

SACRE Constitution and Terms of Reference

Introduction

- 1) In accordance with the Education Act 1996, Religious Education and Collective Worship and Religious Education in English Schools: Non-Statutory Guidance 2010, and circular 1/94 (Collective Worship), the Local Authority (LA) has a duty to set up a Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE).
- 2) It is required by law that Religious Education (RE) is taught in schools to children up to the age of 18, but it is not part of the National Curriculum. Instead RE is a local responsibility. SACRE oversees RE and Collective Worship on behalf of the LA.
- 3) SACRE will operate within the law in force as defined by parliament and interpreted by the courts, and with due regard to any guidance issued by the Department for Education (DfE). If there is any conflict of interest between this constitution and terms of reference and the law SACRE will comply with the law.

Functions and Responsibilities of the LA

- 4) The LA shall appoint, fund and supervise a **Clerk** to:
 - a) attend the full meetings of SACRE, any agenda setting meeting and Agreed Syllabus Conference meetings
 - b) take appropriate minutes and notes at meetings
 - c) maintain and update the records of SACRE and its meetings
 - d) perform any other necessary administrative duties
 - e) provide a copy of the minutes and papers of meeting to the members of SACRE and LA
 - f) If necessary, to seek appropriate legal advice from the LA
- 5) SACRE shall be served by a **Senior LA Officer**. The LA officer will:
 - a) attend each SACRE and ASC meeting
 - b) represent the views of the LA at these meetings
 - c) provide necessary information and support to the RE Consultant regarding RE and Collective Worship in the LA's schools
 - d) ensure that the LA provides sufficient funds for SACRE to perform its function
- 6) **The RE Adviser** will:
 - a) attend each meeting of the SACRE and support the SACRE to fulfil its function with regard to RE and Collective Worship
 - b) work with the Chair, Clerk and LA Officer to prepare the SACRE agenda and any reports, papers or advice required
 - c) report regularly to SACRE on work completed on behalf of SACRE
 - d) provide expertise and advice in the areas of RE and Collective Worship

Functions and Responsibilities of the SACRE

- 7) The broad role of SACRE is **to support the effective provision of RE and Collective Worship in schools**. The Telford & Wrekin LA will work with the SACRE to monitor and review the existing provision for RE and Collective Worship.
- 8) The functions of SACRE are detailed in section 391 Education Act 1996 (as amended). Other responsibilities are outlined in: Religious Education in English Schools: non-statutory guidance 2010; SACRE and Self Evaluation: A guide (Ofsted 2005); Circular 1/94 (Collective Worship). These responsibilities are to:

- a) **Advise** the Authority on such matters connected with RE and Collective Worship in Telford & Wrekin Community schools, Foundation schools without a religious character and Voluntary Controlled schools.
- b) **Monitor** the provision and quality of RE taught according to its Agreed Syllabus, together with the overall effectiveness of the syllabus.
- c) **Provide** advice and support on the effective teaching of the Agreed Syllabus.
- d) **Provide** advice to the LA and its schools on methods of teaching, the choice of teaching material and the provision of teacher training.
- e) **Require** the LA to set up a statutory conference to review the Agreed Syllabus if, in the opinion of the SACRE, this becomes necessary. This must be reviewed and updated every five years, but a majority of representative groups on the SACRE - other than that consisting of persons chosen to represent the Authority (Group D) - may at any time require a review of the Agreed Syllabus which is currently being used by the Authority.
- f) **Consider**, in partnership with the LA, whether any changes need to be made to the Agreed Syllabus, or in the support offered to schools in the implementation of the Agreed Syllabus, to improve the quality of RE and the learning of pupils.
- g) **Offer** schools and the LA advice concerning how an existing syllabus can be interpreted so as to fit in with wider changes in education.
- h) **Receive, determine and review** applications from headteachers - that the requirement for **Collective Worship** in community schools to be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character, shall not apply to the collective worship provided for some, or all, of the pupils at that particular school.
- i) **Publish** an annual report on its work and on actions taken by its representative groups, specifying any matters on which it has advised the LA, broadly describing the nature of that advice, and setting reasons for offering advice on matters which were not referred to it by the LA. This report will be presented to the LA, schools and other appropriate bodies. This report should also be made available to the public. The report will provide at least the information specified by the receiving body.
- j) **Develop** SACRE's own role, supported by the LA and working with inter- religious bodies, to enhance the important contribution that the study of religion and belief can make to community cohesion and the combating of religious prejudice and discrimination.
- k) **Offer** advice to Telford & Wrekin LA on any matters related to SACREs.

