

Equality and Diversity Policy

Version: V01

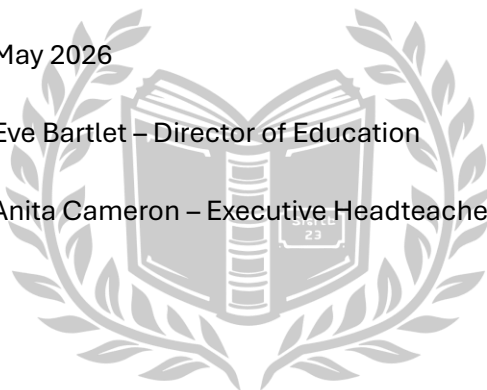
Date of issue: May 2025

Reviewed:

Date of Next Review May 2026

Policy Author: Eve Bartlet – Director of Education

Ratified by: Anita Cameron – Executive Headteacher



Helm Academy

EMPOWERING MINDS. NAVIGATING FUTURES

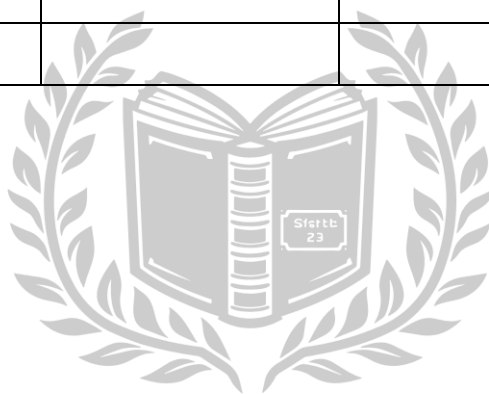
This policy is one of a series of school policies that, taken together, are designed to form a comprehensive statement of the school's aspiration to provide an outstanding education for each of its students and of the mechanisms and procedures in place to achieve this. Accordingly, this policy should be read alongside these policies. 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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1. Introduction

Helm Academy Virtual School is committed to being inclusive as we see a diverse population of both students as one of the school's greatest strengths. In order to ensure everyone can thrive and meet their full potential, it is essential that inclusion and equality of opportunity be at the core of all the school's activities.

This policy applies equally to current and prospective members of the school community, including parents.

This policy takes due account of the letter and the spirit of the government guidance [The Equality Act 2010 and schools](#).

This policy is made available on the school website and can be made available on request. It can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required.

The school is committed to a zero tolerance policy in relation to less favourable treatment on the grounds of any protected characteristic under the protected characteristics - [Equality Act 2010](#). The protected characteristics are defined as **age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sex and sexual orientation**.

The school is committed to promoting and developing inclusion and equality of opportunity in all its functions and will seek to do this by:

- a. communicating its commitment to equality and diversity to all members of its community
- b. ensuring all staff and students are aware of the aims of this policy
- c. briefing for staff and students on this Policy
- d. developing monitoring, evaluation and review mechanisms of school policies and procedures and decision-making
- e. demonstrating our zero-tolerance attitude towards discrimination by taking all allegations seriously

2. Responsibility

The school Senior Leadership Team under Helm Academy Virtual School Ltd have responsibility for ensuring that the school operates within the legal framework for equality and for implementing the policy throughout the school.

Each member of the school community is responsible for being alert to and challenging discrimination; embracing diversity; respecting different faiths and beliefs; and upholding equality of opportunity for all.

3. Understanding discrimination

Discrimination can take the following forms, including:

- ✓ Direct Discrimination - This occurs where a person is treated less favourably than others because of their (or a family member's) actual or perceived protected characteristic.
- ✓ Indirect Discrimination - This occurs by applying a provision, criterion or practice, which disadvantages people on the grounds of a protected characteristic and which cannot be justified as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

- ✓ Victimisation - This occurs where an individual has exercised their rights under equality legislation (or has indicated that they intend to do so) and is treated less favourably as a direct result. It applies equally to a person who is supporting (or indicates that they intend to support) another person who is exercising their rights under the legislation.
- ✓ Harassment – This is defined as unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic which has the purpose OR effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating a hostile, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.
- ✓ 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.

