

**NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**

**STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL**

**ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

**(SACRE)**

**CONSTITUTION**

July 2023

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## **Glossary:**

<b>Act</b>	Education Act 1996
<b>Agreed Syllabus</b>	The agreed syllabus for RE adopted by the Local Authority Agreed Syllabus Conference
<b>Clerk</b>	The person appointed in accordance with the Act
<b>Committee A, B, C or D</b>	Shall mean the respective committees as described in the Education Act 1996
<b>Local Authority Officer</b>	The person designated by the Local Authority to attend meetings
<b>NASACRE</b>	National Association of Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education
<b>SACRE Adviser</b>	The person contracted by the Local Authority to provide advice to SACRE on RE teaching and related matters
<b>RE</b>	Religious Education
<b>SACRE</b>	The North Northamptonshire Standing Advisory Council
<b>Representative Members</b>	The individuals appointed to the SACRE Committee or ASC as the context requires
<b>SACRE Committees</b>	A,B,C,D to represent relevant groups
<b>Local Authority</b>	North Northamptonshire Council

## **The Constitution**

This constitution has been drawn up in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act 1996.

SACREs are legally constituted bodies, appointed by the Local Authority to perform statutory functions. Every SACRE needs a constitution to ensure it operates efficiently and fulfils its statutory duties. The constitution provides a structure for its work and ensures SACRE meetings are held in a way that is publicly accountable.

The Local Authority has a duty to establish a permanent body known as the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education for North Northamptonshire ("SACRE") in accordance with the 1996 Education Act.

The Local Authority has a duty to establish an occasional body known as an Agreed Syllabus Conference ("ASC") to review an Agreed Syllabus in accordance with the Act.

This document sets out how the SACRE and the ASC will operate, their membership and composition, the procedures both bodies will follow and their decision-making structures. The aim is to ensure that both SACRE and the ASC operate efficiently, transparently and are fully accountable to the public.

## **The Aims and Objectives of SACRE**

The broad role of the SACRE is to support the effective provision of RE and collective worship in schools in North Northamptonshire and to enrich the experience of RE and collective worship for all pupils.

North Northamptonshire Council and the SACRE recognise the changing landscape of our schools and the diversity of the type of schools. SACRE will endeavour to work with all schools within their area whatever their designation for the benefit of our children and young people and the local community within which they reside.

The SACRE must comply with its statutory obligations as set out in the Act and shall advise the Local Authority on matters connected with:

- RE to be given in accordance with the Agreed Syllabus; and
- Religious worship in community schools or in foundation schools which do not have a religious character
- Following a referral from the Local Authority for such advice or otherwise as the SACRE sees fit;
- Monitor the provision and quality of RE taught according to the Agreed Syllabus together with the overall effectiveness of the syllabus;
- Provide advice and support on the effective teaching of RE, the choice of teaching materials for RE and the provision of teacher training;
- Upon receipt of an application from a Head teacher of a community, foundation or controlled school, the SACRE shall determine whether the requirement for Christian collective worship should apply to that school or any class or description of pupils at that school
- Review any determinations made by SACRE on receipt of an application for such a review.

## **Membership and Composition of SACRE**

A representative acts as conduit of information/messages from SACRE to their group as well as bringing messages/questions to the SACRE which would be reflected in the minutes.

1. The North Northamptonshire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (“the SACRE”) shall consist of representative members appointed by North Northamptonshire Council (“the Local Authority”) to represent respectively: -
  - (a) such Christian and other religious denominations as, in the opinion of the Council, will appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in the area of North Northamptonshire;
  - (b) the Church of England;

(c) such associations representing teachers as, in the opinion on the Local Authority, ought, having regard to the circumstances of North Northamptonshire Council, to be represented; and

(d) the Local Authority.

2. The composition of the groups of representative members (“the representative groups”) shall be as follows:-
  - (a) Christian and other religious denominations;
  - (b) Church of England representatives;
  - (c) Teachers’ representatives; and match this to the agreed syllabus conference and the principles documents of HLTAs add Post 16
  - (d) The Local Authority

Representatives should be nominated in accordance with Appendix A: Principles of Representation on North Northamptonshire SACRE.

