

WANDSWORTH COUNCIL

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

Constitution

This constitution should be read in conjunction with:

- The Religious Education (Meetings of Local Conferences and Councils) Regulations 1994;
- Circular 1/94, Religious Education and Collective Worship;
- The Education Act 1996;
- The School Standards and Framework Act 1998;
- *Religious education in English schools: Non-statutory guidance*, Department for Children, Schools and Families (June 2010).

1. The Aims of the SACRE

Wandsworth SACRE seeks to ensure that all pupils in our schools develop spiritually, academically, emotionally and morally, as well as socially, culturally and physically, so that they are able to understand themselves and others and cope with the opportunities, challenges and responsibilities of living in a rapidly changing world.

Wandsworth SACRE aspires to work with schools and the Local Authority to:

- Enhance the quality of Religious Education (RE) and collective worship in Wandsworth schools;
- Celebrate the religious and cultural diversity found in Wandsworth.
- Provide a religious education curriculum with challenging learning opportunities to promote an ethos of respect for others, challenge stereotypes and build understanding of students' own and other cultures and beliefs;
- Promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development through meaningful and engaging assemblies and reflection;
- Contribute to community cohesion by engaging the whole school community in an exploration of identity and community in the local, national and global context;
- Make appropriate provision to meet the needs of all pupils represented within their school community;
- Raise standards of pupil attainment in RE to equate to national expectations of performance levels in other core subjects.
- Place a high priority on the quality of provision in RE, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) and collective worship in schools;
- Build links between schools and local faith communities.

Note: The funding agreement for an Academy without a religious designation states that it must arrange for RE to be given to all pupils in accordance with agreed syllabus. Academies can opt to use the locally agreed syllabus.

SACRE members are expected to:

- Represent their nominating body in the spirit of promoting religious education within statutory regulations;
- Represent fairly the views of their nominating body as far as possible;
- Promote respect for and understanding of different beliefs and lifestyles and a universal search for what it means to be human.

2. The Role of the SACRE

In addition to the aims set out above, the SACRE has a number of statutory roles.

(i) The SACRE can advise the Local Authority on matters related to:¹

- Such matters connected with religious worship in community schools or in foundation schools that do not have a religious character (within the meaning of Part II of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998) and the religious education to be given in accordance with an agreed syllabus as the authority may refer to the council or as the council may see fit.
- The matters referred to in subsection (1)(a) of the Act include, in particular, methods of teaching, the choice of materials and the provision of training for teachers.

(ii) The SACRE can require a review of the locally agreed syllabus.

The representative groups on the SACRE, other than the Local Authority group, may at any time require a review of the locally agreed syllabus adopted by the authority.² Each representative group concerned shall have a single vote on the question of whether to require such a review.³

The SACRE shall provide written notification to the Local Authority of a review. This will cause the Local Authority to constitute an Agreed Syllabus Conference for the purpose of reconsidering the locally agreed syllabus.⁴

(iii) The SACRE can make a determination to disapply the requirement that collective worship is wholly or mainly Christian in community schools or foundation schools without a religious character.

¹ s.391(1), Education Act 1996.

² s.391(3), Education Act 1996.

³ s.391(4), Education Act 1996.

⁴ s.391(5), Education Act 1996.

All pupils attending a community, foundation, or voluntary school are required to take part in an act of collective worship each school day⁵, unless parents or guardians have notified the school that they want their children not to participate in some or all of such collective worship. The law requires acts of collective worship to be “wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character”⁶ unless the school has obtained from SACRE a ‘determination’ that some other form of collective worship is appropriate for the school.

A head teacher of any community school maintained by the authority or of any foundation school which has not been designated as having a religious character can apply to the SACRE to consider disapplying the requirement that collective worship be wholly or mainly Christian.⁷ This application can relate to the school or any class or description of pupils at the school.⁸

Before applying to the SACRE, the head teacher must consult the governing body of the school.⁹ The governing body may take such steps as it considers appropriate for consulting all persons appearing to them to be parents of registered pupils at the school.¹⁰ The head teacher should provide to the SACRE a breakdown of the school’s pupil population in terms of family allegiance to religious traditions and a copy of the relevant part of the minutes of the governors’ meeting in which the decision to apply for a determination was discussed and approved. Ordinarily, the head teacher should then apply in writing to the SACRE Clerk to allow the item to be considered effectively at a SACRE meeting.

