

Worcestershire County Council
Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)
Constitution and Terms of Reference

Introduction

1. In accordance with the Education Act 1996, Circular 1/94, Religious Education and Collective Worship and Religious Education in English Schools: Non-statutory guidance 2010, the council, as 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 in county schools on behalf of the LA. The Funding Agreement for an Academy without a religious designation states that that it must arrange for RE to be given to all pupils in accordance with the requirements for agreed syllabuses that are set out in section 375(3) of the Education Act 1996 and paragraph (5) of Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. Academies can opt to use a locally agreed syllabus.
3. SACRE will operate within the law and guidance in force issued by parliament, the courts and 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

4. The broad role of SACRE is to support the effective provision of RE and collective worship in schools. Worcestershire LA will work with the SACRE to monitor and review the existing provision for RE and collective worship.
5. The functions of SACRE are detailed in the s.391 Education Act (as amended). Other responsibilities are outlined in Religious Education in English Schools: Non-statutory guidance (2010), SACRE and Self Evaluation: A guide (OFSTED 2005) and Circular 1/94 Religious Education and Collective Worship. The duties and responsibilities comprise:
 - a. To advise the LA on such matters connected with religious education and collective worship in Worcestershire community schools and foundation and voluntary-aided or voluntary controlled schools without a religious character;
 - b. To monitor the provision and quality of RE taught according to its Agreed Syllabus together with the overall effectiveness of the syllabus;
 - 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 LA (Group D), may at any time require a review of the Agreed Syllabus which is currently being used by the LA;
- f. In partnership with the LA, consider 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. To receive and determine whether 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. This report will be made available to the schools and to the public. A copy can be sent to the DfE.
- j. SACREs are encouraged to develop their own roles working with inter-religious bodies to enhance the important contribution that the study of religion and belief can make to social cohesion and the combating of religious prejudice and discrimination.
- k. The SACRE may offer advice to Worcestershire LA on any matters related to its function as it sees fit.

Membership of SACRE

- 6. The Worcestershire 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. The membership shall be allocated to four groups as follows:

Group A: Christian denominations and other religions and religious denominations.

This group is made up of representatives of Christian denominations; other than the Church of England; and other religious traditions represented in Worcestershire (as identified in the most recent published census information). Each of these representatives should be nominated by an appropriate faith organisation. All members of this group will be appointed by the Local Authority, which will have taken reasonable steps to assure itself that the nominee is

representative of the relevant faith groups of Worcestershire and that they fully support the effective provision for RE and Collective Worship in schools.

Group B: Church of England

three representatives of the Church of England, at least one of whom should be a representative of the Diocese of Worcestershire Board of Education

Group C: Teacher representatives

representatives from the teachers' and head teachers' associations (AHT, ASCL, ATL, NAHT, NASUWT, NUT). The Local Authority will seek to ensure that teacher representatives come from a balance church and non-church schools, county schools and academies.

Group D: The Local Authority

three elected councillors as nominated by the political parties represented on the council.

SACRE officers

Local Authority responsible officer (non-voting)
 Clerk to SACRE (non-voting)
 RE Consultant (non-voting)

Co-opted Members

Any other co-opted members agreed by SACRE.

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

Vacancies

9. 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 membership of the SACRE upon receipt of the agreement of the LA.
10. Before appointing a person to represent any religion, denomination or associations as a member of the council, the LA shall take all reasonable steps to assure themselves that s/he is representative of the religion, denomination or associations in question.

11. A member of the council who was appointed by the LA may be removed from membership by the LA if, in their opinion, s/he ceases to be representative of the religion, denomination or associations which s/he was appointed to represent or (as the case may be) s/he ceases to be representative of the authority.
12. Where a faith group not currently represented on Committee A wishes to join SACRE, the representative will be asked to attend a SACRE meeting and present their request. SACRE will then refer the matter to the LA, recommending either approval of membership, or co-opting the representative, or rejection of the application, with reasons.
13. In the absence of nominees from a representative group, the LA may nominate and appoint any person that it considers to be representative of that group and it deems appropriate to fill that vacancy.

Term of Office

14. Appointments to SACRE shall generally be for a term of up to four years to be co-terminous with the term of office of members of Worcestershire Council.
15. The SACRE shall review the membership annually at the Autumn Term meeting.