**Committee ‘A’:** Shall comprise such Christian denominations (other than the Church of England) and other religious denominations, and worldviews as, in the opinion of the Local Authority will appropriately reflect the principal belief systems in the area of North Northamptonshire.

The number of representatives appointed to Committee A shall, so far as consistent with the efficient discharge of the Committee A’s functions, broadly reflect the Faiths and worldviews in North Northamptonshire, including a representative from but not necessarily restricted to:

**Committee ‘B’:** The Church of England The Diocesan Boards of Education for Peterborough Diocese should nominate these representatives.

**Committee ‘C’:** Such associations representing teachers, Teaching Assistants (TAs) and Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs) as, in the opinion of the Local Authority, ought, having regard to the circumstances of North Northamptonshire, to be represented.

**Committee ‘D’:** The Local Authority (those appointed should represent the political balance of the Local Authority).

The Local Authority should nominate its representatives using its established procedures for appointments. Councillors only.

A maximum of Three (3) representatives reflecting the political balance of elected members of the Local Authority and together the committees shall be known as “the SACRE Committees”.

The membership of the SACRE shall be reviewed annually by the Local Authority.

### **Co-opted Members of SACRE**

Other persons may be co-opted by the representative groups on the SACRE as non-voting co-opted members for such purposes and such length of time as representative groups on the SACRE shall decide. Co-opted members may resign at any time and may be removed by the representative groups at any time.

### **Voting Procedures in SACRE**

- On any issue to be decided by the SACRE, except as provided in paragraph 8, only the four representative groups shall be entitled to a vote and each group shall have a single vote. Individual representative members cannot vote separately. Co-opted members are not entitled to vote.
- Issues shall be decided by a simple majority vote. In the event of a tie the Chair may exercise a second and casting vote.

### **Voting Procedures within Representative Groups**

- 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 decision of the representative group shall be determined by a simple majority vote in which each member of the group has one vote.
- Issues shall be decided by a simple majority vote. There shall not be a casting vote. If there is a tied vote the group shall abstain from voting on the issue in SACRE.
- SACRE will consider the views of co-opted members.

Any decisions of the SACRE Committee shall be determined by a simple majority vote in which each Representative Member of the Committee has one vote.

### **Chair and Vice Chair**

A Chair and Vice-Chair of the SACRE shall be elected annually by the Representative Members of the SACRE at the first meeting to be held at the Annual General Meeting (AGM), normally September, each Representative Member having one vote.

Nominations for chair and vice chair will be proposed and seconded within the SACRE meeting. The Chair and Vice Chair will be appointed from Representative Members of the SACRE Committees.

Persons continuing to be members of the SACRE are eligible for re-appointment to the position of Chair or Vice Chair.

If there is more than one candidate, the Chair and Vice Chair shall be elected following a simple majority vote for each role. In the case of a tied vote, the previous Chair shall have a casting vote.

In the absence of any nominations for the Chair, an executive group of substantive members or a rotating chair may be elected to lead SACRE.

### **Sub-Groups and Working Parties**

SACRE may establish task and finish working parties to consider specific issues relating to RE. Such working parties shall have an advisory capacity only and shall not be authorised to make decisions on behalf of SACRE. The Terms of Reference (ToR) for any working party shall be prepared by SACRE.

SACRE shall appoint representatives to a working party and they may also appoint co-opted members or non-members with relevant expertise to such working parties.

Committees A, B, and C may at any time require a review of any agreed syllabus for the time being adopted by the Local Authority. Each of the committees concerned will each have a single vote on the question of whether to require such a review.

### **Quorum**

A minimum of one representative from each of the four committees must be present for SACRE to be quorate.

### **Terms of Office of Representative Members of SACRE Member behaviour and expectations:**

Representative Members are expected to act and behave in accordance with the principles and spirit of the Local Authority's Code of Conduct (code of conduct to be found) for elected members. A representative acts as a conduit of information/messages from SACRE to their group as well as bringing messages/questions to the SACRE which would be reflected in the minutes.

