional school curriculum.
- ✓ Coherently plan and sequence all core subjects across the school, from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4. We also have a full curriculum available from KS1 including a full phonics package, to support all pupils regardless of their age, in order to meet their needs.
- ✓ Allow pupils to accumulate a sufficient knowledge of skills to prepare them for future learning and employment.
- ✓ Enable pupils to develop knowledge, understand concepts and acquire skills which can be transferred and applied to relevant situations.
- ✓ Support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- ✓ Support pupils' physical development and responsibility for their own health and wellbeing and enable them to be active.
- ✓ Promote a positive attitude towards learning.
- ✓ Ensure equal access to learning for all pupils, with high expectations for every pupil and appropriate levels of challenge and support.
- ✓ Be ambitious for all pupil and set high expectations of real, purposeful outcomes; inspired by SEN research, technology, and innovative teaching.
- ✓ Equip pupils with the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life.
- ✓ Provide subject choices that support pupils' learning and progression and enable them to work towards achieving their goals.
- ✓ Develop pupils' independent learning skills and resilience, to equip them for further/higher education and employment.
- ✓ Develop pupils to develop functional skills for living so each of them can lead a fulfilling and substantially independent life where appropriate.
- ✓ Provide an enrichment curriculum through outdoor experiences that build on the holistic learning of academic, life skills and social competencies, developing the pupils' confidence and sense of achievement.
- ✓ Ensure that all pupils achieve accreditation in English and Maths as a minimum and offer a broad range of accredited subject pathways.

- ✓ Blend therapeutic interventions with learning, inside and outside of the classroom.
- ✓ Offer enrichment by building on pupils' interests, which nurtures exciting opportunities and aspirations.
- ✓ Engender pride, resilience and aspiration for every pupil, preparing them to lead safe, independent lives and to be active members of their community.

Implementation

Core Learning – Key Stage 1 & 2 (available if required)

Pupils follow can follow the Hamilton Brooks <https://www.hamilton-trust.org.uk/about-hamilton/> thematic curriculum, based on focus areas from the National Curriculum programme of study. As well as the core subjects of English, Maths & Science, the curriculum also incorporates History, Geography, Religious Education, PSHE, Physical Education, MFL, IT and the Creative Curriculum (a combination of Art, Design Technology & Music).

Core Learning – Key Stage 3

In Key Stage 3, pupils in Years 7 to 9 are taught in age groups across core subjects of English, Maths & Science as well as Foundation subjects including Humanities, Physical Education, IT, MFL, STEM and Personal Development (PSHE, Careers & Life Skills).

Core Learning – Key Stage 4

In KS4, all pupils must take qualifications in English, Maths, and Science. The most suitable qualifications for each pupil are ascertained by way of an assessment that takes place during towards the end of Autumn 1 term. While we endeavour to enter as many pupils as possible for a GCSE qualification, alternative qualifications (e.g. Functional Skills and Entry Level) may be more suitable for some of our pupils. In addition to these three core subjects, pupils also select two additional KS4-level qualifications from the following list of options:

- ✓ History
- ✓ Geography
- ✓ PE
- ✓ Art
- ✓ IT User Skills / Computer Science
- ✓ Food & Nutrition

The curricula for these qualification-based subjects largely follows the specification from the relevant exam boards, with adaptation to suit the needs of our pupils.

In addition to studying the qualification-based subjects listed above, pupils continue to partake in non-examined subjects such as Personal Development and Physical Education. We also partner with the local colleges and in some cases can offer bespoke examination and qualification packages dependent on need and availability.

Modern Foreign Languages

Our KS3 pupils receive Modern Languages each week, with the target language also being French. However other options maybe available depending on staffing and the needs of pupils at the time

Wellbeing and Personal Development

All elements of our curriculum are therapeutically informed and link across the curriculum, spearheaded by our golden thread of Personal, Social, Health Education (PSHE) and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE). Pupils receive at least 45-minutes of PSHE/RSE sessions per week. They

follow a curriculum based largely on age-appropriate topics selected from the PSHE Association's list of PSHE with additional topics covered on an ad hoc basis. These ad hoc topics correspond to any PSHE/RSE-related issues that emerge unexpectedly from within the pupil cohort. We also implement more specific, bespoke therapeutic opportunities such as Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy and 1:1 Talk Time with the Therapy Team.

