

School Uniform 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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Statement of intent

Helm Academy Virtual School believes that a consistent school uniform policy is vital to promote the ethos of the school and provide a sense of belonging and identity for all pupils, regardless of their protected characteristics or socio-economic circumstances.

This policy lays out the measures the school has taken to ensure a consistent, fair and inclusive uniform policy, and to implement a uniform that reflects the needs of all pupils and is affordable and the best value for money for the school and pupils' families.

We believe that pupils learn most effectively and achieve their best outcomes when they are comfortable, able to be themselves, and dressed in such a way that sets an appropriate tone for education.

1. Legal framework

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

- ✓ Education and Inspections Act 2006
- ✓ Education Act 2011
- ✓ Human Rights Act 1998
- ✓ Equality Act 2010
- ✓ The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- ✓ Data Protection Act 2018
- ✓ Education (Guidance about Costs of School Uniforms) Act 2021

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

- ✓ DfE (2021) 'Cost of school uniforms'
- ✓ DfE (2021) 'School Admissions Code'
- ✓ DfE (2021) 'School uniforms'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- ✓ Complaints Procedures Policy
- ✓ Positive Behaviour Support Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

The Board of Directors are responsible for:

- ✓ Establishing, in consultation with the Headteacher and school community, a practical and smart school uniform that accurately reflects the school's vision and values.
- ✓ Ensuring that the school's uniform is accessible and inclusive and does not disadvantage any pupil by virtue of their protected characteristics or socio-economic status.
- ✓ Listening to the opinions and wishes of parents, pupils and the wider school community regarding changes to the school's uniform.
- ✓ Ensuring that the school's uniform is accessible and affordable.
- ✓ Demonstrating how best value for money has been achieved in the uniform policy.
- ✓ Ensuring compliance with the DfE's '[Cost of school uniforms](#)' guidance.
- ✓ Processing and approving all eligible School Uniform Assistance Application Forms.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- ✓ Enforcing the school's uniform on a day-to-day basis.
- ✓ Ensuring that teachers understand this policy and what to do if a pupil is in breach of the policy.
- ✓ Listening to the opinions and wishes of the school community in regard to the school's uniform and making appropriate recommendations to the board of directors.
- ✓ Providing pupils with an exemption letter as appropriate, e.g. for a pupil who has a broken arm and requires a loose-fitting top.

Staff members are responsible for:

- ✓ Ensuring that pupils dress in accordance with this policy at all times.
- ✓ Disciplining pupils who are in breach of this policy.
- ✓ Ensuring that pupils understand why having a consistent and practical school uniform is important, e.g. school identity.

Parents are responsible for:

- ✓ Providing their children with the correct school uniform as detailed in this policy.
- ✓ Informing the headteacher if their child requires a more relaxed uniform policy for a period of time, including why.
- ✓ Ensuring that their child's uniform is clean, presentable and the correct size.

Pupils are responsible for:

- ✓ Always wearing the correct uniform, unless the headteacher has granted an exemption. Non-compliance will be managed in accordance with the School's Positive Behaviour Management Policy
- ✓ Looking after their uniform as appropriate.
- ✓ Understanding and respecting why a school uniform is important to the school, e.g. school identity and community.

3. Cost principles

The school is committed to ensuring that its school uniform is affordable and accessible to all pupils and does not place an unreasonable financial burden on parents.

Helm Academy Virtual School provides the following branded uniform upon admission to the school at no cost to parents/carers.

- ✓ 2 Helm Academy Polo Shirts
- ✓ 1 Helm Academy branded sweatshirt
- ✓ 1 Helm Academy branded Fleece
- ✓ 1 Helm Academy PE polo shirt and shorts

Additional uniform can be purchased through the school at cost price.

The school ensures the uniform is suitable and safe for pupils who cycle or walk to school, and both the school uniform and PE kit have been chosen to be practical and comfortable for pupils attending Helm Academy Virtual School. Coats are encouraged to be worn during the winter, and waterproofs during inclement weather.

The school will assess the overall cost implications of its uniform policy regularly, including prior to making any changes to the school uniform. When evaluating whether costs are reasonable and proportionate, the school will take into account the opinions and situations of:

- ✓ Economically disadvantaged parents.

- ✓ Parents with multiple children who are, or will be in the future, pupils at the school.
- ✓ Parents of younger children, as they are likely to grow quickly and require new sets of uniform more frequently.
- ✓ Parents of pupils with protected characteristics that may impact their ability to access the uniform due to costs.
- ✓ LAC and PLAC.

The school will evaluate the cost of its uniform based on the overall collection of uniform items that parents would need to purchase for a pupil, rather than on the cost effectiveness of individual items; this will include consideration of the fact that parents will need to purchase multiples of certain items, e.g. shirts and socks, to ensure their child can come to school in clean uniform every day.

The school is committed to meeting the DfE's recommendations on costs and value for money. Every care is taken to ensure that our uniforms are affordable for all current and prospective pupils, and that the best value for money is secured through reputable suppliers.

The school will not amend uniform requirements regularly and will take the views of parents and pupils into account when considering any changes to school uniforms.

Discretionary uniform funding is available for cases of hardship and difficulty – each case will be taken on its own merit and should be discussed in the strictest confidence with the Headteacher.

4. Equality principles

The school takes its legal obligation to avoid discriminating against any protected characteristic unlawfully very seriously and aims to ensure that the uniform policy is as inclusive as possible so that all pupils are supported to access a school uniform which is comfortable, suitable for their needs, and reflects who they are.

The school will work to ensure that school uniform's cost does not disproportionately affect any pupils by ensuring that uniforms for all genders are as equal in price as possible and by adhering to the cost principles laid out in section 3.

