

East Sussex SACRE
Code of Conduct
March 2024



East Sussex
County Council



Code of Conduct

Introduction

The central aim of the **Standing Advisory Committee for Religious Education** is to improve the quality of provision in Religious Education and Collective Worship for all pupils in East Sussex.

We aim to embody 'The Seven Principles of Public Life' (also known as the Nolan Principles):

Selflessness

Members should act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity

Members must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity

Members must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability

Members are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness

Members should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

Honesty

Members should be truthful.

Leadership

Members should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Guidelines for attendance at meetings

East Sussex SACRE encourages all its Members to:

- Attend all SACRE meetings and take a full and active part in its work.
- Read papers before the meetings.
- Participate in and review the work of SACRE for the benefit of the whole community.
- Respect the faith, belief, and practice of those present.
- Listen to what other people have to say; everyone's contribution is relevant.
- Comments should be addressed through the chair.
- Wait for someone to finish speaking before you begin and give people a chance to respond.
- Be assertive but respectful of others.
- Accept differences of opinion and respect each other's views.
- Do not use abusive or discriminatory language or say things that could hurt others.
- Actively challenge and resist stereotyping.
- Try to encourage everyone in the group to participate fully by giving them a chance to speak and by making them to feel comfortable and supported.
- Maintain confidentiality when requested so that people may speak openly.
- Be clear when you speak, avoid using jargon if you can and be sure to explain any initials and terminology so that others feel included.
- Aim to have a discussion, share ideas, ask question and follow on from what others are saying rather than making a speech.
- Be aware of and be courteous to people around you.
- Keep mobile phones on silent unless in an emergency.
- Recognise that all present have a right to respect for their individual beliefs.
- If anyone deliberately misrepresents or disparages other people's beliefs and practices they will be asked to leave the meeting.
- Individual members not adhering to these guidelines may, at the discretion of the chair, be asked to leave the meeting.
- A member of SACRE may be removed from office if it is the opinion of SACRE that the member has persistently breached the guidance.
- If it is in the collective opinion of SACRE that a committee member does not adhere to the guidance for meetings SACRE will inform the nominating body and SACRE has the right to request a replacement representative member.
- Always assume that other members of SACRE are honourable and concerned with the best interests of SACRE.
- Seek reasoned consensus where views diverge and never disrespect the views of other SACRE members or seek to convert them to a different belief stance
- Actively consult with, and report back to, the membership body which they represent so that debate is fully informed.

Remember that the central aim for the SACRE is to improve the quality of provision in RE and collective worship for all pupils in East Sussex.

Visiting schools

From time to time, SACRE members may have the opportunity to visit schools.

SACRE Members should remember that it is a privilege to visit a school. They are there as invited guests, not to make judgements about the school or to “inspect” RE and collective worship.

Members should:

- Only visit a school when invited.
- Inform the Clerk of SACRE and the Children’s Service Representative of any invitation received and visits made.
- Ensure that you do not say or do anything, which could be viewed as denigrating any religion or ethical belief system.
- Avoid being critical of others or imposing their own views.
- Any confidential information disclosed should not be passed on but along with any possible concerns or confusions about what may have been seen should be discussed with the Specialist RE Advisor and Children’s Services Representative before being reported back to SACRE.

Visiting schools as a representative of a faith community

Some faith community representatives may be more regular visitors to schools and invited to support RE or collective worship.

Visitors should be well-supported by the class teacher who should always be present, taking an active role in question-and-answer sessions, and ensuring visitors are well-briefed before a visit.

Members visiting a school to share their beliefs, values and experiences should:

- Have a clear, mutually agreed understanding of the purpose of the visit before it takes place.
- Appreciate that they are not there to convert or proselytise, avoiding being critical of others or imposing their own views.
- Be familiar with the school’s aims, ethos, and policies in RE and Collective Worship.
- Understand where the lesson will fit into the unit of work from the Agreed Syllabus and the learning objectives.
- Use a variety of teaching and learning methods and approaches, but at no time touch pupils or behave favourably towards pupils of particular faiths, ethnic groups, or genders.
- Ensure pupils understand the visitor is representing a particular faith view and their own personal interpretation of it and therefore that others from the same faith may not always interpret ideas in the same ways.
- Ensure that they do not say or do anything, which could be viewed as denigrating.
- Communicate at an appropriate level for the age group concerned.