Membership of SACRE

- 9) Telford & Wrekin SACRE will be represented by members who can fully support the effective provision for RE and Collective Worship in schools. All members shall be delegates who are interested in education in general and religious education in particular in the Borough of Telford & Wrekin.

Group A: Religions and religious denominations in the area (other than Church of England)

This group is made up of representatives of Christian denominations other than the Church of England and other religious traditions represented in Telford & Wrekin.

The number of representatives for each religious tradition or denomination will reflect the religious make up of Telford & Wrekin.

Each of these representatives should be nominated by an appropriate faith organisation. All members of this group will be appointed by the LA, which will have taken reasonable steps to assure itself that the nominee is representative of the relevant faith group and that they fully support the effective provision for RE and Collective Worship in schools. The nominating body will be the point of reference should the LA have any questions pertaining to their nominee(s) either before or subsequent to their appointment.

Group B: Church of England

This group is made up of four members of the Church of England, representing the Diocese of Lichfield and Hereford and can include both clergy and lay people. Each nominee will be

proposed by the Diocesan Board of Education and appointed by the LA. The nominating body will be the point of reference should the LA have any questions pertaining to their nominee(s) either before or subsequent to their appointment.

Group C: Teacher representatives

Telford & Wrekin LA shall appoint members of this group to represent a spread of teacher specialisations and these should reflect as broad a spread of teacher associations as possible (including NASUWT; ATL; NUT; ASCL and NAHT). Any teacher association that is not represented by the teacher category criteria will have the right to nominate an additional representative. The nominating body will be the point of reference should the LA have any questions pertaining to their nominee(s) either before or subsequent to their appointment.

Group D: The Local Authority

This group shall comprise of elected members as nominated by the LA, including a Senior LA Officer and any appropriate officer as put forward by the LA.

The LA is charged with filling any vacancies.

The nominating body will be the point of reference should the LA have any questions pertaining to their nominee(s) either before or subsequent to their appointment. The Director of Children & Family Services will be the point of reference should SACRE have any questions pertaining to the LA Senior Officer.

SACRE Officers

- a) LA Senior Officer (as detailed above)
- b) Clerk to SACRE (non-voting)
- c) RE Consultant (non-voting)

Co-opted members

Any other co-opted members agreed by SACRE members.

- 10) The power to appoint members is vested in the LA in consultation with the appropriate bodies whose representatives comprise the SACRE.
- 11) Any member of SACRE unable to attend a meeting may appoint a named substitute to attend in his/her place.

Vacancies

- 12) In the event of a vacancy on SACRE the clerk shall:
 - a) advise the relevant representative group of the vacancy
 - b) refer any nomination from said group of a replacement member to the LA
 - c) add the nominee's name to the SACRE membership upon receipt of the agreement of the LA

Term of Office

- 13) Appointments to SACRE shall generally be for a term of three years from the date that the new member should have attended their first meeting. Groups can re-nominate members after the end of the three years for consideration by the LA.
- 14) The SACRE shall review the membership annually at the AGM in the autumn term.