Reading is a 'golden thread' at Helm Academy Virtual School and the school supports the acquisition of phonics skills with dedicated lessons at the start of each day. Reading time is built into tutor time throughout the week and our library is well resourced and used.

All staff support pupils throughout the school day. We eat together at lunch times and fully integrate in our carefully structured break times. Physical development and wellbeing are supported through timetabled Physical Education, including Outdoor Education and offsite activities. Pupils are encouraged to contribute to the community in lots of ways to support them in understanding what it means to be an active British citizen. Extracurricular activities enrich pupils' experience and are an integral feature of the school's ethos. All pupils and teachers are encouraged to participate, whether it be sporting, cultural, musical, visits, exchanges, or other of the multitude of experiences offered.

Enrichment

Enrichment lessons are woven into the timetable for all pupils and serves as opportunities for pupils to access activities and learn knowledge and skills that are not typically found in a more "traditional" school curriculum. Enrichment activities rotate between groups throughout the school year, and several are offsite.

Some examples of Enrichment activities that are on offer at various points throughout the academic year are: Forest / Beach School, Music led by Southampton Music Service, Cooking, Photography and Expressive Arts.

Enrichment activities are considered to be part of the school's core curriculum and are supported by plans drawn up by the member(s) of staff responsible for each Enrichment activity.

Several Enrichment activities lead to external awards (ASDAN, AQA).

Creative Learning

The curriculum at Helm Academy Virtual School incorporates many opportunities for creative learning: Art, STEM and Creative Curriculum lessons (Art, Music and Design Technology) are all included as well as Enrichment opportunities (for example: Photography, Music, Expressive Arts).

Planning & Subject Curriculum Design

Every subject taught has a Curriculum Pathway that details how the knowledge and learning sequences from the earliest starting point to the latest possible endpoint (e.g., Year 11, KS4). These Curriculum Pathways are complemented by Long Term Plans, which detail what pupils in each year group will learn over the course of one academic year. Medium Term Plans provide more granular detail on how individual units of learning are sequenced over the course of each half term. Medium Term Plans also contain information pertaining to how the lessons and intent are adapted to specific learners.

Inclusion

All lessons aim to be inclusive. A level of adaptation which provides appropriate tasks for each pupil and a challenge which will maximise achievement should be experienced. Each pupil should be

sufficiently equipped to make informed and realistic decisions at each stage in his/her development so that his/her role is active in contributing to progression.

Teachers set high expectations for all pupils at their stage and level. They will use dynamic, formative and summative assessment to set ambitious targets and plan challenging work for all groups, including:

- ✓ More able pupils
- ✓ Pupils with low prior attainment
- ✓ Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds

Lessons are planned effectively so that our pupils can access every curriculum subject, and that there are no barriers to every pupil achieving at or above expected progress. Teachers will also take account of the needs of pupils whose first language is not English. In this case, lessons will be planned so that teaching opportunities help pupils to develop their English, and to support pupils to take part in all subjects. Further information can be found in our statement of equality information and objectives, and in our SEN policy and information report.

Curriculum Impact

The impact of the three areas of our curriculum is tracked in several ways. We track the academic, personal development and social skills of pupils throughout their time at school through Assessment of and Assessment for Learning, EHCP and Therapeutic Outcomes, Pupil Reflection, BKSb, Boxall Profile, and formal qualifications.

Pupil progress is tracked and recorded, and learning is planned around the identified next steps, at a pace and style that meets their needs. Learning is structured to allow pupil collaboration and support of each other.

The outcomes of qualifications that pupils achieve allow us to assess the impact of our provision. Even sitting exams shows pupils' commitment to learning and their ability to work independently when completing these.

Assessment of impact is also judged via regular marking and monitoring of pupil work. Senior staff members carry out regular "book looks" to ensure this is taking place, and that feedback given to pupils is frequent, sufficiently detailed, and relevant to the work being marked.

Moderation and Standardisation

As a school we strive to ensure that all our assessments are as accurate and reliable as possible. This will ensure that we can accurately track pupil progress and achievement over a period of time. To ensure that our assessments are accurate and reliable we have a structure of internal assessment moderation and standardisation including waypoints and endpoints. Meeting time is directed to opportunities to cross moderate within and outside of each department to validate our assessments.

