

Article 15 – Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

SACRE is a statutory body established to advise the County Council on matters relating to collective worship and religious educations and performs its functions in accordance with statutory requirements.

Membership

- 1 The SACRE shall consist of 4 groups of persons (“representatives groups”) appointed by Derbyshire County Council (“the Authority”) as representative members.
- 2 The representative groups shall be named Group A, Group B, Group C and Group D, and the composition of each group shall be as set out in paragraphs 5 to 8 below.
- 3 Subject to paragraph 29, each representative group may regulate its own proceedings.
- 4 Each person appointed to be a member of the SACRE shall provide such information as Derbyshire County Council may require, in order for Derbyshire County Council to take all reasonable steps to assure themselves that the individual is representative of the religion, denomination or association they represent.

Group A

- 5 Group A shall comprise of 8 persons who represent Christian denominations, other than the Church of England, and 7 persons who represent such other religions and denominations of such religions as, in the opinion of the Authority, will appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in the area.

Group B

- 6 Group B shall comprise of 5 persons who represent the Church of England.

Group C

- 7 Group C shall comprise of 5 persons who represent such associations representing teachers as, in the opinion of the Authority, ought to be represented, having regard to the circumstances of the area.

Group D

- 8 Group D shall comprise of 5 persons who represent Derbyshire County Council.

Term of Office

- 9 Each member of Groups A, B and C shall be appointed for a period of 4 years, and shall thereafter be eligible for renomination by their nominating body. Members of Group D shall be appointed annually by the Authority.

Co-option

- 10 The SACRE may include additional persons proposed as members of SACRE by members who have not themselves been co-opted. A person co-opted as a member shall hold office on such terms as may be determined by the SACRE. The SACRE will determine whether to co-opt a particular person, and the terms on which a person is to be co-opted, by following the normal voting procedures as set out in paragraphs 38 and 39.

Substitutes

- 11 A member who is unable to attend a meeting of the SACRE may arrange for a substitute to attend to represent the same organisation as that member. The substitute shall have the same voting powers as the member whose place they attend. Such arrangements shall be notified to the Clerk to SACRE in advance of the meeting by the member to be substituted.

Removal of Members

- 12 The Authority may remove a member of the SACRE if, in the opinion of the Authority, that member ceases to be a representative of the denomination or association which that member was appointed to represent or (as the case may be) he ceases to be a representative of Derbyshire County Council.

- 13 A member shall notify the Clerk to the SACRE immediately if there is a change of circumstances which may require reconsideration of their membership in accordance with paragraph 12.
- 14 Any member who fails to attend for 3 consecutive meetings of the SACRE without nominating a substitute in accordance with paragraph 11 above shall be disqualified from membership, and shall not be eligible for re-appointment for a further period of 3 meetings. Where a member is removed in consequence of these provisions, the nominating body shall propose a new person for appointment to replace the disqualified member for the remainder of the disqualified member's term of office.
- 15 The Authority may remove a member of the SACRE if, in the opinion of the Authority, that member has failed to comply with the standards set out in the Authority's Code of Conduct for Members, and a member of SACRE who is so removed shall not be eligible for re-appointment.

Resignations

- 16 A member of the SACRE may at any time resign his or her office by giving written notice to the Clerk. In the event of resignation of a member, the nominating body shall propose a new person to replace the resigning member for the remainder of the resigning member's term of office.

Access to Meetings

- 17 A meeting of the SACRE shall be open to members of the public, and while a meeting is open to members of the public the SACRE shall not have power to exclude from the meeting members of the public or duly accredited representatives of news media attending the meeting for the purpose of reporting proceedings.
- 18 A member of the public shall not speak to members or address the SACRE during the course of a meeting without the consent of the Chair of the SACRE.
- 19 The SACRE may exclude any person from a meeting for the purpose of suppressing or preventing disorderly conduct or other misbehaviour at that meeting.

20 The SACRE may exclude the public from a meeting during an item of business whenever it is likely that, if members of the public were present, confidential information would be disclosed. "Confidential information" means:

(a) any information furnished to the SACRE or the Agreed Syllabus Conference, or to any committee, sub-committee or representative group thereof, by a government department or public authority or body upon terms (however expressed) which forbid the disclosure of the information to the public;

(b) information the disclosure of which to the public is prohibited by or under any enactment or by the order of a court;

(c) information relating to any person which appears to the SACRE ought not to be disclosed to the public;

(d) information relating to any legal advice sought or received by the SACRE;

and "information" shall be taken to include any expression of opinion, any recommendation and any decision taken.

Notice of Meetings

21 Public notice of the time and place of a meeting of the SACRE shall be given by posting it at the offices of the Authority at least 3 clear days before the meeting or, if the meeting is convened at shorter notice, than at the time it is convened.

Access to Documents

22 Copies of the agenda for the meeting and, subject to paragraph 24 below, copies of any report for the meeting shall be available for inspection by members of the public at the offices of the Authority at least 3 clear days before the meeting, except that where the meeting is convened at shorter notice, any such documents shall be available for inspection from the time the meeting is convened, and where an item is added to the agenda copies of which are available for inspection, copies of the item (or of the revised agenda) and the copies of any report for the meeting relating to the item shall be available for

inspection from the time the item is added to the agenda.

