

CAMBRIDGESHIRE STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION & AGREED SYLLABUS CONFERENCE CONSTITUTION

Definitions

Act	Education Act 1996
Agreed Syllabus	The agreed syllabus for RE adopted by the Local Authority
ASC	Agreed Syllabus Conference as defined in Article 1.2
ASC Committees	means the committees required in accordance with Schedule 31 of the Act and ARTICLE 14
Clerk	The person appointed in accordance with Article 11.1
Committee A, Committee B, Committee C or Committee D	Shall mean the respective committees as described in Article 2.1
Local Authority	Cambridgeshire County Council
Local Authority Officer	The person designated by the Local Authority Officer to attend meetings
NASACRE	National Association of Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education
RE	Religious Education
Representative Members	the individuals appointed to a SACRE Committee or ASC Committee as the context requires
SACRE	the Cambridgeshire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education as defined in Article 1.1
SACRE Adviser	The person contracted by the Local Authority to provide advice to SACRE on RE teaching and related matters.
SACRE Committees	shall have the meaning given in Article 2.1

ARTICLE 1. THE CONSTITUTION

- 1.1. The Local Authority has a duty to establish a permanent body known as the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education for Cambridgeshire (“SACRE”) in accordance with the Act
- 1.2. The Local Authority has a duty to establish an occasional body known as an Agreed Syllabus Conference (“ASC”) to review an Agreed Syllabus in accordance with the Act. This constitution sets out how the SACRE and the ASC will operate, their membership and composition, the procedures both bodies will follow and their decision making structures. The constitution’s aim is to ensure that both SACRE and the ASC operate efficiently, transparently and are fully accountable to the public.

SACRE

ARTICLE 2. MEMBERSHIP & COMPOSITION OF SACRE

- 2.1. The SACRE shall consist of groups of persons appointed by the Local Authority to the following representative committees:-
- Committee 'A' :** shall comprise such Christian denominations (other than the Church of England) and other religious denominations, and worldviews as, in the opinion of the Local Authority will appropriately reflect the principal belief systems in the county of Cambridgeshire
- Committee 'B' :** the Church of England
- Committee 'C' :** such associations representing teachers as, in the opinion of the Local Authority, ought, having regard to the circumstances of the county of Cambridgeshire, to be represented
- Committee 'D' :** the Local Authority (those appointed should represent the political balance of the Local Authority).

and together the committees shall be known as “the SACRE Committees”.

- 2.2. The number of persons to be appointed by the Local Authority to each SACRE Committee (“Representative Members”) shall be:
- 2.2.1. Committee A: the number of representatives appointed to Committee A shall, so far as consistent with the efficient discharge of the Committee A's functions, broadly reflect the Faiths and worldviews in Cambridgeshire, including but not necessarily restricted to:
- Baha'i
 - Buddhism
 - Christian non-conformism
 - Christian Orthodox
 - Hinduism
 - Humanism
 - Islam
 - Judaism
 - Roman Catholicism
 - Sikhism
- 2.2.2. Committee B - Church of England:
Four (4) representatives
- 2.2.3. Committee C – Associations representing teachers:
Five (5) representatives
- 2.2.4. Committee D -The Local Authority
Four (4) representatives reflecting the political balance of elected members of the Local Authority
- 2.3. The membership of the SACRE shall be reviewed annually by the Local Authority.

- 2.4. The Representative Members to be appointed by the Local Authority to each SACRE Committee in accordance with Article 2.2 shall be nominated in accordance with Appendix A.