A Representative Member appointed by the Local Authority to a SACRE Committee may be removed from membership by the Local Authority if:

- In the opinion of the Local Authority, the Representative Member ceases to be representative of the religion, denomination or associates which he/she was appointed to represent in relation to Committees A to C or ceases to be representative of the Local Authority in relation to Committee D; or
- The Local Authority may remove any Representative Member or co-opted member who fails to act and behave according to the principles and spirit of the Local Authority's Code of Conduct for elected members. This can be found in the Council's Constitution at Part 8.2.

### **Length of office:**

A Representative Member shall hold office until they resign, they are removed from his/her appointment, or they no longer a member of their representative group. A Representative Member may resign at any time.

**Dealing with vacancies:**

Where (for any reason) there is a vacancy for a Representative Member on a SACRE Committee the Local Authority shall ensure a replacement Representative Member is appointed to the relevant Committee as soon as possible.

**Declaring an interest:**

When appointed Representative Members must declare any interests at each meeting, whether personal or prejudicial. It is their responsibility to update the record as necessary.

Where a Representative Member has a disclosable pecuniary or other interest, that interest must be declared at the start of any meeting where a relevant matter falls to be considered by the SACRE and the Representative Member must withdraw from that meeting prior to any discussion of the relevant item on the agenda and take no part in any vote on that agenda item.

**Attendance**

Where a representative of the committees is unable to attend, they are requested to send a substitute. Any representative who is not able to attend must notify the Clerk/Chair of their absence in advance and name an alternative representative.

Should a member of SACRE not attend three consecutive meetings without good explanation, the Local Authority will write to that member informing them that their membership will lapse if they are unable to attend the next meeting.

The Local Authority may remove any representative or co-opted member that has failed to attend three consecutive meetings without valid reason.

**Meetings**

The SACRE shall meet at least once per autumn, spring and summer term and such meetings shall be open to the public unless, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, confidential information or information exempt from public disclosure would be disclosed.

Whether information is confidential, or exempt, it shall be determined in accordance with the Local Authority's access to information procedure rules contained in its Constitution for the time being in force. One of the meetings convened shall be the Annual General Meeting (usually in September). The annual report will be presented and discussed in the spring term (to allow for GCSE data to be commented upon).

**Notice of meetings**

The Clerk to SACRE shall:

- Give written notice of the time and place of any meeting to the Representative Members at least five clear days before a meeting.



- Ensure at least five clear days' notice of a meeting is given to the public by publishing details on its webpage: The Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

### **Agenda**

The agenda for SACRE meetings, (with the exception of the first meeting of a newly constituted SACRE), will be determined by the Chair and the SACRE Adviser. All members can request for an item to be on the agenda through the Clerk. Matters for the agenda of any meeting shall be sent to the Clerk at least 10 days in advance of the meeting and the Clerk will agree the agenda items with the Chair.

The Clerk will:

- Send the agenda, the draft minutes of the previous meeting and any associated reports to Representative Members at least five clear working days before the meeting.
- Arrange for the agenda, the draft minutes of the previous meeting (if not already available) and any associated reports to be published on SACRE's webpage and made available for inspection at the Local Authority's office at least five clear days before the meetings.

### **Minutes**

Following a meeting of SACRE, draft minutes will be circulated by the Clerk to Representative Members within 10 working days of the date of the meeting. The Chair will move that the minutes of the previous meeting be signed as a correct record, and upon their approval will sign them off as an accurate record at the next meeting.

The only part of the minutes that can be discussed is their accuracy.

### **Disputes and Complaints**

Representative Members are expected to act and behave in accordance with the principles and spirit of the Local Authority's Code of Conduct for elected members.

The SACRE is intended to be a collaborative, co-operative body and must ensure that no particular sector or member is unduly favoured. Problems and issues should normally be debated and resolved at SACRE meetings. However, if parties feel that these have not been resolved the following process should be followed and minutes taken:

#### **Stage 1**

The parties who are in dispute meet with the Chair of the SACRE and the professional Adviser who will assist with finding or recommending a solution.

**Stage 2**

A special meeting of the SACRE Complaints Panel, comprising 1 member from each of the 4 committees is convened with papers prepared by the parties representing different views. The Chair and the professional Adviser also prepare a paper offering possible options for resolution.

**Stage 3**

If the issue is not resolved, then guidance and clarification will be sought from the Local Authority's Monitoring Officer, or the relevant Government Department, as to next steps.