

**City of Wolverhampton Council**  
**Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)**  
**Constitution**



## **1 Introduction**

1.1 Sections 11 and 12 of the 1988 Education Reform Act, amended by Sections 15 and 16 of the 1993 Education Act and then by Section 390 of the Education Act 1996 requires City of Wolverhampton Council to establish a Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (the SACRE), which is a permanent body.

1.2 The aim of SACRE is to advise the Local Authority on matters concerned with the provision of Religious Education and Collective Worship. This constitution sets out:

- the main functions of the SACRE
- membership and voting arrangements
- rules on the conduct of business and administration.

## **2 The objectives of Wolverhampton SACRE**

2.1 The core objectives of the SACRE are:

- the provision of independent consultation and detailed scrutiny on any matters within the scope of interest of SACRE
- to determine any application from Headteachers for amendment(s) to the requirement that collective worship be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character
- to publish an annual report that provides details of any matters on which the SACRE has advised.

## **3. The scope of interest of Wolverhampton SACRE, including the relationship of SACRE with the Local Authority**

3.1 SACRE will have a separate identity to and is independent from, the Local Authority.

3.2 The Local Authority will consult the SACRE on any issues within its scope of interest.

3.3 SACRE's primary function is to advise the Local Authority on matters relating to religious education and worship in Community and Voluntary schools and to provide

advice on the Religious Education provided in such schools in accordance with the Locally Agreed Syllabus.

3.4 The Local Authority may refer to the SACRE for any other matters they believe to fall within its scope.

3.5 SACRE can require that the Local Authority undertake a review of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. It is a statutory duty of the Local Authority to review the Locally Agreed Syllabus every five years.

3.6 SACRE must consider all applications made by a Headteacher of a Community school or other school that is not designated as having a religious character, requesting that the requirement for Collective Worship to be wholly or broadly of a Christian character shall not apply for some or all pupils at that school.

3.7 Thus, SACRE's scope and function in the broadest sense is to support the effective provision of Collective Worship and Religious Education in schools.

#### **4. Accountability**

4.1 The SACRE is independent from the Council. When actions or reporting is required that needs the consideration of the Council these will be formally considered by the Cabinet/Cabinet Member or Officer acting under delegated powers.

#### **5. Activities of Wolverhampton SACRE**

5.1 In the pursuit of its aims SACRE will:

- adhere to a timetable that reflects the municipal year of the Local Authority
- hold meetings (including extraordinary meetings) at times that allow for full participation by members, including
  - holding meetings at the Civic Centre and/or other easily accessible venues or online
  - timing these so that they begin after the end of the school day
  - notify SACRE members 5 working days before each regular meeting
  - meet at least 3 times per year, with one meeting taking place in each school term require at least one member from each voting group to be present to constitute a quorum in order to have a fully constituted meeting
  - seek to operate on a consensus basis. If a consensus cannot be reached, members will be required to undertake a formal vote as outlined in section 8 of this Constitution
  - review and recommend to Cabinet/the Cabinet member, any amendments to its Constitution on an annual basis
  - review and adopt the terms of reference for any sub-committees on an annual basis following a formal consultation process with the sub-committees
  - keep a written record of all SACRE meetings and meetings of its subcommittees
  - any member of the SACRE can submit items for inclusion on the agenda of a main meeting of the SACRE. Such items must be supported by a written statement/report to the Chair at least 10 working days before the meeting is due to take place

- the agenda and any reports will be circulated generally at least 5 working days before to a meeting
- create sub-committees where these are necessary
- be able to ask that the Local Authority to consider holding an extraordinary meeting of the SACRE at the written request of at least one member

## **6. Membership of Wolverhampton SACRE and Consultation**

6.1 The SACRE will be made up of members from the 4 panels below. In addition members may be required to consult with the groups they represent a SACRE may occasionally consult with schools.

### 6.2 Member panels

- PANEL A: Christian denominations and other faiths or belief systems active in Wolverhampton. T members: Baptist, Methodist, Roman Catholic, Pentecostal, United Reformed, Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Humanist. Each member is nominated by his/her parent body
- PANEL B: The Church of England – five members: nominated by the Lichfield Diocese
- PANEL C: The Teachers’ Professional Associations – five members: nominated by NASUWT, NEU, NAHT and ASCL
- PANEL D: Local Authority – up to five members: nominated by City of Wolverhampton Council

## **7. Election and nomination of members**

7.1 Nominees will be invited as observers to their first meeting of SACRE, ahead of voting.

7.2 Members of the SACRE, with the exception of co-opted members (see 7.3), will be appointed for four years.

7.3 The SACRE may co-opt additional persons. This may include teachers to ensure adequate representation of teachers who are actively engaged with religious education in schools. Any co-options will be for a period determined by the SACRE.

7.4 The Local Authority will review the membership of the SACRE annually in line with the Constitutional review.

7.5 The Local Authority may terminate the membership of any member of the SACRE by providing one month’s written notice.

7.6 Subject to condition 7.7 and 7.8 below, members of the SACRE who have served a full term are eligible for re-appointment.

