



Rotherham
Standing Advisory Council
on Religious Education
(SACRE)

Constitution and Terms of Reference

2025

1. Introduction to SACRE

- 1.1 SACRE stands for Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education.
- 1.2 Every Local Authority is required by law to have a SACRE. The Education Act 1944 created the origins for SACREs, following the 1988 Education Act, when religious education was confirmed as a compulsory part of the curriculum, it became a statutory requirement for every Local Education Authority (LEA) to appoint a SACRE.
- 1.3 SACRE's advises and supports the local authority in relation to the effective provision of religious education and Collective Worship in schools. These are two distinct and separate matters for which SACRE has responsibility.
- 1.4 Changes to the provision of education, for example through the establishment of Academies and Free Schools and the reducing size of the Local Authority itself means there is considerably less local authority influence on the religious education in schools.

2. Statutory Responsibilities

- 2.1 The broad role of the SACRE is to support the effective provision of Religious Education and Collective Worship in schools.
- 2.2 **Rotherham SACRE must:**
 - (a) Advise the LA and its schools on such matters connected with the agreed syllabus, religious education and collective worship either in response to a referral from the LA or as it sees fit.
 - (b) Publish an annual report on its work and on actions taken by its representative groups, specifying any matters on which it has advised the LA, broadly describing the nature of that advice, and set out reasons for offering advice on matters not referred to it by the LA.
 - (c) Send a copy of the annual report to the Department of Education and National SACRE.
 - (d) Consider applications from a head teacher that the school be released from the requirement for collective worship to be "wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character", for some or all of their pupils (this is known as a determination).
 - (e) Meet in public unless confidential information is to be disclosed; and
 - (f) Produce and publish minutes of its meetings available on the Council's Website, so far as the minutes relate to the parts of the meetings that were open to the public.

2.3 Rotherham SACRE should:

- (a) Monitor the provision and quality of the agreed syllabus RE and of collective worship.
- (b) In partnership with the LA, consider whether any changes need to be made to the agreed syllabus or in the support offered to schools in the implementation of the agreed syllabus, to improve the quality, teaching and learning in RE.
- (c) Offer advice to the LA, and through the LA to schools, concerning how an existing agreed syllabus can be interpreted so as to fit in with a broad, balanced and coherent curriculum.
- (d) Require the LA to set up an occasional body called an agreed syllabus conference (ACS) to review the agreed syllabus at least every five years. If, at some other time, and after discussion and a vote (the LA group on SACRE is not entitled to cast a vote in this context) the majority of the committees of the SACRE asks the LA in writing to reconsider its agreed syllabus, it must convene a conference for that purpose.
- (e) Maintain a Development Plan with SMART targets to measure effectiveness and review and/or refresh the Development Plan on an annual basis.

3. Membership of SACRE

- 3.1 Rotherham SACRE's members represent various religious and non-religious communities from Rotherham and local representatives who are teachers, school governors, councillors, and others.
- 3.2 A SACRE committee must have appointed representatives to each of four groups, representing respectively:

Group A: Such Christian denominations and other religions and denominations of such religions as, in the opinion of the LA, will appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in the area other than the Church of England.

Group B: Representatives of the Church of England.

Group C: Such associations representing teachers as, in the opinion of the LA, ought to be represented, having regard to the circumstances of the area, representing as far as is practicable, infant, junior, primary, secondary and specialist schools.

Group D: The Local Authority: those appointed should represent Rotherham

Borough Council. Members of Group D shall be appointed annually by the full Council.

3.3 Composition of Membership

- 3.4 The composition of the groups shall be a non- exhaustive list of the kinds of groups that are represented on SACRE Committees around the country and will represent a range of religions, denominations and non-religious philosophical convictions groups, which could include but is not restricted to:

Group A: Christian and other religious denominations as follows:

- The Afro-Caribbean Council of Churches
- The Bahai Faith
- The Baptist Church
- The Buddhist Faith
- The Hindu Faith
- Humanism
- The Methodist Church
- The Pentecostal Church
- The Religious Society of Friends
- The Roman Catholic Church
- The Salvation Army
- The Orthodox Church
- The United Reformed Church
- The Jewish Faith
- The Islamic Faith
- The Sikh Faith.

Group B: Four representatives.

Group C: Five representatives.

Group D: Four representatives plus the Governance Advisor to SACRE (non-voting).

- 3.5 When appointing a new member of a group on SACRE, the local authority will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the nominee is representative of the religion, denomination, or associations in question.

3.6 Co-opted Members

- 3.7 Other persons may be co-opted by the representative groups on the SACRE for such purposes and such length of time as representative groups on the SACRE might decide. Co-opted members do not belong to any of the groups and do not have voting rights. Co-opted members may resign at any time and may be removed by the representative groups or the LA at any time.

- 3.8 Any member of SACRE unable to attend a meeting should appoint a named substitute to attend in his/her place. Notice of this substitution should be notified to the Governance Advisor of SACRE at least 6 hours in advance of

the meeting. Substitute members may speak but not vote.

3.9 Terms of Office for Representative Members

Members shall remain members until such time as they have resigned or have been absent for 3 or more consecutive meetings for any reason not acceptable or apologies are not passed on to the Governance Advisor, then they shall be deemed to be a vacated place to be filled by the governing body for that class of Members.

The SACRE shall review the composition of each group and the attendance annually (at the Autumn Term meeting).

