

## **HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

### **STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CONSTITUTION**

#### **1. TITLE**

- 1.1. In accordance with the Education Act 1996, Hampshire County Council “the LA” is required to establish the Hampshire Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE).

#### **2. ROLE**

- 2.1. The broad role of the SACRE is to support the effective provision of religious education and collective worship in schools. The LA will work with SACRE to review existing provision of religious education, promote community cohesion and to consider any further development of that provision.

#### **3. FUNCTIONS**

- 3.1. The Function of SACRE is to:
- 3.2. Consider questions and provide advice to the LA on all aspects of its provision for RE in its schools, including Voluntary Aided and Voluntary controlled Schools where appropriate (including methods of teaching, the choice of materials, and the provision of training for teachers).
- 3.3. Consider questions and provide advice to the LA on Collective Worship in its schools (this does not include Voluntary Aided or Voluntary Controlled schools).
- 3.4. Consider requests from head teachers to hold Collective Worship that is not of a broadly Christian character (known as “Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education Determinations”).
- 3.5. Initiate reviews and, when deemed necessary, ensure that revisions to the Hampshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education are undertaken through the formation of an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) set up by the Council.
- 3.6. Publish an annual report of its work which specifies any matters in respect of which the SACRE has given advice to the authority; broadly describes the nature of the advice given; and where, any such matter was not referred by the LA, provides the reasons for offering advice on that matter.
- 3.7. The SACRE may also:
  - advise on and monitor the provision and delivery of Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural education (SMSC).

- be aware of, and monitor, the uptake of external examinations in RE and religious studies and monitor or review the standards achieved.
- consider complaints about the provision and delivery of RE or Collective Worship referred to it by the LA.

### **Locally Agreed Syllabus and Agreed Syllabus Conference**

- 3.8. The Locally Agreed Syllabus is the statutory document for RE within the LA. It sets out what should be taught to pupils in all key stages and the standards expected at the end of key stages. It is produced by an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) and must be reviewed every five years. However, if a majority of SACRE members agree, they can write to the LA to ask for it to be reviewed sooner and the LA must convene a conference.
- 3.9. An ASC is a statutory body established to produce an agreed syllabus for RE. Although it is a separate legal entity from a SACRE each group can include the same members. The LA will appoint members ensuring that the committee membership is broadly representative of the proportionate strengths of the denominations, religions, and associations in the area.
- 3.10. The LA can ask suitably skilled colleagues, who are not members of SACRE, to attend an ASC and advise on the Locally Agreed Syllabus.

### **Collective Worship**

- 3.11. The Education Act 1996 requires the SACRE to advise on matters relating to religious worship in schools where Collective Worship comes into its remit and lays down a requirement that all schools hold a daily act of collective worship and that this should be “wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character.”
- 3.12. A Headteacher of a school can apply to SACRE for an exemption known in the Education Act as a “Determination”, after consultation with governors (and parents) using Hampshire’s Determination Application and providing the listed supporting documents.
- 3.13. SACRE shall consider whether it is appropriate for the requirements imposed by paragraph 3(2) of Schedule 20 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (requirement for Christian collective worship) to apply in the case of the school or in the case of any class or description of pupils at the school.
- 3.14. In determining whether it is appropriate for that requirement to apply, SACRE shall have regards to any circumstances relating to the family backgrounds of the pupils at the school, or of the pupils of the class or description in question, which are relevant for determining the character of the collective worship in their case.

- 3.15. SACRE shall give the head teacher written notification of their decision on the application.
- 3.16. SACRE, on an application made by the Head teacher, shall review the determination decision, within five years of the previous decision and shall either:
- Confirm the determination, with or without variation, or
  - Revoke it.
- and the Council shall give the head teacher written notification of their decision.

#### **4. MEMBERSHIP**

- 4.1. SACRE shall comprise four groups of representative members as specified below. The members will be appointed by the LA but may be nominated by their religious body, Officers of the LA, or others.
- 4.2. **Group A** - Christian denominations (other than the Church of England) and other religions and denominations as in the opinion of the LA reflect the principal religious traditions in its area, which will be reviewed from time to time.
- 4.3. **Group B** - Four representatives of the Church of England.
- 4.4. **Group C** - Four teachers representing teachers' professional associations recognised by the LA for the purposes of consultation and negotiation.
- 4.5. **Group D** - Four representatives of the LA appointed by the Authority, at least three of whom shall be elected members of the Authority.
- 4.6. All members shall be interested in supporting the improvement of quality of provision of religious education and collective worship in schools in Hampshire.
- 4.7. All members shall adhere to the SACRE Code of Conduct and the LA's Code of Conduct for Members.
- 4.8. Each group/member shall have the following provision to nominate standing substitute members who will attend any meetings if a (group member/member) is unable to attend, subject to approval by the LA.
- **Group A** – each member of Group A to have a deputy.
  - **Group B** – two standing deputies.
  - **Group C** – two standing deputies.
  - **Group D** – deputy arrangements as provided for Councillors in Hampshire County Council's Constitution.
- 4.9. The group/member shall ensure that any substitute member is fully informed of all issues before the Council so that they can play a full and knowledgeable role in any meetings they are required to attend.

- 4.10. Co-opted persons may be appointed by the LA, including teacher co-options as may be necessary to ensure adequate representation of teachers who are actively concerned with religious education in primary and secondary schools.
- 4.11. The LA's Executive Lead Member for Children's services shall be entitled to attend and observe at any meeting of the Council (including confidential items) in an ex officio capacity.

## **5. QUORUM**

- 5.1. A SACRE meeting will be deemed quorate if the following two conditions both apply:
- 30% of SACRE voting members are present and,
  - Each of the four representative groups are represented.