ARTICLE 3. TERMS OF OFFICE OF REPRESENTATIVE MEMBERS

- 3.1. A Representative Member shall hold office until he/she resigns or is removed from his/her appointment in accordance with Article 3.3. A Representative Member may resign at any time.
- 3.2. Representative Members are expected to act and behave in accordance with the principles and spirit of Part 1 of the Local Authority's Code of Conduct for elected members.
- 3.3. A Representative Member appointed by the Local Authority to a SACRE Committee may be removed from membership by the Local Authority if:
- 3.3.1. in the opinion of the Local Authority, the Representative Member ceases to be representative of the religion, denomination or associates which he/she was appointed to represent in relation to Committees A to C or ceases to be representative of the Local Authority in relation to Committee D; or
- 3.3.2. The Local Authority may remove any Representative Member or co-opted member who fails to act and behave according to the principles and spirit of Part 1 of the Local Authority's Code of Conduct for elected members. This can be found at http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/info/20087/councillors_and_meetings/313/county_councillors/4
- 3.4. Where (for any reason) there is a vacancy for a Representative Member on a SACRE Committee the Local Authority shall ensure a replacement Representative Member is appointed to the relevant Committee as soon as possible and in accordance with Articles 2.2 and 2.4.
- 3.5. When appointed Representative Members must declare any interests, whether personal or prejudicial. It is their responsibility to update the record as necessary.
- 3.6. Where a Representative Member has a prejudicial interest, that interest must be declared at the start of any meeting where a relevant matter falls to be considered by the SACRE and the Representative Member must withdraw from that meeting prior to any discussion of the relevant item on the agenda and take no part in any vote on that agenda item.
- 3.7. Representative Members or co-opted members who fail to attend three consecutive meetings of SACRE without a satisfactory explanation may be removed from a SACRE Committee by the Local Authority in consultation with SACRE.

ARTICLE 4. SACRE COMMITTEES

- 4.1. Each SACRE Committee shall ensure that:
- 4.1.1. prior to any vote being cast by the SACRE Committee on an issue to be decided by SACRE, the SACRE Committee shall appoint a Chair for that item. The Chair shall be appointed in accordance with section 6.2 of this constitution. The SACRE Committee shall then discuss that issue unless members agree to waive this on a specific occasion and;
- 4.1.2. any decisions of the SACRE Committee shall be determined by a simple majority vote in which each Representative Member of the Committee has one vote.

- 4.2. Each SACRE Committee may make provision for the appointment of substitute members provided that any such substitute members are approved by the Local Authority.

ARTICLE 5. CO-OPTED MEMBERS OF SACRE

- 5.1. Other persons may be appointed to SACRE [by the Chair in consultation with each SACRE Committee] as non-voting co-opted members for such purposes and such length of time as SACRE shall decide. Co-opted members may resign at any time or may be removed at any time by the SACRE or the Local Authority.

ARTICLE 6. CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

- 6.1. A Chair and Vice-Chair of the SACRE shall be elected annually by the Representative Members of the SACRE at the first meeting to be held after May, each Representative Member having one vote.
- 6.2. The Chair and Vice Chair will be appointed from Representative Members of the SACRE Committees. If there is more than one candidate, the Chair and Vice Chair shall be elected following a simple majority vote for each role. In the case of a tied vote, the previous Chair (or if the previous Chair is not present, the previous vice-chair) shall have a casting vote.
- 6.3. Persons continuing to be members of the SACRE are eligible for re-appointment to the position of Chair or Vice Chair.
- 6.4. In the absence of any nominations for the Chair, an executive group may be elected to lead SACRE.

ARTICLE 7. SUB-GROUPS AND WORKING PARTIES

- 7.1. SACRE may establish working parties to consider specific issues relating to RE. Such working parties shall have an advisory capacity only and shall not be authorized to make decisions on behalf of SACRE. The terms of reference for each working party shall be prepared by SACRE.
- 7.2. SACRE shall appoint a Representative Member from each SACRE Committee to a working party any may also appoint co-opted members or non-members with relevant expertise to such working parties.

ARTICLE 8. FUNCTIONS OF SACRE

- 8.1. The broad role of the SACRE is to support the effective provision of RE and collective worship in schools in Cambridgeshire and to enrich the experience of RE and collective worship for all pupils.
- 8.2. The SACRE must comply with its statutory obligations as set out in the Act and shall:
- 8.2.1. advise the Local Authority on matters connected with:
 - 8.2.1.1. RE to be given in accordance with the Agreed Syllabus; and
 - 8.2.1.2. Religious worship in community schools or in foundation schools which do not have a religious characterfollowing a referral from the Local Authority for such advice or otherwise as the SACRE sees fit;
 - 8.2.2. monitor the provision and quality of RE taught according to the Agreed Syllabus together with the overall effectiveness of the syllabus;
 - 8.2.3. provide advice and support on the effective teaching of RE, the choice of teaching materials for RE and the provision of teacher training;
 - 8.2.4. upon receipt of an application from a Headteacher of a community, foundation or controlled school, the SACRE shall determine in accordance with Section 394 of the Act

- whether the requirement for Christian collective worship should apply to that school or any class or description of pupils at that school;
- 8.2.5. review any determinations made by SACRE under section 394 of the Act on receipt of an application for such a review in accordance with section 395 of the Act.
- 8.3. Committees A, B or C may at any time require a review of any Agreed Syllabus for the time being adopted by the Local Authority. Each of the Committees concerned shall then have a single vote on the question of whether to require such a review.