The school will ensure that parents and pupils are consulted over any changes to school uniform, and that views and advice is sought specifically from pupils, and parents of pupils, who:

- ✓ Are transgender, including non-binary pupils.
- ✓ Have SEND and/or sensory needs.
- ✓ Are of a religious or cultural background that has dress requirements.

The school implements a gender-neutral uniform, meaning that pupils are not required to wear specific items based on their gender, and may wear any of the uniform items listed in the 'School uniform' section of this policy regardless of the legal sex recorded on the school's records. Transgender pupils are supported to access the uniform that best reflects their gender expression in line with the LGBTQ+ Policy.

The school ensures that pupils who are required to follow certain dress requirements, e.g. by virtue of their membership of a particular religious or cultural group, are afforded flexibility to allow them to wear a uniform that adheres to their requirements as far as possible. The school endeavours to meet all requests for amendments to the uniform for these purposes; however, will

ensure that the needs and rights of individual pupils are weighed against any health and safety concerns for the entire school community.

Parents' concerns and requests regarding religious clothing are dealt with on a case-by-case basis by the headteacher and the board of directors, and always in accordance with the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.

The school ensures that the needs of pupils with SEND and/or sensory difficulties are considered in the uniform policy, e.g. ensuring soft, stretchy fabrics and avoiding intricate buttons or hard seams; however, where the needs of these pupils cannot be met in the standard uniform policy, individual adaptations to the uniform will be considered and permitted wherever possible.

5. Complaints and challenges

The school endeavours to resolve all uniform complaints and challenges locally and informally, in accordance with the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.

To make a complaint, parents should refer to the Complaints Procedures Policy and follow the stipulations outlined.

When a complaint is received, the school works with parents to arrive at a mutually acceptable outcome.

Directors are willing to consider reasonable requests for flexibility to allow a pupil to accommodate particular social and cultural circumstances.

6. School uniform supplier

School uniform can be ordered through Helm Academy Virtual School at cost price by contacting reception@helmacademy.co.uk

The school does not sign contracts with suppliers before requesting visualisations of proposed uniform, as well as fabric samples.

7. School uniform

School colours

Our school colours are as follows:

- ✓ White Polo Shirt
- ✓ Black Sweatshirt
- ✓ Black Fleece
- ✓ Black trousers / joggers
- ✓ Black cargo shorts
- ✓ Black shoes
- ✓ Pale blue PE polo shirt
- ✓ Dark blue PE shorts

Clothing

The school uniform is as follows:

Item	Optional or required	Branding	How to acquire	Cost per item from school
Regular school uniform				
Black sweatshirt or Fleece	Required	School logo on right-hand side	Branded sweatshirt and fleece available from school upon admission. Extra items can be purchased at cost price from reception@helmacademy.co.uk	TBC
White polo shirt	Required	School logo on right-hand side No branding – required	Branded sweatshirt and cardigan available from school upon admission. Extra items can be purchased at cost price from reception@yarrowheights.com	TBC
Black trousers / joggers or black cargo shorts	Required	No branding	Available from regular retailers.	N/A
Sensible, plain black shoes / trainers	Required	No branding	Available from regular retailers.	N/A
PE Kit				
Plain Pale blue t-shirt	Required	No branding	Available from school upon admission Available from regular retailers.	N/A
Plain dark blue shorts	Required	No branding	Available from school upon admission Available from regular retailers.	N/A

- ✓ High heels are not permitted.
- ✓ No skirts are permitted.
- ✓ Black jeans are not permitted.
- ✓ Parents are responsible for ensuring their child brings their PE kit to school when needed.

Jewellery

Permitted jewellery that may be worn is:

- ✓ One pair of stud earrings – no other piercings are permitted.
- ✓ A smart and sensible wrist watch.

Jewellery is the responsibility of the pupil and not the school. Lost or damaged items will not be refunded. All jewellery must be removed during practical lessons, including PE lessons and science experiments.

Hairstyles

The school reserves the right to make a judgement on where pupils' hairstyles or hair colours are inappropriate for the school environment; however, will ensure that any such judgements do not discriminate against any pupil by virtue of their protected characteristics. Each individual pupil's scenario will be taken into account where any judgements on appropriateness are to be made, and parents will always have the freedom to complain via the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.

Pupils with long hair must ensure that this does not impede their vision, cover their face or provide a health and safety risk. Long hair must be tied up during practical lessons, e.g. during PE.

The following hairstyles are not considered appropriate for school:

- ✓ Brightly-coloured, dyed hair.
- ✓ Headwear with bold patterns or colours.
- ✓ Excessive hair accessories.

Makeup

The school rules on makeup are as follows:

- ✓ Only light, natural-looking makeup is permitted.
- ✓ No excessive false eyelashes
- ✓ False nails and nail extensions are not permitted.
- ✓ Temporary tattoos are not permitted.

Pupils wearing excessive makeup are required to remove it.

8. Adverse weather

All pupils are required to wear weather-appropriate clothing that covers as much of their skin as possible during adverse weather.

For hot temperatures, this includes wearing:

- ✓ Loose-fitting and lightweight shirts and school summer cargo shorts
- ✓ Sunglasses with UV protection when outside, where possible.
- ✓ Sun hat / cap

Pupils are advised not to wear any jumpers during heatwaves. If outside during break times, pupils not wearing sun-safe clothing are advised to stay in an area protected from the sun, or spare clothing is provided.

For cold temperatures, this includes wearing:

- ✓ Scarfs, gloves, coats and hats when they are outside.
- ✓ Warm jumpers that conform to the school's uniform policy.
- ✓ Trousers

9. Labelling

All pupils' clothing and footwear is clearly labelled with their name.

Any lost clothing is to be taken to the lost property box in the school office.

10. 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 Board, proposals for amendments to this Policy.



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