

East Sussex SACRE
Constitution
November 2024



Constitution

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1. Introduction

SACRE is a statutory body which is established by the Local Authority to carry out a range of duties associated with Religious Education and Collective Worship in schools. The legislation that established the role and function of SACRE is laid out in the Education Act of 1996 (sections 390-397). SACRE reports annually to both Children's Services and the full council about its work and progress.

2. Composition

There are two kinds of membership on SACRE:

1. Those nominated by the appropriate sponsoring Groups and formally appointed by the local authority, and who work within one of four groups.
2. Those co-opted by SACRE

East Sussex SACRE shall have a maximum of 30 voting members and up to 3 non-voting co-opted members.

Commented [BB1]: Clarification in line with NASACRE template.

Clause 390(4) of the Education Act 1996 requires that the Local Authority appoints members representing the following groups to constitute the SACRE. The maximum number of members in each group is indicated below:

- **Group A: 15**
Such Christian and other religious denominations (other than the Church of England) as in the opinion of the Authority, will appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in the area.
- **Group B: 4**
The Church of England
- **Group C: 6**
Such associations representing teachers as, in the opinion of the Authority ought, having regard to the circumstances of the area to be represented.
- **Group D: 5**
The Authority (appointed in conformity with the political balance).

Total number of voting members: 30

Non-voting co-opted member, placed in Group A (to be discussed by SACRE): 3

Non-voting advisers (RE Specialist and Children's Service Representative): 2

Commented [BB2]: Clarification that the role of RE advisor and Children's Services representative are non-voting.

Non-voting clerk: 1

3. Chairperson and Vice Chairperson

- A Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson will be elected on an annual basis, usually at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) which will be in the **spring** term usually following East Sussex County Council elections.
- The Chairperson will be an elected member of the County Council. The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson will be elected at the AGM.

Commented [BB3]: Change from 'autumn' as AGM takes place in February.

- The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson are elected for a period of 4 years and can be re-elected.
- Nominations for the position of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson shall be submitted to the clerk 7 days in advance of the AGM.
- Representatives who continue to be members of SACRE are eligible to be elected as Vice-Chairperson.
- In the event of an equal number of votes for the position of Vice-Chairperson the Chairperson of SACRE will have the deciding vote.
- The Chairperson will be responsible for convening and chairing the meetings in line with the constitution and any other appropriate guidance issued by the Local Authority.
- The Chairperson of East Sussex SACRE or his/her representative will represent East Sussex SACRE on any local or national bodies as appropriate.

4. Membership

- SACRE meetings will be attended by the clerk, the RE adviser to SACRE and, from time to time, other East Sussex education advisers to promote effective communication with the **Education Division**. SACRE meetings are open meetings, so members of the public may also be present. **Attendance of the public and press, and their removal, if necessary, shall follow the protocol for public meetings as set out by local government.**
- The main Christian denominations and groups will be offered representation and other world faiths that are mentioned in the East Sussex Agreed Syllabus or found locally: Baha'i faith, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, and Sikhism.
- All members, including the Chairperson, will serve for up to 4 years, after which they may be re-elected by the nominating body for a further 4-year period(s).
- All members must be nominated by a representative body. This should be a local body, wherever possible. In exceptional circumstances this may be a national body. Members will normally be expected to live or work in East Sussex.
- Any member who does not attend 3 consecutive meetings without valid reason will be deemed to have resigned and the nominating body will be asked to name a new representative.
- Where someone is unable to attend then members are asked to seek a substitute on their behalf.
- Where a substitute is to be sent then the clerk needs to be notified in advance of the meeting. Only named substitutes may attend and vote on behalf of a representative group and they should be fully briefed by the member.
- SACRE members may suggest groups without representation on SACRE which they think should be included. Groups with an interest in the work of SACRE may themselves offer a representative. Decisions about allocation of places for co-opted members will be taken by the SACRE.

Commented [BB4]: New terminology

Commented [BB5]: Inclusion as recommended by NASACRE template.

- SACRE should consider advice from the Local Authority or Professional Bodies such as NASACRE when discussing representation.
- Where the SACRE is not unanimous on a decision, a majority from a group vote will be taken with each of the 4 representative groups having a single vote, which vote need not represent a unanimous decision by that group. Dissenting views may be recorded. In the event of a casting vote being required, this will be given by the Chairperson.
- SACRE will seek to ensure the membership of SACRE is as diverse as possible and representative of the spectrum of faiths and beliefs in East Sussex.
- Resignations should be submitted in writing to the Chairperson.

Commented [BB6]: Inclusion as recommended by NASACRE template.