Legislation & Guidance

Our Curriculum Policy reflects the requirements of the National Curriculum Programme of Study, for which all maintained schools in England must teach, and which we have chosen to follow.

It also reflects requirements for inclusion and equality as set out in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014 and the Equality Act 2010 and refers to curriculum-related expectations of governing boards set out in the Department for Education's Governance Handbook.

Roles & Responsibilities

The Director of Education

The Director of Education is responsible for ensuring that this policy is adhered to, and that:

- ✓ All required elements of the curriculum, and those subjects which the school chooses to offer, have aims and objectives which reflect the aims of the school and indicate how the needs of individual pupils will be met.
- ✓ The amount of time provided for teaching the required elements of the curriculum is adequate and is reviewed regularly.
- ✓ Where appropriate, the individual needs of some pupils are met by permanent or temporary disapplication from all or part of the National Curriculum.
- ✓ They manage requests to withdraw children from curriculum subjects, where appropriate.
- ✓ The school's procedures for assessment meet all legal requirements.
- ✓ The Headteacher is fully involved in decision-making processes that relate to the breadth and balance of the curriculum.
- ✓ The Headteacher is advised on whole-school targets in order to make informed decisions.
- ✓ Proper provision is in place for pupils with different abilities and needs.

The Headteacher

The Headteacher will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and hold the Director of Education to account for its implementation. The Headteacher will also ensure that:

- ✓ A robust framework is in place for setting curriculum priorities and aspirational targets
- ✓ The school is complying with its funding agreement and teaching a "broad and balanced curriculum" which includes English, Maths, Science and (subject to providing the right to withdraw) Religious Education, and enough teaching time is provided for pupils to cover the requirements of the funding agreement.
- ✓ All courses provided for pupils below the age of 16 that lead to qualifications, are approved by the Secretary of State.
- ✓ The school implements the relevant statutory assessment arrangements.
- ✓ They participate actively in decision-making about the breadth and balance of the curriculum.
- ✓ They fulfil their role in processes to disapply pupils from all or part of the National Curriculum, where appropriate, and in any subsequent appeals.

- ✓ Pupils from Year 7 onwards are provided with independent, impartial careers guidance, and that this is appropriately resourced.

Other staff

Responsibility for curriculum will be shared by Subject Leads, Senior Teachers, Assistant Heads and the appropriate staff. Other staff will ensure that the school's curriculum is implemented in accordance with this policy.

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 Virtual School Board proposals for amendments to this Policy.

Accreditation and qualifications

- Pupils undertake accredited courses for up to two years, centred around our Curriculum, which is designed specifically for neurodiverse learners. This includes vocational courses at college and access to internal subject options delivered in learning blocks so that students have access to a wider range of courses.
- A range of qualifications including GCSEs, ASDAN and Functional Skills supporting pupils to progress into employment, training, further education, and higher education.
- Support for young people to achieve awards alongside the more traditional academic and vocational subjects.
- Pupils study the Personal Development and Life Skills curriculum (Leadership, Independence, Vocation, Environment), raising their self-esteem, entrepreneurial and resilience skills and making plans for future home and community life. Careers
- Pupils have a dedicated and robust Careers curriculum. This is both embedded cross curriculum and specifically in individualised career pathways programme.
- Careers information, advice and guidance is provided from Y7 upwards.
- There is a separate Careers policy.
- There is a specific Independent careers professional on Board. Pupils have access to a careers' advisor and work towards an aspirational employment goal and have access to up to date, unbiased careers advice, including understanding local employment opportunities.
- Employability skills are taught throughout all Key stages.
- Pupils have access to work experience or placements.
- Pupils have job search training - CV, application form and personal statement as well as interview support. Curriculum Quality Assurance To ensure that we deliver a high-quality curriculum which is broad, ambitious, and inclusive it is strategically overseen by The Curriculum and Assessment Committee. This is made up of the CEO and Director of Education, Executive Headteacher, The

Head of Teaching Learning and Curriculum, Education Governor, and Non-Executive Director for Education. The group meets half termly to establish and agree plans for any curriculum development. The Curriculum and Assessment Group is formed from the education senior leaders from the School Support Partnership and include Head Teachers, Deputy



Helm Academy

EMPOWERING MINDS, NAVIGATING FUTURES