In making a determination, the SACRE shall have regard to any circumstances which are relevant for determining the character of the appropriate collective worship, including the family backgrounds of the pupils at the school or of the pupils in the particular class or description in question which are relevant for determining the character of the collective worship appropriate in their case.¹¹

The SACRE shall give the head teacher written notification of its decision¹² and, if relevant, specify the date on which the determination shall take effect.¹³

If a community school becomes a foundation school after the application has been submitted but before it has been determined the application will continue as if it had been an application for a foundation school, unless withdrawn by the headteacher.¹⁴

Any determination shall have effect for a period of five years. At the end of this period, the determination shall be reviewed by the SACRE or, if not reviewed, shall cease to have effect.¹⁵

⁵ s.70, Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998. The arrangements for collective worship in academies and free schools will be set out in the funding agreement.

⁶ para. 3, Schedule 20, Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998.

⁷ Academies and free schools must apply to the Secretary of State to be relieved of the requirement that collective worship be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character, as set out in paragraph 3(2), Schedule 20, School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

⁸ s.394(1), Education Act 1996.

⁹ s.394(5), Education Act 1996.

¹⁰ s.394(6), Education Act 1996.

¹¹ s.394(2), Education Act 1996.

¹² s.394(3), Education Act 1996.

¹³ s.394(4), Education Act 1996.

¹⁴ s.394(8), Education Act 1996.

¹⁵ s.395(5), Education Act 1996.

The head teacher of the school can also submit a review application at any time in writing to the SACRE Clerk¹⁶ but must consult the governing body of the school before doing so.¹⁷ The governing body may take such steps as it considers appropriate for consulting all persons appearing to them to be parents of registered pupils at the school.¹⁸

On the review of a determination, the SACRE shall give the head teacher an opportunity to make representations.¹⁹ The head teacher must consult the governing body of the school before submitting any representations.²⁰ The governing body may take such steps as it considers appropriate for consulting all persons appearing to them to be parents of registered pupils at the school.²¹

In reviewing the determination, the SACRE may confirm the determination, with or without variation, or may revoke it (without prejudice to any future determination).²²

The SACRE shall give the head teacher written notification of its decision and specify the date on which the decision shall take effect.²³

3. The Membership of the SACRE

The SACRE will be represented by members who can fully support the effective provision for RE and collective worship in schools. All members shall be representatives who are interested in education in general and RE in particular.

There are two kinds of membership:

- a) Those nominated by the sponsoring groups and formally appointed by the Local Authority and who work within one of the 4 Groups;
- b) Those co-opted by SACRE.

(i) Four Groups

In accordance with the provision of Section 390 of the Education Act 1996 (as amended) the membership will be allocated to four groups as follows:

Group A – Representing religious denominations other than the Church of England – namely Christian and other denominations, religions and world views which, in the opinion of the Local Authority, appropriately reflect the principal faith traditions in Wandsworth with census data as the starting point.

Where a faith group not currently represented on Group A wishes to join SACRE, a representative of that faith group will be asked to apply to the Local Authority (through the SACRE Clerk) and attend a SACRE meeting to present their request. SACRE will

¹⁶ s.395(1), Education Act 1996.

¹⁷ s.395(6), Education Act 1996.

¹⁸ s.395(7), Education Act 1996.

¹⁹ s.395(2), Education Act 1996.

²⁰ s.395(6), Education Act 1996.

²¹ s.395(7), Education Act 1996.

²² s.395(3), Education Act 1996.

²³ s.395(4), Education Act 1996.

then refer the matter to the Local Authority, recommending approval, rejection or co-option, with reasons. The Local Authority will then determine whether the group appropriately contributes to the principal faith traditions in Wandsworth and that its appointment would be consistent with the efficient discharge of Group A's functions.

Group B – The Church of England – four representatives nominated by the Southwark Diocesan Board of Education.

Group C – Teacher Associations – four members representing Teacher and Headteacher Associations to include teachers of religious education.

Group D – The Local Authority – four elected Councillors as nominated by the political groups represented on Wandsworth council at the Council's Annual Meeting in May.²⁴

The Local Authority will contact a relevant regional or national body to request nominated representatives and, where possible, take all reasonable steps to ensure that the persons appointed are representative of the denominations or associations in question.²⁵

The power to appoint members is vested in the Local Authority in consultation with the appropriate representative body.