- 23 Nothing in paragraph 20 above shall require any copy of an agenda or report to be available for inspection until copies are available to members of the SACRE.
- 24 An item of business may not be considered at any meeting unless either:
- (a) a copy of the agenda including the item (or a copy of the item) has been available for inspection from the time required by paragraph 20 above; or
 - (b) by reason of special circumstances (which shall be specified in the minutes) the Chair of the meeting is of the opinion that the item should be considered as a matter of urgency.

The Chair and Vice-Chair

- 25 Each of Groups A, B, C and D shall, at the first meeting of the SACRE to take place following the Annual Meeting of the Authority at which members of Group D are appointed, elect a Chair of that group to hold office for 1 year.
- 26 The Chair of Group D shall be the Chair of the SACRE.
- 27 The Chairs of Groups A, B and C shall in rotation hold office as Vice-Chair for 1 year.
- 28 If the Chair is absent from a meeting of the SACRE the Vice-Chair shall act as Chair for the meeting.

Frequency of Meetings

- 29 The SACRE shall meet 3 times annually. Additional meetings may be summoned at the instance of the Chair or full SACRE. In addition, each group may convene its own group meetings at any time.

Quorum

- 30 The presence of eight members of the SACRE including at least one member of each representative group shall constitute a quorum of the SACRE
- 31 The existence of a vacancy in the office of any member of the SACRE required to be appointed shall not invalidate the proceedings of the SACRE of any representative group.
- 32 The validity of proceedings of the SACRE or of any particular representative group shall not be affected on the ground that a member does not, at the time of the proceedings, represent the religion, denomination or association which that member is appointed to represent.

Adjournments

- 33 Any of the groups by a majority of its own members present and voting may request an adjournment of the debate or discussion on a particular item. An adjournment will last for 15 minutes unless otherwise requested, and agreed by the SACRE.

Voting

- 34 On any question which must be decided by the SACRE in accordance with statutory law, only the representative groups on the SACRE shall be entitled to vote and each sub group shall have a single vote.
- 35 Co-opted members shall not vote on any question which must be decided by the SACRE in accordance with statutory law.
- 36 Prior to formal votes being cast the 4 representative groups may meet separately to determine how their single collective vote should be cast. Decisions within a group about how its vote is to be cast do not require unanimity.
- 37 The SACRE may determine matters relating to its own procedure. Matters which are not required by statute to be determined by formal voting shall be determined by a simple majority of individual members of the representative groups present and voting.

Recommendations

- 38 Where the SACRE has determined that advice should be given to the Authority upon a matter connected with collective worship in maintained schools in Derbyshire, and the religious education to be given in accordance with an agreed syllabus, this advice shall be submitted to the Derbyshire County Council Cabinet Member for Education.

Review of Agreed Syllabus

- 39 Representative Groups A, B or C may at any time require a review of any agreed syllabus for the time being adopted by the Authority. Each representative group concerned shall have a single vote on the question of whether to require such a review. On receiving written notification of any such requirement, the Authority must convene an Agreed Syllabus Conference constituted in accordance with Schedule 31 of the Education Act 1996, for the purpose of reconsidering any agreed syllabus to which the requirement relates.

Clerk

- 40 The Director of Legal & Democratic Services shall be the Clerk to the SACRE and shall summon meetings, prepare Minutes and arrange for the submission of advice to the Derbyshire County Council Cabinet Member for Education.

Sub-groups

- 41 A SACRE sub-group shall comprise 2 members of each representative group, but if a larger working party is required all the representative groups shall be represented in proportion to the size of the membership of each group.
- 42 A sub-group may be constituted if members of the SACRE are of the view that one is required to consider a particular issue. Membership of sub-groups shall be reviewed annually at the first meeting of the SACRE to take place following the Annual Meeting of the Authority at which members of Group D are appointed.
- 43 A co-opted member of the SACRE may be invited, or may request, to be a member of a SACRE sub-group. Any question regarding the membership of a co-opted member on a sub-group shall be determined by a single majority of individual members of the representative groups

present and voting.

- 44 SACRE may from time to time refer issues raised at a SACRE meeting to a sub-group. The sub-group will report its findings to the SACRE.

Annual Report

- 45 The SACRE shall in each year publish a report as to the exercise of their functions and any action taken to require a review of the agreed syllabus adopted by the Authority, as set out in paragraph 41 above, during the last preceding year. The report shall:

- (a) specify any matters in respect of which the SACRE have given advice to the Authority; and
- (b) broadly describe the nature of the advice given; and
- (c) where the SACRE offers advice on a matter that has not been referred to the SACRE by the Authority, give reasons.

- 46 The Annual Report will be distributed to all relevant persons within the Authority, and a hard copy will also be sent to:

- (a) the Head Teachers of all schools for whom the Authority has statutory responsibility with regard to Religious Education, together with a copy of any advice which the SACRE gives to the Authority upon matters connected with Collective Worship and the Religious Education to be given in accordance with an agreed syllabus; and
- (b) the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority.