

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

TERMS OF REFERENCE AND PROCEDURES

STATUTORY BACKGROUND¹

Each local authority (LA) must establish a permanent body called a standing advisory council on religious education (SACRE)². LAs must appoint representatives to each of four committees, representing respectively:

- Group A: Christian denominations and such other religious and religious denominations as, in the authority's opinion, will appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in the area
- Group B: The Church of England
- Group C: Teacher associations
- Group D: The LA

The SACRE must:

- advise the LA on RE given in accordance with the agreed syllabus, collective worship, and on matters related to its functions, whether in response to a referral from the LA or as it sees fit
- have regard to any circumstances relating to the faith backgrounds of the pupils which are relevant for deciding what character of collective worship is appropriate when a school makes application for a determination³
- 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 describe the nature of that advice, and set out reasons for offering advice on matters not referred to it by the LA
- send a copy of the report to the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA)
- meet in public unless confidential information is to be disclosed
- make minutes of its meetings available for inspection at the LA's offices (so far as the minutes relate to the parts of meetings that were open to the public). There are also provisions about public access to the agenda and reports for meetings.

The SACRE should:

- monitor the provision and quality of RE taught according to its agreed syllabus, together with the overall effectiveness of the syllabus, and collective worship
- provide advice and support on the effective teaching of RE in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus; provide advice to the LA and its schools on methods of teaching, the choice of teaching material and the provision of teacher training
- in partnership with its LA, consider whether any changes need to be made in the agreed syllabus or in the support offered to schools in the implementation of the agreed syllabus, to improve the quality teaching and learning of RE
- offer advice to the LA, and through the LA to schools, concerning how an existing agreed syllabus can be interpreted, and collective worship provided, so as to fit in with a broad, balanced and coherent curriculum.

¹ Religious education in English schools: Non-statutory guidance 2010, together with DfE Circular 1/94 Collective Worship

² Section 390, Education Act 1996

³ The lifting of the statutory requirement for collective worship to be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character, Education Reform Act 1988

The SACRE may:

- require its LA to review the agreed syllabus and, if after discussion a vote is taken on this matter, the LA group on SACRE is not entitled to cast a vote. A majority decision by the three other committees is sufficient
- decide to advise the LA on matters related to its functions to the LA – equally, an LA may decide to refer matters to its SACRE
- co-opt members who are not members of any of the four groups – such co-opted members may provide educational expertise, young peoples' views or religious and non-religious views that reflect a diverse multi-cultural society.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership of each of the four groups which constitute the North Yorkshire SACRE shall be

Group A: Baptist, Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Methodist, Muslim, Roman Catholic, Salvationist, Sikh, Society of Friends (single representative for each).

Group B: Two representatives nominated by each of the diocese of York, and the diocese of Ripon and Leeds.

Group C: Three advanced skills teachers for religious education.

Group D: Five elected members of the county council.

Co-opted membership of the North Yorkshire SACRE shall individually represent:

Academic expertise in religious education
Humanist

Voting

On any question to be decided by the SACRE, its constituent groups each have a single vote, but co-opted members do not have a vote⁴.

Decisions within a group do not require unanimity.

Each group must regulate its own proceedings, including provision for resolving deadlock.

Election of chair and vice-chair

Members of groups A, B, C and D shall vote individually for the election of a chair and vice-chair from within their collective membership at the first SACRE meeting of a new school year.

MEETINGS

The North Yorkshire SACRE shall meet at least once per school term, normally during the penultimate week of that term, dates to be determined at the summer term meeting for the following school year.

PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT AND CLERKING

Professional support on educational matters shall be provided by the quality and improvement unit of the children and young people's service.

Clerking will be provided by the chief executive's democratic services unit.

⁴ Section 390(7) and Section 391(4), Education Act 1996