Each nominating body may nominate one named deputy for its representatives to the SACRE and such deputies can attend as a substitute in the absence of the representative. These deputies may contribute to discussion and vote (see section 4(ix) on Voting below).²⁶

Faith representatives are appointed by the Local Authority for a term of four years; this will be co-terminus with the Council's term of office. Each Group (Group A, B, C and D) will elect a Coordinator to act as a point of contact for SACRE matters.

Where a nominated representative has missed two consecutive meetings, the SACRE Clerk will advise the representative and the Coordinator of that representative's Group. Where a nominated representative fails to attend three consecutive meetings of the SACRE and is not represented at any of these meetings by a named deputy, the nominating body shall be invited to nominate another representative provided that:

- a) The SACRE Clerk has advised the representative and the Coordinator after the second missed meeting or at least a fortnight before the next meeting.
- b) SACRE does not decide to disapply this rule for reasons of extenuating circumstances.

The nominating body may nominate the same representative.

²⁴ s.390(4), Education Act 1996.

²⁵ s.390(2) and s.392(2), Education Act 1996.

²⁶ Only the deputies for members appointed to Groups A, B, C, and D will have voting rights. Co-opted members are not granted voting rights (see s.390(7), Education Act 1996).

(ii) Co-opted members

SACRE may also include co-opted members who are not members of any of the four Groups.²⁷ Co-opted members may contribute to discussion but do not have voting rights.²⁸ Co-opted members must fulfil a particular role or offer particular expertise that is not otherwise available through the SACRE – such co-opted members may provide educational expertise, young peoples' views or religious and non-religious views that reflect a diverse multicultural society.

The Local Authority will, where possible, contact a relevant regional or national body to request nominated representatives.

Co-opted members are appointed by the Local Authority, after consulting the SACRE or the SACRE Chairman, for a term of two years. Co-opted members may be re-appointed any number of times but not for a period exceeding two 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 set out above.

(iii) Chairman

The Local Authority will appoint the SACRE Chairman whose term of office will be for a period of four years to be co-terminus with the term of office for SACRE members. Should the Chairman be unable to continue in their position, the Local Authority will appoint a new Chairman who shall hold office only for the unexpired term of office of the Chairman in whose place s/he is appointed. If the Chairman is absent from a SACRE meeting, the members present will elect a Chairman for that meeting only.

(iv) Cessation of membership

Any member may resign his/her office at any time by informing the SACRE Clerk in writing.²⁹

Any member of the SACRE appointed by the Local Authority may be removed if, in the opinion of the Local Authority:

- They cease to be representative of the denomination or association they were appointed to represent or;
- They cease to be a member of the group which they represent on the SACRE.

(v) Vacancies

A member appointed to fill a vacancy shall hold office only for the unexpired term of office of the member in whose place s/he is appointed.

Any vacancy occurring within three months of the expiration of the term of office of a member need not be filled.

²⁷ s.390(3), Education Act 1996.

²⁸ s.390(7), Education Act 1996.

²⁹ s.392(6), Education Act 1996

4. The Proceedings of SACRE Meetings

(i) Agenda setting meetings

Where possible, agenda setting meetings will be held one month before the meeting with the Chairman, SACRE Officer, SACRE advisor, SACRE Clerk, and any other relevant persons as necessary.

(ii) Frequency of meetings

The SACRE will meet as a full body three times a year and, where possible, this will be once per school term. It will be for the SACRE to decide whether further meetings of the SACRE, representative groups, or sub-committees are needed.

(iii) Meetings of the four Groups

The four groups may meet separately if they wish and rooms can be booked by the SACRE Clerk before each meeting and on request.

(iv) Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services

The Clerk will ensure that the Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services is provided with a copy of the Agenda and papers of each meeting at the time of publication.

(v) Access to information

All SACRE meetings shall be open to members of the public and the SACRE shall only have the power to exclude members of the public or duly accredited representatives of the press in certain circumstances. The Chairman of the SACRE may exclude any person from a meeting in order to suppress or prevent disorderly conduct or misbehaviour.³⁰ The Chairman of the SACRE may also exclude members of the press and public from a meeting whenever it is likely that, if members of the press and public were present, confidential information would be disclosed.³¹ A report or part of a report may be excluded from publication if, in the opinion of the Chairman, the consideration of the information is likely not to be open to the public. Where a report or part of a report will not be published, it shall be marked 'not for publication'.³²

(vi) Notice of meetings

Public notice of the time and location of any SACRE meeting shall ordinarily be given five clear days before the meeting or, if the meeting is convened at shorter notice, then at the time it is convened.³³

The agenda and all relevant reports will ordinarily be published five clear days before the meeting or, where the meeting is convened at shorter notice, any such documents shall be available for inspection from the time the meeting is convened. Where an item is

³⁰ R3, The Religious Education (Meetings of Local Conferences and Councils) Regulations 1994.