4. Aims and Values

The aims of this policy and the school's ethos as a whole are to:

- ✓ eliminate unlawful discrimination on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics
- ✓ eliminate all bullying and unlawful discrimination on the basis that an individual has a learning difficulty or special educational need, or because English is an additional language
- ✓ promote equality of opportunity for all members of the school community
- ✓ comply with the school's equality obligations in the [Equality Act 2010](#)
- ✓ provide a secure environment in which all our children can thrive and achieve all of the outcomes of [Keeping children safe in education 2024](#)
- ✓ provide a learning environment where all individuals through the school policies feel valued and feel they have a sense of belonging
- ✓ prepare students for life in a diverse and inclusive society in which everyone can take their place in the local, regional, national and international community
- ✓ include and value the contribution of all families to our understanding of equality and diversity
- ✓ provide and promote positive information about the diversity of UK society
- ✓ actively challenge discrimination and ensure that all members of the school community learn from these experiences
- ✓ embed inclusion through all our activities

To achieve these aims, the school:

- ✓ involves, where reasonably practicable, all members of the school community in the development, review, evaluation, and impact assessment of all relevant improvement plans, policies and procedures
- ✓ publishes school policies to the school community as appropriate
- ✓ collects and analyses data (such as admissions data and examination results) to monitor any potential disadvantage amongst the student body
- ✓ helps to overcome any potential barriers to learning by providing for students' diverse needs and learning styles including any learning support needs and/or disabilities a student may have
- ✓ ensures the wider school curriculum promotes and celebrates equality and diversity
- ✓ operates a clear zero tolerance policy towards abusive or discriminatory behaviour
- ✓ works in partnership with families and the wider community to establish, promote and disseminate inclusive practice and help tackle discrimination

The school ethos states that:

- ✓ Every pupil is valued and treated as an individual and with respect.
- ✓ The vision of our School is for all staff to proactively demonstrate a caring culture which nurtures aspirations, develops resilience and empowers the desire to learn. Our culture is centered on our deep-rooted ethos to make a positive, lifelong difference to the lives of our pupils.
- ✓ At Helm Academy Virtual School, we recognise that every child is different. Our pupils have access to a team of skilled teachers, therapists, and professionals who work together to ensure each child has a learning programme tailored to their specific needs.
- ✓ The school aims to promote inclusion and tackle any form of discrimination and actively promote harmonious relations in all areas of school life and with key partners such as parents and other schools. The school seeks to remove any barriers to access, participation, progression, attainment and achievement. The school takes seriously its contribution towards community cohesion.

5. Admissions

The school treats every application for admission in a fair and equal way in accordance with this policy and the school's Admissions Policy. The school accepts applications from, and admits, students irrespective of any protected characteristic.

Parents must inform the school when completing the registration form of any special circumstances affecting their child (such as learning support needs) which may affect the child's ability to fully participate in the education provided by the school. The school will not offer a place to a child if, after reasonable adjustments have been considered, the school cannot adequately cater for and/or meet their needs.

6. Educational Services

The school affords all students access to educational provision including all benefits, services and facilities irrespective of any protected characteristic subject to the school's obligations under the [Equality Act 2010](#) and considerations of safety and welfare.

The school will not discriminate against a student on the grounds of any protected characteristic by excluding them or subjecting them to any other detriment.

The school seeks to educate students in a multicultural, anti-racist environment using the curriculum, assemblies, PSHE programme and external speakers to promote understanding and appreciation of other faiths, races and cultures.

The school recognises that discrimination may be, for example, direct, indirect or arising from disability whether or not it was intentional. Harassment and bullying in all its forms are unacceptable and will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Anti Bullying and the engagement and behaviour policy.

The school:

- ✓ treats all members of the school community with respect and dignity and seek to provide a positive working and learning environment free from discrimination
- ✓ endeavours to meet the needs of all, and ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics listed above

- ✓ ensures those students with an EHCP (Education Health and Care Plan) receive necessary educational and welfare support
- ✓ ensures that students with English as additional language receive additional support, in line with the school's English as an Additional Language Policy
- ✓ monitors the admission and progress of students from different backgrounds
- ✓ challenges inappropriate discriminatory behaviour by students, staff and parents
- ✓ offers all students access to all areas of the curriculum, including being able to participate in a full range of extra-curricular activities
- ✓ ensures that all staff are aware of their responsibilities to promote equality of opportunity and are given appropriate training and support
- ✓ works with parents and external agencies where appropriate to combat and prevent discrimination in school
- ✓ seeks to protect against discrimination or unfavourable treatment students who are pregnant or young mothers
- ✓ makes clear to staff and students that it is also unlawful to discriminate because of a characteristic which they think a person has, even if they are mistaken
- ✓ is allowed to treat disabled students more favourably than non-disabled pupils, and in some cases are required to do so, by making reasonable adjustments
- ✓ ensures that it reviews, monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of inclusive practices.

