



# **CUMBRIA STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)**

## **Constitution**

**Our aim is to enrich the quality of learning in religious education and collective worship for all Cumbrian pupils**

**February 2023**

## 1. The Duties of the Local Authority:

Establishing a SACRE has been a legal requirement for every Local Authority (LA) since 1988. The LA is legally obliged to ensure:

- that there is a functioning SACRE with all four committees represented
- that there is professional and financial support in place for SACRE to carry out its duties
- that there is an Agreed Syllabus for RE which is reviewed at least once every five years
- that it consults with SACRE on any issues to do with RE and collective worship
- that it takes note of, and responds to, any advice it receives from SACRE

## 2. The Duties of Cumbria SACRE are to:

- Provide advice to the LA and schools on collective worship and RE in accordance with the agreed syllabus.
- Advise the LA on how to monitor the provision and quality of collective worship and RE in Cumbrian community schools and foundation schools without a religious character.
- Advise the LA on any complaints concerning RE or collective worship.
- Consider any requests from community schools or foundation schools without a religious character to lift the legal requirement to hold a daily act of collective worship of a broadly Christian character for some or all of the pupils at that school. Such applications are to be made by the headteacher after consultation with the governing body. If SACRE agrees, the school is granted a 'determination' for five years, after which the school can reapply and the determination must be reviewed.
- Require the LA to review the agreed syllabus by convening an Agreed Syllabus Conference in accordance with the provisions of Para 3, Schedule 31 to the Education Act 1996
- Publish an annual report about its work.

## 3. The Membership of Cumbria SACRE:

Legally the LA is the appointing body and members are appointed to one of four committees:

- Committee A: people to represent Christian denominations and other religions as, in the opinion of the LA, appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in the area
- Committee B: people to represent the Church of England
- Committee C: people to represent teacher's professional associations
- Committee D: people to represent the LA

### Cumbria SACRE aims to have:

Committee A: Representation from Catholicism, Methodism, Quakerism, United Reformed, non-conformists, Free Churches, Churches Together and other faiths including but not limited to Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Islam, and Sikhism.

Committee B: Representatives nominated by the Diocesan Board of Education (Church of England)

Committee C: Representatives nominated by teacher unions and other professional bodies

Committee D: Elected Members - two members appointed by Cumberland and two by Westmorland and Furness.

## 4. The Appointment of Representatives to SACRE:

### Term of Office of Representative Members:

The LA appoints members of SACRE following consultation with the appropriate body. Members continue to serve until they resign in writing or the LA, following consultation with the nominating body, suspends their membership at which time they will cease to be a member of SACRE. Members who fail to attend three consecutive meetings without good reason will have their membership reviewed by the LA through the Clerk and in consultation with the appointing body who may suspend their membership.

### Co-opted members:

It is open to SACRE to co-opt people who may be able to contribute to its work. Co-optees are not members of any of the four committees and do not have voting rights. Such co-options will be reviewed annually at the first meeting of the academic year.

**Substitutes:**

A member who is unable to attend a SACRE meeting can be represented at that meeting by a substitute from the same nominating body. The member should inform the Clerk of the name of the substitute prior to the meeting. Substitutes do not have voting rights.

**5. SACRE Working Practices:**

**Quorum:** SACRE will be quorate when at least one member of EACH of the 4 committees are present.

**Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair:**

The Chair and Vice-Chair of SACRE are nominated by SACRE and appointed by the LA. The appointment is for 3 years.

**Working Groups/sub-committees:**

SACRE can appoint sub-committees to work on particular tasks on behalf of the full SACRE. They can elect a Chair who will report the results of the work of that committee to the full SACRE.

**Voting Arrangements:**

As far as is practical, items will be discussed fully and issues decided by consensus. If a formal vote is necessary each of the 4 SACRE committees has one vote. It may be necessary for the four committees to meet separately to determine how their collective vote will be cast. To facilitate such a vote each committee may elect a Chair. A committee's vote will represent the majority within that committee. In any vote, a majority of 3 carries the vote but if the vote is split (2-2) the status quo applies because the Chair of SACRE doesn't have a casting vote. Co-opted members do not have a vote.

**Changes to the SACRE:**

Currently the SACRE is jointly operated by Westmorland & Furness and Cumberland local authorities. If the local authorities wish to disaggregate in the future, then separate SACRE could be constituted. Any separate SACRE would need to be constituted by the individual local authority's cabinet as per section 390 of the Education Act 1996.

**Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC):**

SACRE must convene an ASC every five years to review the agreed syllabus and where necessary produce a new agreed syllabus. The agreed syllabus is the statutory document for RE which community and foundation schools must follow. It is a long standing tradition in Cumbria that each body nominates, and the LA appoints, the same people as on SACRE.

**Extraordinary Meetings:**

The Clerk to SACRE, following consultation with the Chair, may convene an Extraordinary Meeting. The Clerk must always consult with the Chair if requested to do so by 5 SACRE members. At least seven days' notice must be given to members of any such meeting.

**Appendix 1:****Meetings:**

Cumbria SACRE aims to meet on at least three occasions during the school year (normally one meeting per term). Non members are welcome to attend, to observe SACRE meetings.

**Agenda:**

Matters for the Agenda should be sent to the SACRE Clerk at least 21 days in advance of the meeting. The Agenda should be distributed at least seven working days in advance of meetings. The minutes of meetings are published on the Cumbria County Council website.

**Annual report:**

SACRE's annual report should be emailed to the LA, Cumbrian schools and academies, DfE and NASACRE.

**Code of Conduct of members:**

Cumbria SACRE encourages all of its members to:

- Attend all SACRE meetings and take a full and active part in its work and discussions.
- Appoint a substitute if unable to attend a meeting. (See Non-attendance above)
- Consult actively with the organisation you represent so that debate is fully informed.
- Listen with respect to the views of other members. Express views and opinions openly and sensitively, recognising others may have different views. Never denigrate or mock the views of others. Seek reasoned consensus where views diverge.
- Develop their understanding of the different faiths and beliefs represented in Cumbria and contribute to the

wider community cohesion agenda.

- Remember that SACRE's aim is to improve the quality of provision in RE and collective worship for Cumbrian pupils.