

nasacre



National Association of
Standing Advisory Councils
on Religious Education

- **supporting**
- **strengthening**
- **promoting**



ABOUT SACREs

This training presentation looks at these four questions:

- What is a SACRE?
- How is it composed?
- What is its role?
- What are the Local Authority's responsibilities?

What is a SACRE?

SACRE stands for:

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

A SACRE is part of local government.

Its main function is to advise the local authority (LA) on matters related to Religious Education and collective worship in schools.

What is a SACRE?

- In 1944, Local Education Authorities (LEAs) were empowered by law to set up a Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)
- In 1988, the law changed and LEAs had to do so
- Today every local authority must have a SACRE and it must meet sufficient times to fulfil its statutory duties
- Most SACREs meet at least three times a year

SACREs: Statutory responsibilities

A SACRE must:

- advise the local authority (LA) on matters related to agreed syllabus religious education (RE) and
- collective worship (CW) either in response to a referral from the LA or as it sees fit
- publish an Annual Report on its work and on actions taken by its representative groups
- email a copy of the Annual Report to the Secretary of State
- these are currently being nationally collated by NASACRE

SACREs: Statutory responsibilities

A SACRE **must also:**

- meet in public, unless confidential information is to be disclosed
- make minutes of its meetings available for inspection at LA offices
- consider appeals from schools wishing to modify the legal requirement for the majority of acts of collective worship to be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character; this procedure is called a 'determination' as SACRE determines whether or not to agree the appeal

SACREs: Statutory responsibilities

An effective SACRE **should:**

- monitor the provision and quality of agreed syllabus RE and of CW in order to provide targeted advice and support on teaching agreed syllabus RE
- advise the LA on the provision of training for teachers
- consider complaints about RE and CW referred to them by their LA
- consider whether changes need to be made to the agreed syllabus, in partnership with the LA
- offer advice to the LA in respect of the agreed syllabus and its implementation

SACREs: Statutory responsibilities

A SACRE may:

- require the LA to review its agreed syllabus
- decide to advise the LA on matters to do with RE and CW
- co-opt individuals who are not members of any of the groups, for example to provide educational expertise, the views of young people, or religious and non-religious views that reflect a diverse multi-cultural society

How is a SACRE composed?

Group A	Christian denominations other than the Church of England and other religions and their denominations, reflecting the principal religions of the area
Group B	The Church of England
Group C	Teacher and head teacher associations and often others representing education interests
Group D	The Local Authority

Representation on a SACRE

- All four groups must be represented on the SACRE.
- The number of members in each group will be determined by the individual SACRE's constitution.
- The composition of Group A should be broadly proportionate to the religions and denominations represented in the local area.

Decision making

After discussion many SACREs come to agreement about issues without the need for a vote except in very rare circumstances.

However when votes need to be taken:

- each of the four groups has equal voting rights: one vote per group
- decisions within a group about how that vote is to be cast do not require unanimity
- Each group has to regulate its own proceedings, including provision for resolving deadlock
- co-opted members do not have a vote

SACRE Annual Reports

- The Annual Report should include details of the SACRE's activities, including advice given to the LA and to schools and any monitoring that has been undertaken in the past year.
- The Report explains how the SACRE has fulfilled its responsibilities, evaluated its practice and used the resources at its disposal effectively.
- In the best practice, SACRE's work would be linked to a development plan.
- The Report can be used to publicise the work of SACRE with schools, governors, elected members and the general public.

The role of the SACRE

SACREs are responsible for oversight of religious education and collective worship in the majority of maintained schools.

The exceptions are:

- RE in voluntary aided schools where RE is determined by the governors and taught according to the school's trust deed
- collective worship in all schools with a religious character where worship can be reflective of that religious faith
- academies (even those which follow the LA agreed syllabus)

Schools and RE:

Type of school	Religious education is
Community and Voluntary controlled (VC) schools	taught according to the local authority's agreed syllabus and comes within SACRE's remit.
Voluntary aided (VA) schools	determined by the governors in accordance with the trust deed and reflects the religious character of the school.
Foundation schools with or without a religious character	taught according to the local authority's agreed syllabus.
Trust schools	taught according to the local authority's agreed syllabus.
Academies	Is part of the curriculum, but is taught according to the school's funding agreement.

Collective worship in schools

Type of school	Collective worship
Community	follows the 1996 Education Act and the majority is 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character'.
Voluntary controlled (VC) and Voluntary aided (VA) schools	reflects the Christian character of the school.
Foundation schools without a religious character	follows the 1996 Education Act and the majority is 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character'.
Academies	Collective worship is determined by the academy's funding agreement but must be every day for pupils not withdrawn in whole or in part by their parent.

Local Authority responsibilities

- ensure there is a SACRE
- ensure all four groups are represented on the SACRE
- establish an occasional body called an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) and appoint members to it
- ensure there is an Agreed Syllabus, reviewed every five years
- ensure funds and support are in place to enable SACRE to fulfil its duties
- take note of and respond to advice from the SACRE

Local Authority responsibilities

Appointing members

It is the LA's responsibility to appoint members of the SACRE and the ASC.

The LA should:

- seek nominations from the organisations to be represented
- ensure those appointed are representative of the religion, denomination or sponsoring group in question

It is good practice for the SACRE to review its constitution periodically to ensure membership is appropriately representative and to advise the LA of any necessary amendments.

In summary

SACREs:

- are statutory bodies which all local authorities have to have and support
- are representative of the local community
- are responsible for RE and CW in most schools
- are instrumental in ensuring quality experiences for all pupils in RE and CW
- have to report annually
- have the potential to contribute to social harmony and cohesion