7. Age

Because age as a protected characteristic under the [Equality Act 2010](#) does not apply to pupils or students in schools, the school is entitled to admit and organise students in age groups (including students over the age of 18) and to treat them in ways judged to be appropriate to their age and stage of development.

8. Religious Belief

Although as a matter of policy it has no religious character, the school is inclusive and welcomes and respects the rights and freedoms of individuals from all religions and faiths or of no religion or faith.

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9. Reasonable Adjustments

The school has an ongoing duty to make reasonable adjustments for anyone with a disability to ensure they do not suffer a substantial disadvantage in comparison to non-disabled counterparts. The school will inform and consult with parents about what reasonable adjustments, if any, the school is able to make for their disabled child. The school will carefully consider any proposals for auxiliary aids and services in light of a disability and, for example, the resources available to the school. The school has a duty to make reasonable adjustments (in terms of case-by-case consideration and subject to government) for anyone who request to be known as gender neutral, gender fluid, are undergoing gender reassignment or are transgender.

The school is not legally required to make alterations to the school's physical environment as part of the reasonable adjustment's duty. However, the school monitors and reviews the physical environment to consider what reasonable and proportionate steps can be taken to alleviate any substantial disadvantage caused to disabled students. The school has an Accessibility Plan in place, a copy of which can be made available upon request

10. Concerns and Complaints

The school seeks to provide a supportive environment for those who make claims of discrimination and/or harassment. Anyone who believes that they have been discriminated against or have been subject to discriminatory conduct should talk to HR and may use the school's complaints procedure to seek remedy to such matters.

Any student who harasses another student on the grounds of any protected characteristic will be subject to the school's disciplinary measures in accordance with the school's Engagement and Behaviour Policy.

If parents feel this policy has been breached, they should raise their concern or complaint through the school's Complaints Policy which is available on the school website or can be available upon request.

11. Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored on an ongoing basis to evaluate its effectiveness and ensure appropriate steps can be taken to eliminate unlawful discrimination.

This policy is usually reviewed on an annual basis to ensure the aims of the policy are carried out in accordance with the school's equality obligations.

In support of monitoring of this policy, the school seeks to gain anonymised data on staff through the form at Annex A.

The school's Admissions process generates equivalent data for students on roll.

12. 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 Helm Academy Virtual School's Ltd proposals for amendments to this Policy.

Annex A Model form for staff

CONFIDENTIAL - EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES MONITORING FORM

We are an equal opportunities employer and as such we ask all candidates to complete and return this Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form. You should return this form in a separate envelope from your employment application form. The data gathered will help us to monitor the effectiveness of our equal opportunities policies and procedures. It should be completed anonymously and will be held and processed separately from your application.

THIS INFORMATION WILL HAVE NO IMPACT ON THE FINAL RECRUITMENT DECISION.

Position applied for	
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In each section listed below, please choose one option by marking 'X' in the appropriate box.

AGE

16-24		25 -29		30-34		35-39	
40-44		45-49		50-54		55-59	
60-64		65-69		Prefer not to say			

DISABILITY

The Equality Act 2010 defines a disability as a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on an individual's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Do you consider that you have a disability?					
Yes		No		Prefer not to say	

GENDER

Male		Female	
Prefer not to say			

MARITAL OR CIVIL PARTNERSHIP STATUS

Married		In a registered civil partnership	
Not married nor in a civil partnership		Separated	
Divorced		Widowed	
Prefer not to say			

ETHNIC GROUP

Aggregated Ethnic Group	Detailed Ethnic Group	Please put your answer into this column:
White	White British	
White	Gypsy / Roma	
White	Irish	
White	Traveller of Irish Heritage	
White	Any other White background	
Mixed	White and Black Caribbean	
Mixed	White and Asian	
Mixed	White and African	
Mixed	Any other Mixed background	
Asian	Pakistani	
Asian	Indian	
Asian	Bangladeshi	
Asian	Any other Asian background	
Black	African	
Black	Caribbean	
Black	Any other black background	
Chinese	Chinese	
Other	Any other ethnic group: please identify	
Prefer not to say		

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Bisexual		Homosexual / Gay / Lesbian	
Heterosexual		Prefer not to say	

RELIGION OR BELIEF

Buddhist		Christian	
Hindu		Jewish	
Muslim		No religion	
Sikh		Prefer not to say	
Other religion or belief (please specify)			

Date	
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Please do not sign this form.



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