

Assessment Policy

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Person Responsible: 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 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	Eve Bartlet	March 2026	Policy written – new framework aligned	01/03/2027



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1. Introduction

This Assessment Policy outlines Helm Academy’s approach to assessment, ensuring that all pupils experience fair, consistent, and effective assessment practises tailored to their individual needs and the unique context of our school. This policy is designed to inform future planning, teaching, and learning, supporting individual identified outcomes and fostering a positive learning environment.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to deliver rigorous, trauma-informed assessment that accurately measures holistic progress against National Curriculum and EHCP outcomes, establishing a consistent framework that balances academic standards with the adaptive flexibility required by our therapeutic context. By utilising diagnostic data to tailor teaching strategies for pupils with SEMH and ASC profiles, we aim to scaffold self-reflection that helps pupils overcome assessment anxiety while empowering parents with transparent reporting that triangulates academic attainment with social, emotional, and behavioural growth. Ultimately, this approach ensures we meet statutory obligations through processes that distinctly recognise and validate the non-linear progress of our specific cohort.

3. Links to Other Policies and Documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Helm Academy Curriculum Policy
- Helm Academy Teaching and Learning Policy
- Helm Academy SEND Policy
- Helm Academy Accessibility Policy
- Monitoring, Evaluation, and Review Policy
- Marking and Feedback Policy
- Exams Policy
- Behaviour Policy

4. Legislation and Guidance

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This policy is informed by the following legislation and guidance:

- The Education Act 2002
- The Children and Families Act 2014
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice: 0 to 25 Years
- Equality Act 2010
- Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005
- Relevant guidance from the Department for Education (DfE)
- Ofsted Inspection Framework

5. Context: Helm Academy's Unique Approach

Helm Academy is an independent special school catering for pupils aged 11-16 with EHCPs, and a range of needs including SEMH, ASC, and those requiring therapeutic intervention. Our assessment practises are tailored to this context, recognising the importance of:

- Trauma-informed approaches
- Nurturing and stable environments
- Individualised learning journeys
- Focus on social, emotional, and mental health
- Primary-model structure to minimise transitions and anxiety
- Meeting pupils where they are developmentally

We align our learning to the National Curriculum outcomes which provides guidance on assessment for special schools.

6. Aims of Assessment at Helm Academy

Our assessment policy aims to:

- Provide accurate and meaningful information about each pupil's progress and attainment.
- Inform teaching and learning strategies to meet individual needs.
- Identify pupils who may require additional support or intervention.
- Enable pupils to understand their own learning and progress.
- Provide parents, carers and stakeholders with clear and regular updates on their child's development.
- Support effective target setting and planning.
- Comply with statutory requirements.

7. Principles of Assessment

Assessment at Helm Academy is underpinned by the following principles:

- **Validity:** Assessment methods accurately measure what they are intended to measure.
- **Reliability:** Assessment practises are consistent and dependable.
- **Fairness:** Assessment is equitable and accessible to all pupils, regardless of their individual needs.
- **Inclusivity:** Assessment methods are adapted to meet the diverse needs of our pupils.
- **Transparency:** Assessment criteria and processes are clear and understandable to all stakeholders.
- **Usefulness:** Assessment information is used to inform teaching, learning, and support.
- **Manageability:** Assessment practises are sustainable and do not create unnecessary workload for staff.