5. Duties

- SACRE will **advise the Local Authority** on matters pertaining to the teaching of Religious Education and Collective Worship as laid out in the statutory responsibilities for the teaching of RE and requirements for Collective Worship. The Local Authority may ask SACRE to report on particular aspects in general relating to these responsibilities.
- More specifically SACRE is responsible for:
 - Developing the Local Agreed Syllabus for the teaching of RE.
 - Aspects of professional development and training relating to RE.
 - Teaching methods.
 - Matters relating to Collective Worship.
- SACRE works with the Local Authority and its partners to **monitor** the implementation of the Local Agreed Syllabus.
- SACRE will **review the Local Agreed Syllabus** at least every 5 years and will convene an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) for this purpose according to the statutory guidance.
- Have an agreed process for **Determinations** in relation to Collective Worship and undertake these as needed. This is the process where SACRE decides whether Collective Worship in a community or foundation school of a religious character needs to be of a 'wholly or mainly of a Christian character' and whether this applies to the school making the application.

The East Sussex SACRE 'Collective Worship: Seeking a Determination' form shall be used for this purpose and any decision reviewed after five years.

- SACRE will produce an **Annual Report** relating to how it has carried out its duties and progress against the priorities and the development plan. NASACRE guidance will be used to inform the production of the Annual Report. Typically, this will be completed by the 31 March each year (and in advance of the relevant local government committee).
- SACRE recognises that academies may choose to follow the Local Agreed Syllabus or one of their own choosing. Academies will be encouraged to follow the Local Agreed Syllabus along with their community counterparts. Determinations for academies are not made by SACRE but are made directly to the Secretary of State.

Commented [BB7]: Practical addition as this is often before the end of March.

- SACRE will be affiliated to the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education (NASACRE).
- Where possible the Adviser to SACRE will be a member of the Association of Religious Education Inspectors Advisers and Consultants (AREIAC).
- ~~Members with specific duties should follow the agreed role descriptions.~~

Commented [BB8]: Link to relevant document.

6. Working Groups

- SACRE may require the formation of working groups to undertake specific tasks on its behalf.
- The remit and tasks of any working groups shall be decided at SACRE.
- Working groups will be dissolved once their remit is complete.

7. Quorum and Voting

- Quorum shall be agreed if there is at least ~~7 members present with at least~~ one representative from each of the 4 groups. If the meeting is not quorate then business cannot proceed.
- ~~The quorum will be an attendance from each representative group (A-D), as actually constituted, of one third of the members of that group (to the nearest whole number).~~
- Any questions requiring decisions by SACRE shall be made by all members with at least one member of each group present and each person shall have a vote. Co-opted members are not able to vote.
- Decisions are reached by a simple majority vote in which each member has a single vote.
- In the event of a tied decision the Chairperson of SACRE shall have the casting vote.

Commented [BB9]: Removed to reflect number of members and the minimum by statute.

Commented [BB10]: Removal to stop absence frustrating decision with fewer members. This point is not required by statute.

8. Agreed Syllabus Conferences

- ~~The Agreed Syllabus Conference is a body appointed by the local authority according to the same structure as a SACRE.~~
- ~~In East Sussex, membership of SACRE is coterminous with the Agreed Syllabus Conference.~~
- ~~Co-opted members of SACRE, though, cannot be members of the Agreed Syllabus Conference as there is no option to co-opt onto such.~~
- ~~When voting to adopt the Agreed Syllabus, the decision must be unanimous amongst the four committees (coterminous with the groups set out above) in line with the voting arrangements in section 7.~~

Commented [BB11]: Inclusion as recommended by NASACRE template.

9. Administration

- The Local Authority makes the necessary arrangements for a Clerk to SACRE to support all administrative matters on behalf of the board.

- The Director of Children’s Services is entitled to attend or a representative of the Director and shall be present throughout the meetings and able to offer support and guidance.
- SACRE shall meet at least three times a year and the agenda and papers will be circulated at least a week prior to the meeting.
- **Agenda setting meetings will be attended by the Chair, Children’s Services Representative, RE Specialist Advisor and the Clerk, where possible.**
- Other items may be added as they arise during the course of business or as AOBs.
- Minutes will be agreed by the Chairperson and circulated within 14 days of the meeting. They will be approved at the next SACRE meeting. The minutes will then be available on the council website ([Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education](#)) and will be available to the public upon request.
- Meetings will be held in public unless statutory obligations deem otherwise.
- All meetings will be made as accessible as possible.

Commented [BB12]: Inclusion as recommended by NASACRE template.

10. Visits

On occasion SACRE members may have the opportunity to visit schools; this is a privilege and SACRE members are there as invited guests, not inspectors. When an invitation to visit a school is received by a SACRE member, they are asked to:

- Inform the clerk of the visit dates and arrangements.
- Ensure that you are respectful of all faiths, religions and ethical beliefs.
- Avoid being critical or imposing your own views.
- Be encouraging and informed about the developments and priorities of the East Sussex SACRE.
- Be supportive of the school and their endeavours to deliver high quality RE and comply with the statutory requirements around RE and Collective Worship.
- Where any issues arise be sure to discuss these with the Chairperson of SACRE and the Adviser to SACRE so that they may be resolved.

When arranging to visit a school as part of SACRE’s ongoing activities, the agreed protocol should be followed.

Commented [BB13]: Clarification.

11. Accountability

- East Sussex SACRE is fully accountable to East Sussex County Council.
- ESCC will provide such budget that will allow East Sussex SACRE to carry out its duties in full.