

Devon Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)

CONSTITUTION

Feb 2022 review: suggested changes in red

TERMS OF REFERENCE:

1. To advise Devon County Council upon matters connected with Religious Education (RE), in accordance with the Locally Agreed Syllabus, and matters of collective worship. The main areas of SACRE's work in Devon include:-
 - (a) monitoring and improvement of standards, quality of teaching and provision in RE.
 - (b) maintaining the partnership between SACRE, the County Council and other key stakeholders.
 - (c) keeping under review the effectiveness of the Agreed Syllabus.
 - (d) monitoring and improvement of the provision and quality of collective worship.
 - (e) promoting social and racial harmony.
2. In particular the advice must cover methods of teaching, the choice of materials and the provision of training for teachers.
3. In each year to publish a report (Annual Report) as outlined in legal requirements which is sent to the Department for Education (DfE).
4. When appropriate to require the County Council (on a vote of the three groups representing Christian and other Religion and Belief Communities, the Church of England and Teachers Associations) to review the Agreed Syllabus by convening a statutory conference for this purpose.
5. In accordance with legal requirements, on receipt of an application, to make a determination about whether the requirement for mainly Christian collective worship is appropriate in a community school.
6. To receive reports on any complaints made under the County Council's complaints procedure which relate to worship or RE and to provide advice about such cases to the County Council and governing bodies.
7. To draw up and periodically review guidelines for the regulation of its business.

MEMBERSHIP:

8. The County Council is responsible for constituting SACRE and for appointing the members other than co-opted members. It must take reasonable steps to be assured that persons appointed are representative of the denominations/religions/beliefs or teachers associations involved and may remove an appointed member if in the opinion of the County Council they cease to be so representative.
9. The legal requirements for a SACRE are that four groups should be appointed. In order to reflect the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus in Devon and the religions taught in Devon schools the membership of each group (which may be amended with the consent of the County Council from time to time) shall be as follows:

Group A Christian and other Religion and Belief Communities (with the exception of the Church of England) (13)

Baha'i Community	1	Methodist Church	1
Baptist Church	1	Pagan Community	1
Buddhist Community	1	Quakers, Religious Society of Friends	1
Hindu Community	1	Roman Catholic Church	1
Humanist Community	1	Sikh Community	1
Islamic Community	1	United Reformed Church	1
Jewish Community			
Total 13			

Group B The Church of England (6)

Group C Teachers Associations (12)

Teaching Union	NEU	2
Teaching Union	NAS/UWT	1
Teaching Union	VOICE	1
Primary School Leaders	DSLS	1
Secondary School Leaders	DSLS	1
Further Education	UCU	1
Higher Education/Initial Teacher Education	UCU	2
RE Teachers Association (primary)	NATRE	1
RE Teachers Association (secondary)	NATRE	1
Special school		1
		12

Group D The County Council (6)

10. There shall be up to 6 further places which SACRE may fill by co-optation. **The total membership of SACRE will be 37 - 43.**

11. In making appointments the County Council will encourage the Christian denominations, other religion and belief communities and teachers associations to nominate teachers with experience of teaching RE. The County Council expects Group C (Teachers Associations) to consist of active, serving teachers who are able to consult with colleagues on issues of RE and collective worship. All members of Devon SACRE are expected to take an active interest in RE and collective worship, particularly in provision, practice and standards in Devon schools. SACRE members, in addition to attending SACRE meetings, are encouraged to develop their involvement in RE and collective worship through attending INSET courses and visiting schools. It is expected, as far as is practicable, that members of Devon SACRE live in Devon.

TERMS OF OFFICE:

12. On any matter to be decided by SACRE only the representative groups shall be entitled to vote and each such group shall have a single vote. Group (D) (The County Council Representatives) may not vote on a proposal to require the County Council to review the Agreed Syllabus. It is actively encouraged however that SACRE will conduct its normal business by consensus. At least one member from each Group A,B,C and D should be present at SACRE meetings and decisions cannot be made unless there is at least one person present from each group to cast each group's single vote.

13. Although co-opted members do not have a vote they are encouraged to take a full and active part in SACRE meetings and express their views and preferences on SACRE matters.

14. The County Council must appoint named persons to each of the four groups. On resignation or removal by the County Council an appointed person shall be replaced by the County Council for the remainder of the term of office by another representative. Substitution is allowed.