³¹ R9, The Religious Education (Meetings of Local Conferences and Councils) Regulations 1994.

³² R5(5), The Religious Education (Meetings of Local Conferences and Councils) Regulations 1994.

³³ R4, The Religious Education (Meetings of Local Conferences and Councils) Regulations 1994.

added to an agenda, copies of the report shall be available from the time the item is added.³⁴

An item of business may not be considered at a SACRE meeting unless it has been subject to the notice periods set out above. However, an item may be considered if, by reason of special circumstances, the SACRE Chairman of the meeting is of the opinion that the item should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency; these special circumstances shall be specified in the minutes of the meeting.³⁵

(vii) SACRE Sub-Committees

The SACRE may constitute sub-committees to deal with particular matters as and when it sees fit. Five clear days' notice of meetings of any such sub-committees should be given to the members thereof. Sub-committees cannot make decisions binding on SACRE.

Items for the agenda may be submitted by any of the four groups and such items should be sent to the SACRE Clerk not less than 14 days before a meeting.

(viii) Quorum

In order for the SACRE to be quorate, one representative from each group must be present.³⁶

(ix) Voting

On any questions to be decided by the SACRE, each group (namely Group A, B, C and D) shall be entitled to vote and each Group shall have a single vote.³⁷ Before any representative group casts its single vote on any issue to be decided by the SACRE, it shall meet to discuss the issue. The decisions made within a group do not require unanimity. Each group is to regulate its own proceedings and the vote of each group should ordinarily be cast through the Coordinator.

In the event of a tied vote, the Chairman has a casting vote. In the event of an unavoidable tied vote, the issue would fall.

Representatives of the Local Authority appointed under group 1 (d) above (the Local Authority) cannot vote on the question of whether to require the Local Authority to review the Agreed Syllabus.³⁸

The validity of proceedings of the SACRE or of the members of the SACRE of any particular category shall not be affected by a vacancy in the office of any member of the SACRE or by a member of the SACRE no longer representing their appointing body.³⁹

³⁴ R5(1) and (2), The Religious Education (Meetings of Local Conferences and Councils) Regulations 1994.

³⁵ R5(3), The Religious Education (Meetings of Local Conferences and Councils) Regulations 1994.

³⁶ s.390(2), Education Act 1996

³⁷ s.390(7), Education Act 1996

³⁸ s.391(3), Education Act 1996

³⁹ s.392(8), Education Act 1996.

(x) Minutes

The minutes of a SACRE meeting will be circulated with the agenda of the following meeting. These minutes will also be published on the Council's website.

(xi) Retention policy

All agendas, reports, and minutes of the SACRE will be held by the Local Authority for a period of six years (from the meeting date).

5. General Information**(i) Annual report**

SACRE must publish an annual report outlining the exercise of any functions and any action taken; the report will, in particular:

- Specify any matters on which SACRE has advised the Local Authority;
- Broadly describe the nature of that advice;
- Set out its reasons for offering advice in any matters which were not referred to SACRE in the first place by the Local Authority.⁴⁰

The SACRE publishes its annual report on the Wandsworth Council website. The annual report will be sent to the Secretary of State for Education⁴¹ and to the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE).

(ii) Resources for SACRE

The Local Authority will provide specific resources as follows:

- A Clerk to organise and minute meetings and to co-ordinate working parties and initiatives;
- An Adviser contracted by the Local Authority to provide advice to SACRE on RE teaching and related matters;
- An Officer to attend SACRE meetings to provide professional advice and support and to ensure there is effective communication between SACRE and the Local Authority;
- Funding to service the formal meetings of SACRE and associated running costs for the delivery of its functions.

⁴⁰ s.391(6) and (7), Education Act 1996.

⁴¹ s.391(10), Education Act 1996. Note: The Education Act 1996 requires the report to be sent to the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. This body was replaced by Ofqual and the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency in April 2010 and then by the Standards and Testing Agency in April 2012. NASACRE has advised that reports are now sent to: ministers@education.gov.uk.