## **6. VOTING**

- 6.1. On any questions to be decided by the SACRE, only the representative groups shall be entitled to vote, and each group has a single vote.
- 6.2. Decisions within a Group about how that vote is to be cast do not require unanimity. Each Group is to regulate its own proceedings.
- 6.3. Representatives of the LA appointed under Group D cannot vote on the question of whether to require the LA to review the Agreed Syllabus.
- 6.4. In the event of a tied vote the issue would fail and similarly any new initiative will not proceed.
- 6.5. On formal votes it may be necessary for the four representative groups to meet separately to determine how their collective vote will be cast. To facilitate such a vote each representative group should elect a chair. Decisions made within a group as to how their vote should be cast do not require unanimity.

## **7. DURATION OF MEMBERSHIP**

- 7.1. Members of the SACRE shall be appointed for a period of four years.
- 7.2. Any member of the SACRE may at any time resign from office.
- 7.3. A member of the SACRE may be removed from membership by the LA at any time if, in the opinion of the LA, the person ceases to be representative of either the religion, denomination or association which he/she was appointed to represent on the SACRE, or he/she ceases to be a member of the LA, or he/she fails to attend three consecutive meetings without good reason.

- 7.4. Subject to the conditions of 7.3 above, members of the Council having served the full term are eligible for re-appointment.
- 7.5. Any faith community wishing to take part in the SACRE's work must make a written application to the Strategic Director Children & Young People.
- 7.6. The application must state:
  - their ability to define themselves as a faith community.
  - why they have a legitimate interest in the work of SACRE as outlined in this constitution.
  - how their interests are not currently being adequately represented.
- 7.7. SACRE members may co-opt non-voting members for a period of two years. However co-opted members may not propose further co-options.

## **8. CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN**

- 8.1. The LA shall appoint the Council Chairman and Vice-Chairman. Such appointment shall be for four years.
- 8.2. Persons continuing to be members of SACRE are eligible for re-appointment to the position of Chairman and Vice-Chairman.
- 8.3. The SACRE may collectively nominate to the LA an individual/s from its membership for the position of Chairman or vice-Chairman.
- 8.4. It is open to the LA to appoint the chair of the SACRE, but it is the current view that the SACRE should appoint its own chair subject to the following:
  - that a chair be elected annually at the last meeting of the summer term.
  - that the new chair takes up office from the end of that meeting.
  - that a chair be elected by nomination and secret ballot of all voting groups present at the relevant meeting, each group having one vote.

## **9. PROCEEDINGS**

- 9.1. Meetings of the SACRE will be open to the public except when items of a confidential nature are to be discussed.
- 9.2. The validity of proceedings of SACRE or of the members of the SACRE of any category shall not be affected by a vacancy in the office of any member of any of the representative groups comprised by the SACRE or on the ground that a member of the SACRE appointed to represent any religion, denomination or association does not at the time of the proceedings represent the religion, denomination, or association in question.

## **10. Complaints**

10.1. Complaints are to be raised with reference to the LA's compliant procedure.

**Updated July 2023**

## **SACRE Code of Conduct**

This Code of Conduct applies to each representative member of SACRE in addition to the LA's Code of Conduct for Members.

In the event of any conflict between this Code of Conduct and the LA's Code of Conduct for Members then the LA's Members Code it to be applied.

### **All representatives should:**

- support the role of SACRE in advising on the effective provision of religious education and collective worship in schools.
- attend the meetings of the SACRE and take part in the deliberations and work of SACRE.
- participate in and review the work of the SACRE for the benefit of the whole community.
- express views and opinions openly, honestly and sensitivity, always recognising others may have views different to one's own, actively challenge and resist stereotyping.
- always assume that other members of the SACRE are honourable and concerned with the best interests of the SACRE.
- respect the rights of other members to disagree with your point of view/ listen with respect the views of other members and where a situation of disagreement occurs, disagree respectfully.

### **Groups A and B representatives should:**

- ensure that they are adequately qualified to represent their faith community.
- be able to explain how they intend to inform and consult with their faith community.
- feel a sense of responsibility not only to the children coming from their own faith but also to all the children of Hampshire.
- provide expertise, or assist in providing access to such expertise, in matters of fact, tradition, theology and practice relating to their own faith for the benefit of the whole school population.
- represent to the SACRE the interests and concerns of their own faith community.
- endeavour to represent fairly the views and interests of the widest possible range of faith positions within their community (this is particularly relevant if they are the sole representative on the SACRE for their faith).
- follow the guidelines for visits to schools.
- recognise that stating a belief or religious tenet is not the same as advancing an argument for or against any proposal, although it may well be an overriding consideration.
- inform members of their faith community of the work of the SACRE.

### **For school visits faith representatives should:**

- only visit a school as a SACRE faith group representative when invited.
- inform the Clerk of the SACRE of any invitation received, and visits made.

- make clear that you are speaking from the perspective of the religion or belief system that you are representing.
- ensure that you do not say or do anything, which could be viewed as denigrating any other religion or ethical belief system.
- at all times behave honourably in relation to your fellow SACRE members.

**Teacher and teacher association representatives should:**

- provide information and expertise in relation to teaching and the school environment.
- if appropriate provide information and expertise in relation to the teaching of religious education and the carrying out of collective worship in schools.
- represent the interests and concerns of teachers, pupils, and schools.
- consult with teaching colleagues and students.
- keep colleagues informed about the work of the SACRE.
- ensure that the welfare and education of all the children in Hampshire is the primary focus of the SACRE.

**Council representatives should:**

- represent the wider public interest.
- provide information and expertise to the SACRE in their capacity as an elected member of Hampshire County Council.

Code of Conduct – July 2023

To be reviewed – July 2024