8. Types of Assessment

Helm Academy utilises a range of assessment types to provide a comprehensive picture of each pupil's progress:

- **Formative Assessment (Assessment for Learning):** Ongoing assessment embedded in classroom practice to inform teaching and learning. Examples include:
 - o Questioning
 - o Observations
 - o Discussions
 - o Self and peer assessment
 - o Feedback (oral and written)

- o Learning walks
- **Summative Assessment (Assessment of Learning):** Periodic assessments to measure overall achievement and progress against learning objectives. Examples include:
 - o End-of-term assessments
 - o Standardised tests (where appropriate)
 - o GCSEs and vocational qualifications (where appropriate)
 - o Project-based assessments
- **Diagnostic Assessment:** Assessments used to identify specific learning needs and inform targeted interventions. Examples include:
 - o Reading assessments
 - o Maths assessments
 - o Assessments of social and emotional wellbeing
 - o Boxall Profile assessments
- **Baseline Assessment:** Assessments conducted at the start of a pupil's time at Helm Academy to establish their starting points and inform individualised learning plans. Examples include:
 - o Cognitive Abilities Tests (CATs)
 - o Standardised tests in literacy and numeracy
 - o Teacher observations

9. Assessment Methods and Strategies

Helm Academy employs an adaptive variety of assessment methods and strategies to cater to the diverse needs of our pupils, ensuring all approaches are trauma-informed and accessible.

- **Systematic Observation:** Continuous, contextualised observation of pupils within the classroom and therapeutic settings, prioritising tracking of **social, emotional, and self-regulation skills** in line with PEP/EHCP targets.
- **Adaptive Questioning:** Use of **low-anxiety techniques** (e.g., *Think-Pair-Share*, *non-verbal cues*) to assess understanding and promote critical thinking, allowing pupils to process and respond at their own pace.
- **Structured Discussion:** Facilitated group or one-to-one discussions to assess knowledge and communication skills, providing a **safe, familiar structure** to minimize social anxiety.
- **Scaffolded Self and Peer Assessment:** Encouraging pupil reflection and constructive peer feedback, with explicit support structures (e.g., visual rubrics, sentence starters) to build self-esteem and independence.
- **Task-Based Portfolio Assessment:** Compiling collections of pupils' work to demonstrate holistic progress, focusing on the **learning process** (e.g., planning, adaptation, effort) over final product accuracy.
- **Practical & Applied Tasks:** Assessing skills through hands-on activities and real-world projects, utilizing these methods as the *primary* means of measuring ability where formal written tests are counterproductive.
- **Modified Summative Checkpoints:** Using tests and examinations *only* where necessary for qualification, adapting them through **reduced reading load, rest breaks, and verbal/scribe support** to maintain fairness and inclusivity.

10. Marking and Feedback

Marking and feedback at Helm Academy are designed to:

- Acknowledge pupil effort, particularly according to their EHCP and/or PEP targets
- Provide pupils with clear and specific information about their strengths and areas for improvement.
- Offer strategies for pupils to improve their work and take the next steps in their learning.
- Promote self-reflection and independent learning.
- Be manageable for the teaching team.
- Inform future planning and next steps in learning.

Our marking and feedback practises include:

- Carefully considering pupils' work.
- Providing detailed comments, but not overwhelming amounts of writing.
- Offering honest and constructive feedback.
- Using stickers and stamps (where appropriate).
- Giving pupils time to read and respond to feedback.
- Basing grades and levels on clear success criteria.
- Sharing examples of good work from other pupils.

See Marking and Feedback Policy

11. Recording and Reporting

Helm Academy maintains accurate and up-to-date records of pupil assessment data. This information is used to:

- Track pupil progress over time.
- Identify pupils who may require additional support or intervention.
- Inform teaching and learning strategies.
- Provide parents, carers and stakeholders with regular updates on their child's development.
- Meet statutory reporting requirements.

We use a variety of methods for recording and reporting assessment data, including:

- Internal recording documents
- Teacher planners
- Excel spreadsheets
- Management Information System (MIS) - Iris Adapt
- Annotated notes and comments on pupils' work

Formal written reports are sent to parents at the end of the Summer term, with interim reports provided in the Autumn and Spring terms. Parent Consultation Evenings are also held throughout the year to provide opportunities for face-to-face discussions about pupil progress. **See APPENDIX 1 and 2**

12. Roles and Responsibilities

The following roles and responsibilities are essential to the implementation of this policy:

Executive Leadership Team (ELT)/Senior Leadership Team (SLT):

- Ensuring the policy is implemented effectively.

