

Camden Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

1. The Legislation

- 1.1. The legislation is set out in Sections 390 to 397 of the Education Act 1996. Guidance is provided within the non-statutory Guidance for Religious Education in English Schools published in 2010.
- 1.2. The Act requires each Local Authority (LA) to set up a Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (known as SACRE). This is a statutory body in its own right and is not a sub-committee of the Council.

2. Duties

- 2.1. To advise the LA on matters concerned with school worship and with Religious Education according to an Agreed Syllabus, either referred to SACRE by the LA or as SACRE may see fit. These matters might include, for example, the provision of INSET, methods of teaching and choice of materials and the consideration of complaints, if the LA so requires.
- 2.2. To receive and decide whether Determinations (applications from headteachers to vary the requirement for worship to be broadly or mainly Christian character for the whole school or for groups of pupils) are appropriate.
- 2.3. To publish an annual report outlining the advice given by SACRE to the LA and whether a Statutory Conference was requested. The report should broadly describe the nature of advice provided and, if such advice was in relation to matters not referred to SACRE by the LA, giving the reasons for offering such advice. A copy of the report should be sent by SACRE to the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA).
- 2.4. To require the LA to set up a Statutory Conference to review the Agreed Syllabus if, in the opinion of SACRE, this becomes necessary.

3. Membership

Members

- 3.1. SACRE consists of 4 groups of Members ('the Representative Groups'), which are:

Group A

Persons representing such Christian and other religious denominations reflecting, in the opinion of the Authority, the principal religious traditions of the Borough. So far as possible the membership of this group should reflect broadly the proportionate strength of each denomination or religion within the Borough. This group shall not include persons appointed to represent the Church of England.

Group B

Persons representing the Church of England

Group C

Persons representing teacher associations in the Borough

Group D

Persons representing the Local Authority

- 3.2. Members of groups A and B must be representative of their faith or denominational group.
- 3.3. Members of group C should have experience of religious education and worship and knowledge of good current practice.

Appointment, Removal and Resignation

- 3.4. The LA appoints the members of groups A-D, having ascertained that they are representative of their denomination, faith or association. Members may resign at any time, or, if appointed by the LA, may be removed by the LA if they are no longer representative of the religion, denomination or association which they were appointed to represent or (as the case may be) they cease to be representative of the LA. The LA may remove any member if they are absent for more than three consecutive meetings. If a member is unable to attend, a substitute may attend in his/her absence (see paragraph 4.8).

Co-options

- 3.5. Additional members may be co-opted by SACRE or by a group within it. Co-opted members may not themselves co-opt. Persons co-opted shall hold office on such terms as may be determined by the members co-opting them.

Sub-groups

- 3.6. Any sub-group set up by SACRE shall include at least one member from each of groups A-D. Each group and sub-group will elect its own chair and may convene its own meetings.

4. Procedures

Dates

- 4.1. The dates of the main meetings will be decided in advance.

Agenda

- 4.2. Matters for the agenda of any meeting shall be sent to the clerk at least 21 days in advance of the meeting.
- 4.3. The agenda shall be distributed to reach members at least 7 working days in advance of a meeting.

Notice of Meetings

- 4.4. At least five clear days before a meeting of SACRE, notice of the time and place of such meeting shall be given by posting it at the offices of the LA. If the meeting is convened sooner, then notice to be given as soon as the meeting is convened.
- 4.5. At least five clear days before a meeting of SACRE, copies of the agenda and copies of any report for the meeting (except reports under paragraph 5.10 below) shall be available for inspection. However, where the meeting is convened, or an item added to the agenda, on shorter notice the requirement to provide inspection shall apply from the time the meeting was convened, or item added to the agenda, respectively.
- 4.6. No business shall be transacted at any meeting of SACRE unless:
 - i) A copy of the agenda including the item has been available for inspection from the time set out within paragraph 4.5 above.
 - ii) By reason of special circumstances, the Chair of the meeting is of the opinion that the item should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency. The special circumstances should be recorded within the minutes of the meeting.

Minutes

- 4.7. The draft minutes of meetings shall be circulated to Members within one month of the meeting.

Substitutes

- 4.8. Members may arrange for substitutes to attend meetings and have full voting rights. Such substitutions should be notified to the Clerk before the meeting.

Pre-meetings

- 4.9. Facilities will be made available for groups to arrange pre-meetings before the main meetings of SACRE.

5. Conduct of meetings

Voting

- 5.1. The decision to request the authority to set up a Statutory Conference to review the Agreed Syllabus is made by Groups A-C only and with regard to this matter Group D does not have a vote. On all other matters, each representative group has one vote.

Chair and Vice-Chair

- 5.2. SACRE shall appoint a Chair and Vice-Chair for one year at its first meeting in the academic year. The Chair does not have a casting vote.

Quorum

- 5.3. No formal decisions shall be taken unless there is a quorum of 1 or more representatives from 3 or more representative groups present.

Clerk

- 5.4. The Chief Executive or his/her delegate will act as clerk to SACRE.

Meetings

- 5.5. The full SACRE will meet at least 3 times in each school year. The Annual Report will be received at the meeting in the autumn term.

Access to the press and public

- 5.6. Members of the public and duly accredited representatives of the news media shall be permitted to attend all meetings of SACRE subject to paragraphs 5.9 – 5.11 below.
- 5.7. Members of the public and representatives of the news media may be excluded from any meeting for the purpose of suppressing or preventing disorderly conduct or other misbehaviour at any meeting.
- 5.8. At all meetings which are open to the public there shall be made available for use by members of the public present a reasonable number of copies of the agenda and all reports, save for those reports referred to within paragraph 5.10.

Confidentiality

- 5.9. Nothing within these terms of reference shall be taken to authorise or require the disclosure of confidential information.
- 5.10. Where any report contains, in the opinion of the Chair, confidential information the Chair may exclude such reports from those made available for inspection

under paragraph 4.5 above or made available at the meeting under paragraph 5.8.

5.11. Members of the public and representatives of the news media may be excluded from any meeting during an item of business whenever it is likely that, if members of the public were present, confidential information would be disclosed.

Advisers

5.12. The Executive Director Children and Learning or their delegate will act as Professional Adviser to SACRE.

Validity of Proceedings

5.13. The validity of the proceedings of SACRE, or those of any group within it, shall not be affected by a vacancy in the office of any member required under 3.1 or 3.4 above or on the grounds that any member appointed as a representative of their denomination, faith or association does not, in fact do so.