



# City of Westminster

## THE STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

### CONSTITUTION

#### 1. LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

The City of Westminster SACRE has been established under the provisions of Sections 390 – 397 of the Education Act 1996. It is a Statutory Body of the Local Authority.

#### 2. ROLE AND FUNCTIONS

- i) To advise the Local Authority (Westminster City Council) upon matters connected with religious worship in its community schools.
- ii) To advise the Local Authority upon the religious education to be given in its community schools in accordance with an agreed syllabus. In particular it can offer advice on methods of teaching, the choice of materials and the provision of training for teachers.

For (i) and (ii) the Local Authority may refer matters to the SACRE, which the SACRE must then consider and offer advice on them; but the SACRE may also take the initiative in making recommendations to the Local Authority.

- iii) To determine and review the cases in which the requirement for collective worship that is wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character is not to apply.
- iv) To decide whether the Local Authority's agreed syllabus should be reviewed (the Local Authority Committee of the SACRE cannot ask for such a revision or participate in a vote on the question).
- v) To write an annual report on its work which will:
  - (a) specify any matters in respect of which the SACRE has given advice to the Local Authority;
  - (b) broadly describe the nature of the advice given;
  - (c) where any such matter was not referred to the SACRE by the Local Authority, give the SACRE's reasons for offering advice on that matter.

Copies of the report must be made available to schools and the public by publishing it on the SACRE and/or other appropriate websites.

At the discretion of the Local Authority the SACRE may:

- monitor RE provision to inform its advice and reporting;
- monitor collective worship provision to inform its advice and reporting;
- be involved, by having input, in the Local Authority Complaints Procedure. Any complaint about SACRE as a whole, or about individual members in the capacity as SACRE members, shall be dealt with by the Chair of SACRE initially and referred to the authority where appropriate.

### 3. OFFICERS

- i) Westminster Local Authority shall appoint a suitable officer to be Clerk to the SACRE.
- ii) Westminster Local Authority shall appoint officers to attend SACRE meetings to provide professional advice and support and to ensure there is effective communication between the SACRE and the Local Authority.

### 4. MEMBERSHIP

In accordance with the provisions of the Education Act 1996 (Section 390(4)):

- i) the SACRE is to comprise four Groups representing respectively:
  - (a) such Christian denominations and other religions or beliefs and denominations of such religions or beliefs as, in the opinion of the Local Authority, will appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions or beliefs in the area;
  - (b) the Church of England;
  - (c) Teachers nominated by Professional Associations representing as far as is practicable – Primary, Secondary and Special Schools.
  - (d) the Local Authority;
- ii) the Local Authority has to take all reasonable steps to assure itself that the persons appointed under (i) are representative of the denominations or associations in question; it must also attempt to ensure that the number of representative members appointed to any representative Group under (i)(a) to represent each denomination or religion or belief required to be represented shall, so far as consistent with the efficient discharge of the Group's functions, reflect broadly the proportionate strength of that denomination or religion or belief in the area;
- iii) Members can be re-nominated by their representative Group for a further term of four years, subject to the agreement of the Local Authority.
- iv) the Local Authority may remove a member of the SACRE if in the opinion of the Local Authority that member ceases to be representative of the denomination or association which he/she was appointed to represent;
- v) any member may resign at any time.

The composition of the Westminster SACRE is attached as an appendix.

### 5. TERM OF OFFICE OF MEMBERS

The term of office for all members shall be four years.

### 6. TERMINATION OF SACRE MEMBERSHIP BY REASON OF NON-ATTENDANCE

Where a nominated representative fails to attend three consecutive meetings of the SACRE and is not represented at any of these meetings by a named deputy, s/he shall cease to be a member of the SACRE, and the nominating body shall be invited to nominate another representative. See also 3(iii) above.

### 7. VACANCIES

The Clerk will make arrangements with the relevant Group for a vacancy to be filled as soon as possible after the vacancy arises.

### 8. DEPUTIES

- i) Each nominating body may nominate a deputy for each of its representatives to the SACRE and such deputies, subject to their endorsement in the role by the Local Authority, can attend and vote in the absence of the representative.
- ii) Only named deputies may attend or vote in place of a member.

### 9. PROCEDURE FOR ELECTING CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

- i) These officers shall be elected by the individual members of the SACRE.
- ii) The Local Authority adviser to the SACRE shall serve as the returning officer for the election.
- iii) The Chair and Vice Chair will be elected on an annual basis in the autumn term.
- iv) The Clerk shall invite nominations to each post when a vacancy occurs.
- v) Members of the SACRE may nominate themselves, or accept the nomination of others, for the position of Chair or Vice Chair, seven days in advance of the meeting.
- vi) Members nominating themselves, or being nominated, for the position of Chair or Vice Chair will submit a written statement to the Clerk, of no more than 250 words, outlining why they consider the person is/they are suitable for the position of Chair or Vice Chair (as appropriate).
- vii) All members of the SACRE shall be informed in writing of the nominations ahead of the SACRE meeting at which the election is to be held and receive the written statements in advance of the meeting.
- viii) Nominated members are entitled to vote and can remain in the room during the election process.
- ix) Members can be re-nominated for the position of Chair or Vice Chair.
- x) Members unable to attend the meeting to vote may send a representative in their place or send a postal vote to the Clerk or notify the Clerk by email of whom they wish to vote for.
- xi) Any election taking place during a meeting of the SACRE shall be decided by a secret ballot conducted by the Clerk.