- Monitoring the impact of the policy on pupil outcomes.
- Providing resources and support for staff.

Head of School:

- Overseeing the implementation of the assessment policy.
- Ensuring compliance with statutory requirements.
- Reporting to the Board on pupil progress and attainment.

Lead Teacher for Curriculum/Deputy Head Teacher:

- Maintaining and updating the assessment policy.
- Providing training and support for staff on assessment practises.
- Analysing assessment data and identifying areas for improvement.

Assistant Lead Teacher for Curriculum:

- Developing subject-specific assessment strategies.
- Monitoring the quality of assessment within their subject area.
- Using assessment data to inform curriculum planning.

Teachers/Higher Level Teaching Assistants:

- Implementing the assessment policy in their classrooms.
- Providing pupils with regular feedback on their progress.
- Maintaining accurate records of pupil assessment data.

SENCO:

- Advising on assessment practises for pupils with SEND.
- Ensuring that assessment methods are adapted to meet individual needs.

Parents/Carers/Stakeholders:

- Supporting their child's learning at home.
- Attending consultation events.
- Communicating with the school about any concerns or questions.

Pupils:

- Engaging actively in the assessment process.
- Reflecting on their own learning and progress.
- Seeking support from teachers when needed.

13. Inclusion and SEND

Helm Academy is committed to providing inclusive assessment practises that meet the needs of all pupils, including those with SEND. We will:

- Use a range of assessment methods to cater to different learning styles and needs.
- Adapt assessment materials and procedures to ensure accessibility.
- Provide pupils with SEND with appropriate support and accommodations.
- Consider progress relative to pupil starting points and take this into account alongside the nature of pupils' learning difficulties.
- Work closely with parents, carers and stakeholders to develop individualised assessment plans.

- Ensure that assessment practises are consistent with the recommendations in pupils' EHCPs.

14. Monitoring and Evaluation

The effectiveness of this assessment policy will be monitored and evaluated through:

- Regular analysis of assessment data.
- Lesson observations and work scrutiny.
- Feedback from pupils, parents, carers, stakeholders and staff.
- Reviews of assessment practises at departmental meetings.
- External reviews and inspections.

The findings of these monitoring and evaluation activities will be used to inform ongoing improvements to the assessment policy and practises.

15. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Head Teacher and Assessment Coordinator, in consultation with staff and other stakeholders. The review will consider:

- The effectiveness of the policy in achieving its aims.
- Changes to relevant legislation and guidance.
- Feedback from pupils, parents, cares, stakeholders, and staff.
- The impact of the policy on pupil outcomes.

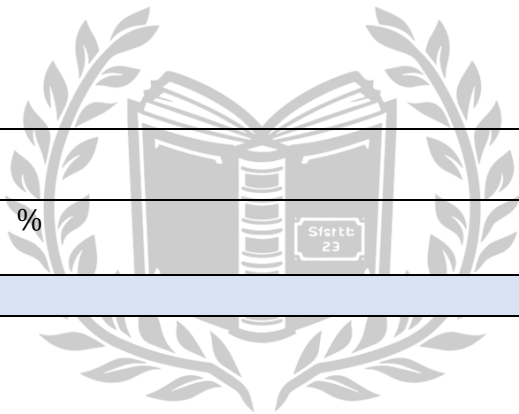
Any necessary revisions will be made to the policy, and the updated policy will be communicated to all stakeholders.