ARTICLE 9. REPORTING

- 9.1. The SACRE shall publish an annual report on the work and actions taken by SACRE in the preceding year. The annual report shall:
- 9.1.1. specify any matters on which it has advised the Local Authority and shall include details of the nature of the advice given;
 - 9.1.2. Where the SACRE has offered advice to the Local Authority on a matter without the Local Authority referring that matter to the SACRE, give the SACRE's reasons for offering advice on that matter;
 - 9.1.3. provide details of any determinations made on applications under section 394 of the Act concerning collective worship or any review of such determinations under section 395 of the Act.
- 9.2. The annual report shall be made available to every school and NASACRE.
- 9.3. The annual report shall be agreed by the SACRE at a meeting held in accordance with Article 10.3,

ARTICLE 10. MEETINGS

- 10.1. The SACRE shall meet at least once per academic term and such meetings shall be open to the public unless, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, confidential information or information exempt from public disclosure would be disclosed.
- 10.2. Whether information is confidential or exempt shall be determined in accordance with Part 4 of the Local Authority's Constitution for the time being in force.
- 10.3. One of the meetings convened in accordance with this ARTICLE 10 shall be the annual general meeting at which the report prepared in accordance with ARTICLE 9 shall be approved.

Notice

- 10.4. The Clerk to SACRE shall give written notice of the time and place of any meeting to the Representative Members at least five clear days before a meeting.
- 10.5.1 The Clerk shall ensure at least ten clear days' notice of a meeting is given to the public by publishing details on its webpage:
http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/info/20076/children_and_families_practitioners_and_providers_information/279/children_and_families_working_with_partners/3

Agenda

- 10.5. The agenda for SACRE meetings, with the exception of the first meeting of a newly constituted SACRE, will be determined by the Chair and the SACRE Adviser. All members can request for an item on the agenda.
- 10.6. Matters for the agenda of any meeting shall be sent to the Clerk at least 10 days in advance of the meeting.
- 10.7. The Clerk will send the agenda, the draft minutes of the previous meeting and any associated reports to Representative Members 7 working days before the meeting.
- 10.8. The Clerk shall arrange for the agenda, the draft minutes of the previous meeting (if not already available) and any associated reports to be published on SACRE's webpage.

Quorum

- 10.9. Meetings of the SACRE shall be quorate if eight (8) or more Representative Members (or substitute members where relevant) are present including at least one (1) Representative Member from each of the four SACRE Committees. If the meeting is not quorate either business shall not be transacted or the meeting could continue but decisions would have to be ratified at the next SACRE meeting.

Voting Procedures in SACRE

- 10.10. Except as provided for in ARTICLE 6, on any issue to be decided by the SACRE, only the four SACRE Committees shall be entitled to a vote and each SACRE Committee shall have a single vote. Individual Representative Members cannot vote separately and co-opted members are not entitled to vote.
- 10.11. Issues shall be decided by a simple majority vote. Except as provided for in ARTICLE 6, in the event of a tie there shall not be a casting vote. If there is a tied vote no action shall be taken on the issue and the existing position shall continue.

Minutes

- 10.12. Following a meeting of SACRE, draft minutes will be circulated to Representative Members within four weeks of the date of the meeting.
- 10.13. The Chair will sign the minutes of the proceedings at the next suitable meeting. The Chair will move that the minutes of the previous meeting be signed as a correct record. The only part of the minutes that can be discussed is their accuracy.

Conduct at Meetings

- 10.14. When a Representative Member speaks at a meeting of the SACRE he/she must address the meeting through the Chairman/woman.
- 10.15. If a Representative Member persistently disregards the ruling of the Chairman/woman by behaving improperly or offensively or deliberately obstructs business, the Chairman/woman may move that the Representative Member be not heard further. If seconded, the motion will be voted on without discussion.
- 10.16. If the Representative Member continues to behave improperly after a motion is carried in accordance with Article 10.15, the Chairman/woman may move that either the Representative

Member leaves the meeting or that the meeting is adjourned for a specified period. If seconded, the motion will be voted on without discussion.

