

**STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION  
(S.A.C.R.E.)  
CONSTITUTION**

## **1. Legislative Background**

The Education Act 1996, Sections 375-397 (in conjunction with 'Religious Education In English Schools: Non-statutory guidance 2010').

## **2. Terms of Reference**

- a) The broad role of SACRE is to support the effective provision of RE and Collective Worship in schools. Walsall Local Authority will work with the SACRE to monitor and review the existing provision for RE and Collective Worship.
- b) 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:

- a) **to advise** the Authority on such matters connected with Religious Education and Collective Worship in Walsall Community schools, Foundation schools without a religious character and Voluntary Controlled schools.
- b) **to monitor** the provision and quality of RE taught according to its Agreed Syllabus together with the overall effectiveness of the syllabus in all schools.
- c) **to provide** advice and support on the effective teaching of the Agreed Syllabus.
- d) **to provide** advice to the LA and its schools on methods of teaching, the choice of teaching material and the provision of teacher training.
- e) **to 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.

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- f) **to 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) **to 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) **to 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) **to 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 and schools and is to be delivered to the Department for Education and NASACRE (the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education) by the date specified. This report should also be made available to the public. The report will provide at least the information specified by the receiving body.
- j) **to 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, British values\* and the combating of religious prejudice and discrimination.
- k) **to offer** advice to the Walsall LA on any matters related to SACREs.

### 3. Membership of SACRE

- a) The number of representative members shall be determined from time to time by the LA and the individual appointments should be made by the LA after taking all reasonable steps to assure itself that the individual is representative of the denomination or the teacher association concerned. It is desirable that all members have an interest in education in general and in religious education in particular.
- b) SACRE is to be comprised of the members of the four Representative Groups and members co-opted to SACRE
- c) The four Representative Groups shall be:

**Group A:** Such Christian denominations other religions and religious denominations as, in the opinion of the LA, will appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in Walsall and religions and faiths covered by the Agreed Syllabus. The number of representatives of each religion and religious denomination appointed shall, so far as consistent with the efficient discharge of the Council's functions, reflect broadly the proportionate strength of that denomination or religion in the area as indicated by the 2011 census data:

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- 1 Baptist
- 1 Black Country Orthodox Trust
- 2 Methodist
- 1 New Testament Church of God
- 1 Quakers
- 1 Roman Catholic
- 1 Salvation Army
- 1 United Reform Church
- 3 Muslim
- 2 Hindu
- 3 Sikh
- 1 Jewish
- 1 Buddhist

### **Non-Religious Philosophical Convictions**

- 2 appointed representative for people with non-religious affiliation or belief not represented by any other membership group so long as the non-religious beliefs analogous (similar or equivalent) to a religious beliefs as per the following guidance:-
  - To be “analogous” we consider the non-religious beliefs must in accordance with case law under the European Convention of Human Rights and the Human Rights Act 1998 attain the necessary level of cogency, seriousness, cohesion and importance to attract protection under the Convention Rights.
  - Any appointment is dependent on the relevant local authority’s opinion as to whether such a representative would help ensure that the relevant traditions in the local authority’s area are appropriately reflected in Group A. The final decision of an appointment rests with the local authority, and they are best placed to assess whether a SACRE has the necessary expertise and experience to properly discharge its function.

### **Nomination and election process**

Nominations for people with non-religious affiliation or belief not represented by any other membership group in Category A should be submitted in writing to Democratic Services. Nominations to be reviewed by the Director of Children’s Service together with the Portfolio Holder for Education and SACRE, to consider eligibility. A recommendation to Council shall then be made.

**Group B: Church of England.** This group is made up of 5 members of the Church of England, representing the Diocese of Lichfield. It can include both clergy and lay people. Each nominee will be proposed by the Lichfield Diocesan Board of Education and appointed by the LA. The nominating body will be the

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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** to represent a spread of teacher specialisations as listed below, and these should reflect as broad a spread of teacher associations as possible. 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:

- 2 Maintained School Headteachers (Primary or Secondary)
- 1 Secondary Academy School Headteachers
- 1 Primary Academy School Headteacher
- Local RE subject leader Primary
- Local RE subject leader secondary
- Representatives of Unions (NUT, NASUWT, ATL, ASCL, NAHT)

**Group D: Local Authority.** This group shall comprise a group of up to seven elected members as nominated by the political parties represented on the council.