(iii) Complaints

Any complaints about the SACRE or SACRE members⁴² should be submitted to the Wandsworth Council complaints procedure. More details and complaint forms can be downloaded from the Wandsworth Council website:

http://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/info/200310/about_the_council/34/making_a_complaint.

In brief, the complaints process is as follows:

Step 1 – wherever possible, Wandsworth Council tries to deal with a complaint at the service point involved. Any complaints should be addressed, in the first instance, to the SACRE Clerk.

Step 2 – if the response received at Step 1 is considered unsatisfactory, the next step is to contact the Director of the department involved who will look into the complaint.

Step 3 – if the response received at Step 2 is still considered unsatisfactory, the next step is to write to the Chief Executive who will undertake an independent investigation.



⁴² Please note that there is a separate complaints procedure for councillors. Details can be found on the Wandsworth Council website or can be provided by the SACRE Clerk.

GLOSSARY

Act	Education Act 1996
Agreed Syllabus	The agreed syllabus for RE adopted by the Local Authority
ASC	Agreed Syllabus Conference as defined in Article 1.2
ASC Committee	Means the committee required in accordance with Schedule 31 of the Act and Article 14
Clerk	The person appointed in accordance with Article 11.1
Group A, Group B, Group C or Group D	Shall mean the respective Groups as described in Article 2.1
Local Authority	Wandsworth Council
Local Authority Officer	The person designated by the Local Authority to attend meetings
NASACRE	National Association of Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education
RE	Religious Education
Representative Members	The individuals appointed to a SACRE Committee or ASC Committee as the context requires
SACRE	The Wandsworth Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education as defined in Article 1.1
SACRE Adviser	The person contracted by the Local Authority to provide advice to SACRE on RE teaching and related matters.
SACRE Committees	Shall have the meaning given in Article 2.1

WANDSWORTH SACRE - CODE OF CONDUCT

General principles

Wandsworth SACRE encourages all its members to:

- Attend all SACRE meetings and take a full and active part in its work
- Participate in and review the work of SACRE for the benefit of the whole community
- Listen with respect to the views of other members and where a situation of disagreement occurs, disagree respectfully
- Express views and opinions openly, honestly and sensitively, always recognising others may have different views to one's own
- Assume at all times that other members of SACRE are honourable and concerned with the best interests of SACRE
- Seek reasoned consensus where views diverge and never disrespect the views of other SACRE members or seek to convert them to a different belief stance
- Actively consult with, and report back to, the membership body which they represent so that debate is fully informed
- Actively challenge and resist stereotyping

Remember that the central aim for the SACRE is to improve the quality of provision in RE and collective worship for all pupils in Wandsworth.

Visiting schools as a member of SACRE

From time to time, SACRE members may have the opportunity to visit schools. SACRE members should remember that it is a privilege to visit a school. They are there as invited guests, not to make judgements about the school or to "inspect" RE and collective worship.

Members should:

- Only visit a school when invited
- Inform the Clerk of SACRE and the SACRE's RE Officer of any invitation received and visits made
- Ensure that they do not say or do anything which could be viewed as denigrating any religion or ethical belief system
- Avoid being critical of others or imposing their own views
- Not pass on any confidential information disclosed but should discuss and possible concerns or confusion about what may have been seen with the LA Officer and RE professional before reporting back to the SACRE

Visiting schools as a representative of a faith community

Some faith community representatives may be more regular visitors to schools and be invited to support RE and/ or collective worship.

Visitors should be well-supported by the class teacher who should always be present, taking an active role in question and answer sessions, and ensuring visitors are well-briefed before a visit.

SACRE members visiting a school to share their beliefs, values and experiences should:

- Have a clear, mutually agreed understanding of the purpose of the visit before it takes place
- Appreciate that they are not there to convert or proselytise, be critical or impose their own views
- Be familiar with the school's aims, ethos and policies in RE and collective worship
- Have an understanding of where the lesson will fit into the unit of work from the Wandsworth Agreed Syllabus and what the learning objectives are
- Use a variety of teaching and learning methods and approaches, but at no time touch pupils or behave favourably towards pupils or particular faiths, ethnic groups or genders
- Ensure that pupils understand that the visitor is representing a particular faith views and their own personal interpretation of it and therefore that others from the same faith may not always interpret ideas in exactly the same ways
- Ensure that they do not say or do anything which could be viewed as denigrating
- Communicate at an appropriate level for the age group concerned.

The Wandsworth Code of Conduct has been based on a generic code produced by NASACRE



supporting
strengthening
promoting