End of membership

- 15) A member shall be removed from SACRE if:

- a) they reach the end of their term of office and have not been re-nominated
- b) they write to the SACRE or the Clerk and tender their resignation
- c) they were appointed by virtue of holding a particular office and they no longer hold that office
- d) they do not attend three consecutive meetings without appropriate apologies
- e) their representative group states, in writing, that the member should no longer act as one of its representatives on the SACRE, where the member was nominated by the representative group

Co-opted members

- 16) SACRE shall have the right to co-opt additional members. Co-opted members may take part in any of the discussions but do not belong to any of the groups and do not have voting rights.
- 17) Members of SACRE or a representative group should consider the following when co-options are decided e.g. candidates could:
 - a) have some experience as religious educators
 - b) have a balanced view of the aims of religious education and collective worship
 - c) where possible be representative of specific education phases, to provide a balanced spread across various phases
- 18) SACRE will decide co-options following nominations from members of SACRE or representative groups. Co-opted members shall hold office on such terms as may be determined at the time of co-option by the representative members.

Voting

- 19) Each of the four committees on SACRE shall have one vote. Groups are to determine their own internal voting arrangements. Decisions within a group about how that vote is cast do not require unanimity. Each group is to regulate its own proceedings, including provision for resolving deadlock.
- 20) A proposal shall not be deemed to be carried unless it has been approved by at least three of the four committees, unless otherwise required by law or guidance. If there is a tied vote then the issue would fail, and no action would be taken.
- 21) The validity of the proceedings of SACRE or of the members of SACRE of any particular category shall not be affected by a vacancy in the office of any member of SACRE, or on the ground that a member appointed to represent any religion, religious denomination or association does not at the time of the proceedings represent the religion, religious denomination or association in question.

Quorum

- 22) A quorum shall consist of one member from at least three of the groups, with a total presence of no less than one third of the members.

Chair and Vice Chair

- 23) The Chair and Vice Chair will be appointed by the membership of SACRE at the AGM in the Autumn Term, or any meeting during the year when the position is vacant. Normally the Chair and Vice Chair will remain in their position for three years.
- 24) Where a vote is required, voting will be by a simple majority, with each committee being assigned one vote.
- 25) The Chair will be responsible for:
 - a) the management of meetings
 - b) representing the SACRE to other bodies
 - c) such other duties as the SACRE considers appropriate

26) The Vice Chair will be responsible for:

- a) deputising for the chair as required
- b) representing the SACRE to other bodies in the absence of the chair or in agreement with the Chair
- c) such other duties as the SACRE considers appropriate

Frequency of Meetings

27) There will normally be three SACRE meetings per academic year, one per term. Meetings will be convened by the LA. The autumn term meeting will be the AGM.

28) Special meetings may be called by the Chair, Vice Chair and LA acting jointly.

29) Details of the business to be considered by the meeting, which will be included in the agenda, must be received by the Clerk no later than fifteen school days before the meeting.

30) The Clerk will, no later than ten working days before the meeting, circulate the agenda and supporting papers to the members.

Convening an Agreed Syllabus Conference

31) Telford & Wrekin LA is required to convene an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) to review the Agreed Syllabus every five years. An ASC may be requested to be convened by SACRE more frequently.

32) This conference will ideally have the same composition as SACRE. There is no provision for co-opted members; however some individuals may be invited to all meetings of the conference and its committees in order to give their advice.

General

33) The SACRE may, if it wishes, establish working parties to take forward specific projects comprising representatives of each of the groups and the RE Consultant. These working parties will report back to SACRE regularly, according to a schedule agreed at the outset of the project.

34) In accordance with the statutory requirements of the Education Act 1996 and associated regulations, the press and public will be entitled to attend meetings of the SACRE, but may be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of items containing information capable of being treated as exempt information if meetings of SACRE were meetings of a LA. The press and public are not entitled to attend meetings of an Agreed Syllabus Conference.

35) The Constitution will be reviewed every three years of SACRE (at the AGM) and suggestions for amendment voted on as described in Clauses 17-20. Minor amendments may be brought to any meeting, with the agreement of members, and such minor amendments voted on as described in Clauses 17-20.