7.7 A member ceases to be a member of the SACRE if they resign from the SACRE or no longer occupies the office which he or she was nominated to represent.

7.8 A member of the SACRE appointed by the Authority may be removed from membership by the Authority at any time if, in the opinion of the Authority, the person ceases to be representative of either the denomination, religious group or association which they were appointed to represent.

7.9 Subject to conditions 7.7 and 7.8 above members of the SACRE who have served a full term are eligible for re-appointment.

7.10 At the invitation of the Chair of the SACRE, Advising Officers can attend SACRE meetings. Advising Officers can provide professional expertise but they are not members of the SACRE and cannot vote.

7.11 The Director of Education and Children's Services and the Head of Educational Excellence will receive a standing invitation to attend all SACRE and sub-committee meetings but are not members of the SACRE and cannot vote. They may address the meeting if invited to do so by the Chair.

7.12 At the discretion of the Chair of the SACRE, observers can attend SACRE meetings. Observers are defined as individuals interested in the work of SACRE. At the discretion of the Chair of the SACRE observers can address the meeting. However, they are not members of the SACRE and cannot vote.

## **8. Voting**

8.1 Only the representative groups on the Council shall be entitled to vote. Each shall have a single vote.

8.2 In the event of a tied vote groups are to revisit the issue in question until a decision has been achieved.

8.3 Co-opted members do not have a vote.

## **9. Meetings of Wolverhampton SACRE**

9.1 The SACRE shall normally meet termly on three occasions per year.

9.2 Meetings of the SACRE may be convened at the request of the Chairman or any of the representative groups.

9.3 Any member of the SACRE unable to attend a meeting may appoint a named substitute to attend in their place.

9.4 If a member of SACRE fails to attend 2 consecutive meetings (without sending a substitute), their membership will be reviewed. If non attendance continues the membership may be terminated as above (7.5).

## **10. Chairing**

10.1 The Chair and Vice Chair are appointed from panels A, B,

C and D. Any appointments will be for the Municipal year or until the person appointed ceases to be a member of the SACRE, whichever is sooner.  
10.2 Continuing members of the SACRE are eligible for reappointment to the position of Chair or Vice Chair.

## **11. Codes of Practice**

11.1 Interests, whether personal or prejudicial, should be declared. If a member has a prejudicial interest they should declare that interest and withdraw from the meeting and take no part in the decision.

## **12. Servicing the Committee**

12.1 The specific responsibilities of the Chair and Members of the SACRE will be as set out in this Constitution and the Education Reform Act 1988.

12.2 The specific responsibilities of Democratic Support and Member's Services of the Council are:

- convene meetings of the SACRE
- arrange accommodation for meetings
- co-ordinate and act as secretariat to meetings
- copy, circulate and dispatch appropriate papers and
- provide appropriate guidance on the operation of local government and other relevant procedures.

12.3 The specific responsibilities of the Professional Advisors to the SACRE will be to:

- provide advice to the SACRE and any sub committee(s) on professional issues
- advise and update SACRE members on any new government guidance or policy documents.

## **13. Disputes, complaints and Freedom of Information**

13.1 The SACRE is intended to be a collaborative body and needs to ensure that no particular sector or member is unduly favoured. Problems and issues should usually be raised and resolved at the SACRE meetings. However, if parties feel that an issue has not been resolved, the following process should be followed and minutes should be taken.

Stage 1: Parties who are in dispute meet with the Chair of the SACRE and the Professional Advisor who will assist in finding or recommending a solution.

Stage 2: A special meeting of the SACRE is convened. Papers should be prepared by the parties representing different views. The Chair and the Professional Advisor also prepare a paper offering possible options for resolution. If the problem is not resolved, the dispute is referred to Stage 3.

Stage 3: If the issue is not resolved then guidance or clarification will be sought from the relevant Government Department.

13.2 Complaints from members of the public will be handled by the Council's Complaints Procedure.

13.3 Request for Information under the Freedom of Information Act will be handled in accordance with the Council's published procedures for dealing with such requests. If any member of the SACRE receiving a request under the FOIA will be required to pass that request to Legal & Democratic Services within 24 hours of receipt of that request in order that Legal & Democratic Services may deal with the request on behalf of the SACRE within the 20 working day time limit.

#### **14. Monitoring and Inspection**

14.1 The effectiveness of the SACRE will be assessed by an annual Internal Review via the SACRE Development Plan.

14.2 The SACRE will monitor and review the operation of the Constitution to ensure that the aims and the principles of the Constitution are given full effect. They may make recommendations for ways in which it can be changed.

14.3 The SACRE is authorised to make any variations to those parts of the Constitution to give effect to any changes in the law and where, in its opinion, circumstances require it.

#### **15. Dissemination of the Annual Report**

15.1 The Annual Report will be made available for public inspection. Additionally, a copy will be sent to the Department for Education, NASACRE and to other organisations and stakeholders, including all schools within the City, local teacher training institutions and others as Wolverhampton SACRE considers appropriate.