End of Membership

16. 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;
 - 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;
 - f. the LA determines, on reasonable grounds, that the member is unable, unwilling or an unsuitable person to continue these duties.

Co-opted members

17. 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.
18. Members of SACRE or a representative group should consider the following when co-options are decided. Candidates should:

- a. have some experience as religious educators;
 - b. have an inclusive 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.
19. SACRE will decide co-options following nominations from members of SACRE or representative groups.
20. Co-opted members shall hold office on such terms as may be determined at the time of co-option by the representative members. This may be for a fixed-term project, or for term of four years. There is no right of succession for co-opted members; SACRE shall agree through a vote if a replacement co-opted member is required and fulfils the stipulations from Para 18.

Voting

21. In general proceedings, routine decisions can be approved by SACRE members giving their consent. Matters of controversy, constitutional reform or significance, such as agreeing a revised Agreed Syllabus, should be dealt with by voting in groups, as in Para 22 below.
22. 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 proceeding including provision for resolving deadlock.
23. 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.
24. 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

25. A quorum shall consist of one member from at least each of the four constituent groups with a total presence of no less than one third of the appointed members.

Chair and Vice-Chairs

26. The chair and two vice-chairs will be elected by the membership of SACRE for a period of two years, with the option for renewal, at the autumn meeting or any meeting during the year when the position is vacant. The term of office for each Vice-Chair will start a year apart to ensure continuity.

27. The chair and vice-chairs, where possible, will represent different groups of the SACRE.
28. Voting for the chair and vice-chairs will be by a simple majority within the council.
29. 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.
30. The vice-chairs 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.

The Clerk

31. The LA shall appoint, fund and supervise a Clerk to:-
 - d. attend the full meetings of SACRE, any agenda-setting meeting and agreed syllabus conference meetings;
 - e. take appropriate minutes and notes at meetings;
 - f. maintain and update the records of SACRE and its meetings;
 - g. perform any other necessary administrative duties;
 - h. provide a copy of the minutes and papers of meeting to the members of SACRE and LA.

The LA officer

32. SACRE shall be supported by an Officer from the Children's Services Directorate who will:
 - a. attend each meeting;
 - b. represent the views of the LA at the meeting;
 - c. ensure that the LA provide sufficient funds for SACRE to perform its functions.

The RE consultant/Adviser

33. The RE consultant/adviser will:
 - a. attend each meeting of the SACRE and support the SACRE to fulfil its function in Worcestershire;
 - b. work with the chair, clerk and LA officer to prepare the SACRE agenda and any reports, papers or advice required;
 - c. will regularly report back to SACRE on work completed on behalf of SACRE;
 - d. provide expertise and advice in the areas of RE and collective worship.

Frequency of Meetings

34. There will normally be three SACRE meetings per year, one in each term. Meetings will be convened by the LA.
35. Special meetings may be called by the chair and LA acting jointly.
36. 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 10 school days before the meeting.
37. The clerk will, no later than 5 working days before the meeting, circulate the agenda and supporting papers to the members.

Convening an Agreed Syllabus Conference

38. Worcestershire 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.
39. This conference will 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.

General

40. 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.
41. The SACRE may if it wishes establish a Strategy Group to prepare proposals for SACRE, or to take forward agreed proposals. This group shall comprise representatives of each group and the RE consultant/adviser.
42. 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 Council, 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.
43. Worcestershire will review this constitution every four years.

Membership

The membership shall consist of:-

- Group (A) two Roman Catholic representatives (nominated by the Roman Catholic hierarchy)
 two free Church representatives (which could include non-conformists e.g. Baptist and Methodist)
 one Muslim representative
 one Jewish representative
 one Hindu representative
 one Sikh representative
 one Buddhist representative
 one ba'hai
 up to four representatives of other faiths
- Group (B) Three Church of England representatives (nominated in consultation with the appropriate Diocesan Education Authorities)
- Group (C) Representatives of such associations representing teachers as, in the opinion of the Authority, ought to be represented, having regard to the circumstances of the area
- Group (D) Three members of the Authority.

The Council may also include co-opted members appointed in accordance with paragraphs 17-20.

The number of members appointed to any representative group to represent each denomination or religion required to be represented shall, so far as is consistent with the efficient discharge of the groups function, reflect broadly the proportionate strength of that denomination or religion in the County.