3.10 Chair and Vice-Chair Positions

3.11 The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council shall be elected by the representative members of the SACRE and shall be elected at the last meeting in each academic year. Voting for the Chair and Vice-Chair will be by a simple majority. The Chair and Vice-Chair where possible, will represent different committees of SACRE.

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

In the absence of the Chair or Vice-Chair at any meeting the local authority can elect one of its members to act as the Chair for that meeting.

The main specific role of the Chair is to manage the work of SACRE in accordance with statutory requirements and local circumstances.

3.13 The Chair will be responsible for:

- (a) The management of meetings.
- (b) Representing the SACRE to other bodies.
- (c) Leading the SACRE in its own self-evaluation and development and/or training programmes.
- (d) Any other duties as the SACRE considers appropriate.

3.14 The Vice-Chair will be responsible for:

- (a) Deputising for the Chair as required.
- (b) Representing the SACRE to other bodies in the absence of the Chair or in agreement with the Chair.
- (c) Any other duties as the SACRE considers appropriate.

3.15 Professional SACRE Advisor

The specific responsibilities of the RE Advisor to SACRE is to:

- (a) Attend each meeting of the SACRE and support the SACRE to fulfil its legislative duties in Rotherham.
- (b) Work with the Chair and Governance Advisor to prepare the SACRE agenda, SACRE Annual Report, any other relevant reports, papers or advice requested.
- (c) Provide advice to the SACRE on professional issues. Professional Advisors are not members of the SACRE and cannot vote.
- (d) Advise and update SACRE members on any new government guidance or policy documents.
- (e) Regularly report back to SACRE on work completed on behalf of SACRE.
- (f) Provide expertise and advice in the areas of RE and collective worship.

3.16 Childrens and Young People's Services Representation

The Assistant Director of Education and Inclusion is the responsible officer and representative for the local authority Children's and Young People's Services. The responsible officer is required to be present throughout the proceedings of the SACRE and to give advice on behalf of the LA as he/she thinks appropriate.

He/she will ensure that the LA provides sufficient funds and support for SACRE to perform its duties and take note of and respond to advice from SACRE. He/she will contribute to the SACRE Annual Report from the perspective of Children's and Young People's Services.

The attendance of a LA officer at a SACRE meeting may be specifically requested by the SACRE when it requires advice or guidance on a particular issue.

4. SACRE Meetings

- 4 SACRE should meet at least 3 times annually, once during each of the summer, autumn and spring terms.
- 4.3 Additional meetings may be called by the Chair and local authority acting jointly. In addition, each group may convene its own group meetings at any time. All of SACRE are expected to attend and contribute to meetings.

4.4 Quoracy

4.5 A meeting shall be quorate if the following numbers of representative/s of the respective groups are present:

4.6 Group A – minimum of 1
Group B – minimum of 1
Group C – minimum of 1
Group D – minimum of 1.

4.7 If the meeting is not quorate either business shall not be transacted, or the meeting could continue but decisions would have to be ratified at the next SACRE meeting.

5. Voting procedures in SACRE

5.1 All members are entitled to speak and vote on any issue. However, substitute or co-opted member may speak but not vote at any meeting.

5.2 SACRE is committed to reaching decisions on a consensus basis but on the rare occasions when voting is necessary the following guidelines will apply:

- (a) On any issue to be decided by the SACRE, except as provided in statement 3.7 above, only the four representative groups shall be entitled to vote. They have equal voting rights: one vote from each group A, B, C or D.
- (b) Issues shall be decided by a simple majority vote.
- (c) A proposal shall not be deemed to be carried unless it has been approved by at least three of the four groups, unless otherwise required by law or guidance.
- (d) In the event of a tied vote the groups shall revisit the issue in question to see if consensus can be reached.
- (e) If the vote is still tied, the Chair may exercise a casting vote.

6. Administrative Arrangements

6.1 The LA shall provide a person to act as Clerk to the SACRE, the Clerk will be a Governance Advisor from Democratic Services.

6.2 The Governance Advisor will:

- (a) Attend the full meetings of SACRE, an agenda setting meeting with the Chair and agreed syllabus conference meetings.
- (b) Distribute agendas, take appropriate minutes and notes at the meetings.

- (c) Maintain and update the records of SACRE and its meetings.
- (d) Perform any other necessary administrative duties.
- (e) Provide a copy of the draft minutes and papers of meetings to the members of SACRE and LA, 5 clear working days before the next meeting takes place.
- (f) Provide information for the development of the Annual Report, such as membership and attendance details.

6.3 SACRE members can propose agenda items by contacting the Chair or the Governance Advisor to SACRE. Matters for the agenda of any meeting shall be sent to the Governance Advisor at least 28 days in advance of the meeting.

6.4 The Chair should meet with the Educational Representative from the local authority and the Governance Advisor to SACRE 21 days in advance of the meeting, to agree the content and business to be added on the agenda for each meeting.

6.5 The draft minutes of meetings shall be published within one month of the meeting.

7. Disputes and Complaints

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

- (a) Stage 1: The parties who are in dispute meet with the Chair if the SACRE and the Professional SACRE Advisor who will assist in finding or recommending a solution.
- (b) Stage 2: A special meeting of the SACRE is convened, with papers prepared by the parties representing different views. The Chair and the Professional SACRE Advisor also prepare a paper offering possible options for resolution. If the problem is not resolved, the dispute is referred to Stage 3.
- (c) Stage 3: If the issue is not resolved then guidance or clarification will be sought from the relevant Government Department.
- (d) Complaints from members of the public will be handled by the Council's Complaints procedure.