**Co-opted members:** SACRE shall have the right to co-opt additional members for the remainder of the municipal year. 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. The co-opted members shall be appointed only by those members of SACRE who have not themselves been co-opted.

Co-opted Members to include a Humanist UK representative.

#### 4. Officer Support

- a) Local Authority senior officer or representative (non-voting)
- b) Clerk to SACRE (non-voting)
- c) RE Consultant (non-voting)

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 Head of Service will be the point of reference should SACRE have any questions pertaining to the Local Authority Senior Officer.

#### 5. Membership

- a) The LA shall appoint the members of the SACRE after consulting with the Nominating Bodies as appropriate.
- b) Nominating bodies will review their representation at the beginning of each municipal year or up to every five years as they see fit.

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- c) An individual representative member may resign at any time by giving notice in writing to their Nominating Body and to the Clerk of SACRE
- d) An individual representative member may be removed from membership by the LA, if in the opinion of the LA he or she ceases to be representative of the nominating denomination or teacher association.
- e) Following non-attendance of a member at two consecutive meetings without apology, the SACRE will recommend to the LA that a replacement nomination be sought from the relevant Nominating Body.

## **6. Term of Office**

- a) Appointments to SACRE shall generally be for a term of 5 years from the date that the new member should have attended their first meeting. Groups can re-nominate members after the end of the 5 years for consideration by the LA. Members may not serve for more than two consecutive periods of 10 years (i.e. ten consecutive years in total). SACRE may waive this rule with the agreement of all voting members of SACRE if the continued service of a Member was considered to be beneficial to the Council.
- b) The SACRE shall review the membership annually at the AGM in the summer term.

## **7. Voting**

- a) Each of the four Groups 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.
- b) A proposal shall not be deemed to be carried unless it has been approved by at least three of the four Groups, unless otherwise required by law or guidance. If there is a tied vote then the issue would fail, and no action would be taken.
- c) 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.

## **8. Quorum**

A quorum shall consist of one member from at least three of the constituent groups with a total presence of no less than eight of the appointed members.

## **9. Chairs and Vice Chair**

- a) The chair and vice chair will be appointed by the membership of SACRE at the AGM in the summer term or any meeting during the year when the

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position is vacant. Normally the chair and vice chair will remain in their positions for two years.

- b) The chair and vice chair, where possible, will represent different Groups of the SACRE and if possible have different religious backgrounds.
- c) SACRE will put in place procedures to consider succession planning for the posts of chair and vice chair.
- d) Where a vote is required, voting will be by a simple majority with each Group being assigned one vote.
- e) The Chair will be responsible for:
  - the management of meetings
  - representing the SACRE to other bodies
  - such other duties as the SACRE considers appropriate.
- f) The Vice Chair will be responsible for:
  - deputising for the chair as required;
  - representing the SACRE to other bodies in the absence of the chair or in agreement with the Chair
  - such other duties as the SACRE considers appropriate.

## **10. The Clerk**

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

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## **11. The Local Authority Senior officer**

SACRE shall be served by a Local Authority Senior 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 Walsall schools
- d) ensure that the LA provide sufficient funds for SACRE to perform its functions.

## **12. The RE Consultant**

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.

## **13. Meetings of SACRE**

- a) There will normally be three SACRE meetings per academic year, one per term. Meetings will be convened by the LA. The summer term meeting will be the AGM.
- b) Special meetings may be called by the Chair, Vice Chair and LA acting jointly.
- c) Details of the business to be considered by the meeting, which will be included in the agenda, must be received by the Clerk not later than 15 school days before the meeting.
- d) The Clerk will, no later than 5 working days before the meeting, circulate the agenda and supporting papers to the members.
- e) Meetings of SACRE shall be held in public except where an item of business is being considered which involves the consideration of confidential information in accordance with the Religious Education (Meetings of Local Conferences and Councils).

## **14. Convening an Agreed Syllabus Conference**

- a) Walsall 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.
- b) 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 Groups in order to give their advice.

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## 15. General

- a) 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.
- b) 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 Local Authority. The press and public are not entitled to attend meetings of an Agreed Syllabus Conference.
- c) The Constitution will be reviewed on a biennial basis at the Summer term meeting of SACRE (the AGM) and suggestions for amendment voted on as described in Sections 7 & 8. Minor amendments may be brought to any meeting, with the agreement of members, and such minor amendments voted on as described in Section 7 & 8.

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