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Date	
Pupil Name	
Class/Year Group	
Teacher/Staff Present	
Parents/Carers Present	
Purpose of Meeting	
Academic Progress	
Strengths	
Areas of Development	
Personal, Social, and Behavioural Development	
Attendance/ Punctuality	%
Key Discussion Points	
How Parents/Carers Can Support at Home	
How Parents/Carers Can Support at Home	
Agreed Actions & Next Steps	
Action	



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Responsibility	
Deadline	
Review Dates if Applicable	
Next Meeting Scheduled	
Additional Notes	
	
Academic Year	
Pupil Name	
Class/Year Group	
Teacher	
Attendance	%
Punctuality	
English / Literacy	
Strengths	
Areas for Development	
Overall Comment	

Maths/Numeracy	
Strengths	
Areas for Development	
Overall Comment	
Other Subjects	Strengths, needs, overall comments
Science	
History/ Geography	
PE	
Art/DT	



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Computing	
	Overall comments
Attitude to learning	
Behaviour & conduct	
Independence & Organisation	
Social & Emotional Development	
Strengths/ Achievements	Overall comments



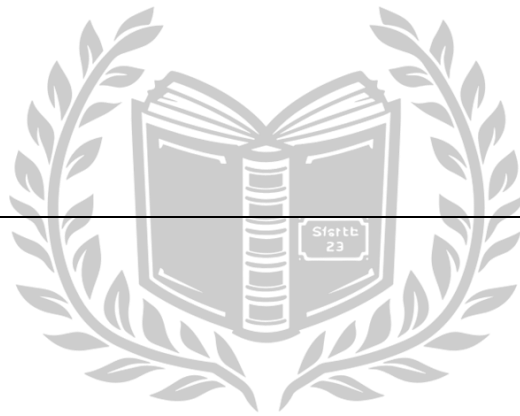
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Targets/ Next steps	Overall comments & EHCP link



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Evidence Map

- **Culture & Ethos:** Relational culture; predictable routines; anti-bullying stance; pupil/parent voice informs change.
- **Preventative Teaching & Routines:** Explicit success criteria; low-anxiety checks for understanding; visual schedules; supportive cold-call.
- **Pupil Support / ILPs:** Graduated response; ILPs co-produced; reasonable adjustments; access arrangements based on normal way of working.
- **Restorative & Data-Informed Responses:** Trend analysis (attainment/ reading/ attendance/ behaviour); restorative conversations; actions logged and reviewed.
- **Staff Training & Induction:** CPD on explicit instruction, feedback, moderation; safeguarding/KCSIE; ProActive Approach.
- **Restraint-Reduction:** Any restrictive practice is last resort; leaders review, learn and minimise; staff skilled in de-escalation.
- **Recording & Moderation:** Single dashboard; standardisation and cross-moderation; termly governor reports with equity analysis.



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Appendix 3 – Glossary of Key Terms and Acronyms

Glossary of Key Terms and Acronyms

AfL – Assessment for Learning: Formative checks that adapt teaching in real time. Example: exit tickets inform next lesson scaffolds.

AoL – Assessment of Learning: Summative checks at waypoints/endpoints. Example: end-of-term assessment with reasonable adjustments.

BKSB: Diagnostic platform for Maths/English. Example: termly baselines trigger targeted interventions.

Boxall Profile: SEMH assessment informing ILP targets. Example: regulation goals reviewed half-termly.

CEIAG: Careers education, information, advice & guidance. Example: impartial guidance interviews.

EHCP: Statutory plan for needs and provision. Example: Section F provision recorded and reviewed.

ILP – Individual Learning Plan: Personalised targets and strategies. Example: reading fluency goal with fluency drills and decodable texts.

KCSIE: Keeping Children Safe in Education. Example: DSL ensures assessment routines uphold safeguarding.

Reasonable Adjustments: Support to remove barriers. Example: reader/scribe, rest breaks, coloured paper, assistive tech.

Standardisation & Moderation: Processes to secure reliable judgements. Example: cross-subject book looks each half term.

SSP – Systematic Synthetic Phonics: Structured phonics approach. Example: Jolly Phonics for identified pupils.

Therapeutic Assessment Approach: Minimising anxiety and using valid alternatives. Example: oral presentation instead of extended writing.

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