The result of the election shall be ratified by the four Groups in accordance with the statutory requirement described in 10(i) below. In the event of the four Groups failing to ratify the successful candidates, the runner-up in the election shall be put to the Groups for ratification as Chair.

In the event of neither winner nor runner-up in the election being acceptable to a majority of the four Groups, the Chair shall have the casting vote.

The procedure for the election of Vice Chair shall replicate the procedure for election of Chair.

Any matter related to the election of Chair and Vice Chair not provided for in this constitution shall be decided by the returning officer.

### 10. VOTING

- i) On any question to be decided by the SACRE only the representative Groups on the SACRE shall be entitled to vote, and each Group shall have a single vote. Decisions made within each group require a majority vote. Matters to be decided by the SACRE are decided by a majority vote of the Groups that make up the SACRE subject to the single exception of a vote concerning a review of the current agreed syllabus (see 10(iii) below).

- ii) In the event of a tie, the Chair will have the casting vote.
- iii) Each representative Group has a single vote on the question of whether to require a review of the Local Authority's agreed syllabus except the Local Authority Group.

### **11. CO-OPTIONS**

The SACRE may co-opt members on the nomination of any of the Groups. Such co-opted members may participate fully in the discussions of the SACRE, at the discretion of the Chair, but may not vote. Co-opted members will serve for a term of one year. They may be re-nominated for further terms of office.

### **12. QUORUM**

A meeting of SACRE shall be deemed quorate if at least one member of each of the Groups represented is present.

### **13. FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS**

The SACRE shall normally meet at least once in every school term. The four Groups may meet separately beforehand if they wish.

### **14. NOTICE OF MEETINGS**

At least seven clear days before each meeting of the SACRE the Clerk shall send notices to every member setting out the business to be transacted. Items for the agenda may be submitted by any of the four Groups and such items should be sent to the Clerk not less than 14 days before a meeting.

### **15. MEETINGS OF THE FOUR GROUPS**

Each of the Groups of the SACRE may hold its own meetings and shall make its own arrangements to appoint a Chair and Vice Chair.

### **16. SUB-COMMITTEES**

The SACRE may constitute sub-committees to deal with particular matters as and when it sees fit. Seven clear days' notice of meetings of any such sub-committees should be given to the members thereof. Sub-committees cannot make decisions binding on the SACRE.

### **17. MINUTES**

Minutes of each meeting shall be sent by the Clerk to each member as soon as practicable after a meeting. The minutes shall be confirmed at the next meeting.

### **18. CIRCULATION OF MINUTES**

The Clerk shall publish on the SACRE website minutes of SACRE meetings and provide to any persons as may be deemed appropriate by the Clerk, or the SACRE.

### **19. AVAILABILITY OF PAPERS TO THE PUBLIC**

- i) All papers of the SACRE shall be available to the public, except in relation to any information defined as confidential in regulation 9 of the Religious Education (Meetings of Local Conferences and Councils) Regulations 1994.

- ii) All meetings of the SACRE and of any sub-committee of the SACRE, including the four Groups which constitute the SACRE, shall be open to the public, except that the public may be excluded from any meeting during an item of business whenever it is likely that, if members of the public were present, confidential information as defined in regulation 9 of the Religious Education (Meetings of Local Conferences and Councils) Regulations 1994 would be disclosed.

### **20. URGENT BUSINESS**

- i) The Chair may call an unscheduled meeting to deal with urgent business.
- ii) The Chair may put in place alternative arrangements such as virtual meetings or agreement by email.
- iii) Such instances should be avoided so far as possible but are legitimate provided all members of the SACRE, or their representative, have an opportunity to participate, the logistics provide a reasonable opportunity for consideration and the Local Authority policy on data security is not compromised.

APPENDIX

Composition of Westminster SACRE

**Group A, representing Religious Denominations other than the Church of England**

Baha'í	one member
Baptist	one member
British Humanist Association	one member
Buddhist	one member
Hindu	one member
Islamic	two members
Jewish	one member
Methodist	one member
Orthodox Churches	one member
Pentecostal	one member
Roman Catholic	one member
Sikh	one member
Society of Friends	one member
United Reformed Church	one member

*Group A has in total 15 members*

**Group B, representing the Church of England**

*Group B has in total 5 members*

**Group C, representing Teachers' Associations**

National Education Union (NEU)	one member
National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT)	one member
National Association of Headteachers (NAHT)	one member
Association of School and College Leaders (formerly Secondary Heads' Association) (ASCL)	one member
VOICE, formerly The Professional Association of Teachers	one member

*Group C has in total 5 members*

**Group D, representing Local Authority**

*Group D has in total 3 members*