15. The appointment of the members of all four groups will usually be for a period of four years when the County Council may renew or discontinue an appointment. **Members will not usually serve for more than 8 years consecutively.**

FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS:

16. SACRE will meet at least once each term. At one meeting the Annual Report will be agreed (~~usually the Autumn term meeting~~).

CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE:

17. The County Council may alter this Constitution at any time but should consult SACRE before doing so.

GUIDELINES FOR SACRE PROCEDURES

COMPOSITION:

1. The composition of SACRE is for the County Council to determine, but SACRE should make recommendations in the light of experience.

CHAIRING OF MEETINGS:

2. The offices of Chair and Vice-Chair shall be open to any member of the representative groups and shall be elected for a minimum of one and up to a maximum of four years, normally at the Annual Meeting. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair will take the chair and in the absence of both of these a member will be elected for one meeting. The Chair will be entitled to a briefing by officers prior to meetings. ~~It is the convention for the role of Chair to be rotated between the four groups.~~

ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS:

3. Meetings will normally be held at County Hall but meetings in schools and faith communities will also be considered. All SACRE members may claim travelling expenses; a contribution towards supply cover for teachers will be funded if needed. In the case of a member who, without the consent of SACRE, has failed to attend SACRE meetings for a continuous period of twelve months, SACRE may remove them or may recommend their removal by the County Council.

VOTING:

4. In the interests of achieving consensus SACRE should only take a vote of the four groups when it is necessary to make a formal record of a decision, or if there are opposing views.

5. In the event of a formal vote being necessary, an officer shall designate adequate spaces for each group to meet, normally in the same room and there shall be an agreed time limit for deliberation.

6. At the Annual Meeting each group should elect a spokesperson who should also act as Chair of the group. The spokesperson must allow all members of the group to express an opinion and to vote. A record of this vote shall be reported to the full meeting, but the single vote of the group must be cast in favour of the simple majority in the group. In the case of a tied vote, the whole group vote must be presented as an abstention.

SUB-GROUPS AND WORKING PARTIES:

7. SACRE may appoint members to working parties which may include non-members with expertise to contribute. The terms of reference of a working party will normally involve exploratory work rather than decision making. The composition of a working party will normally include members from all groups.
8. Where a sub-group of SACRE is established with a brief to take action its membership and decisions must reflect the single vote system of the four groups.
9. There shall be a permanent sub-group of SACRE able to give immediate guidance to officers (especially the RE Adviser) and to deal with urgent business between meetings. This sub-group shall consist of the Chair and the spokesperson of each of the three groups other than the one to which the Chair of SACRE belongs. Members may meet or consult informally by email or telephone.

CO-OPTION AND OBSERVERS:

10. Up to six co-options may be made. Co-opted members may discuss any item including co-options but may not vote.
11. The term of office of a co-opted member will usually be four years.
12. Co-option is designed to give SACRE greater flexibility in balancing interests. In making co-options SACRE should have regard to representation of the areas of Devon, types and phases of school and of minority interests.
13. SACRE must take reasonable steps to be assured that the co-opted member is genuinely representative. The procedure for co-options should normally include a period between meetings for enquiries to be made. An invitation to become a co-opted member and to attend a meeting may be made for the Chair by an officer but the invitation must be ratified by a full meeting.
14. A designated substitute may attend SACRE meetings as an observer to enhance their familiarity with SACRE and its operation.
15. In addition to an administrative officer or officers appointed by the County Council the RE Adviser should attend SACRE meetings.
16. It shall be open to SACRE to invite people of expertise or special interests to attend on an occasional basis.

AGENDA:

17. The agenda for SACRE meetings must give priority to items raised by the County Council. Members may, with three weeks notice, raise other matters which lie within the scope of the terms of reference. SACRE can only give advice to the County Council. It cannot take independent action.
18. The Annual Report will cover a school year and will be agreed at an Annual Meeting to be held early in the Autumn Term. The Annual Report should include:-
 - any specific matters on which SACRE has advised the County Council;
 - a broad description of the nature of that advice.

Arrangements should be made for the Annual Report to be distributed to Devon schools and other interested groups.

REPRESENTATION/COMMUNICATION:

18. All SACRE members should ensure they are fully representative of their membership group and seek to consult colleagues as widely as possible on relevant issues.
19. Members of SACRE should direct any press enquiries to the RE Adviser and Chair.
20. Communication with national organisations e.g. DfE, Ofsted and NASACRE should normally be through the Chair and RE Adviser. Such communication should make it absolutely clear whether the views being expressed are on behalf of SACRE or purely an individual perspective.

Revised Feb 2022