- 10.17. If there is a general disturbance making orderly business impossible, the Chairman/woman may adjourn the meeting for as long as he/she thinks necessary.
- 10.18. If a member of the public wishes to speak at a meeting, permission may be granted at the absolute discretion of the Chair. Speakers will usually only be permitted to speak once during any discussion and be time limited to three minutes. The Chairman/woman has discretion to determine whether and for how long the member of the public will be allowed to speak.
- 10.19. In order to assist meeting organisers, members of the public wishing to speak at a SACRE meeting are asked to make a request in writing no later than midday three working days before the meeting via a letter to Stanton House, Stanton Way, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, PE29 6XL or email to RE.SACRE@cambridgeshire.gov.uk providing the name, address and contact details of the person wishing to speak and full text of the question/comment to be asked/raised. Requests to speak received after the three working day deadline may be permitted at the discretion of the Chairman/woman.
- 10.20. If a member of the public interrupts proceedings, the Chairman/woman will warn the person concerned. If he/she continues to interrupt, the Chairman/woman will order his/her removal from the meeting room. Permission to speak may be refused in circumstances where this is not conducive to the orderly conduct of SACRE business including where it is likely, in the opinion of the Chairman/woman, that defamatory, vexatious, discriminatory or offensive language will be used. Permission to speak may also be removed/not granted if the anticipated contribution is not relevant to the agenda items of the meeting.
- 10.21. If there is a general disturbance in any part of the meeting room open to the public, the Chairman/woman may call for that part to be cleared.
- 10.22. If registered to speak, members of the public should arrive at the venue at least 15 minutes before the start of the meeting and report to the Clerk. The register of speakers will be provided to the Chairman/woman in advance of the meeting. No more than three speakers will normally be permitted per subject at a meeting subject to the discretion of the Chairman/woman. The member of the public must cease speaking when so instructed by the Chairman/woman. The Chairwoman may allow questions from SACRE attendees to the speaker for clarification only. The Chairman/woman will deal with the question or statement, or request that an appropriate member of SACRE reply orally. If this is not possible, the member of the public will be provided with a written answer using the contact details provided within ten working days.
- 10.23. If there should be a large number of requests for public speaking regarding one or more items on the agenda, the Chairman/woman may take steps to ensure that the meeting can be conducted in an appropriate fashion; for example, move the agenda item to the beginning of the meeting or limit the number of speakers. If the Chairman/woman should decide to limit the number of speakers, the CLERK will ensure that all steps are taken to inform the “unsuccessful” speakers in advance and a written reply will be sent within ten working days after the meeting.
- 10.24. For the purposes of this section, “member of the public” is defined as anyone who lives or works in Cambridgeshire or is affected by a decision made by the SACRE.

Validity of Proceedings

- 10.25. The validity of any proceedings of the SACRE or of any SACRE Committee shall not be affected by either:-
- 10.25.1. any vacancy amongst Representative Members; and/or
 - 10.25.2. any assertion that a Representative Member does not at the time represent the denomination or associations which he/she was appointed to represent

ARTICLE 11. ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

- 11.1. The Local Authority shall provide a person to act as Clerk to the SACRE.
- 11.2. The Local Authority shall provide accommodation for the meetings of the SACRE.
- 11.3. The Head of the Learning Directorate from Children, Families and Adults Service or anyone nominated by her/him shall be entitled to be present throughout the proceedings of the SACRE and shall be entitled to give advice as she/he thinks appropriate.

ARTICLE 12. DISPUTES AND COMPLAINTS

- 12.1. The SACRE is intended to be a collaborative, co-operative body and needs to ensure that no particular sector or member is unduly favoured. Problems and issues should normally be debated and resolved at the SACRE meetings. However, if parties feel that these have not been resolved, the following process should be followed to resolve disputes and minutes taken:
 - 12.1.1. Stage 1: The parties who are in dispute meet with the Chair of the SACRE and the LA Officer who will assist in finding or recommending a solution.
 - 12.1.2. Stage 2: A special meeting of the SACRE is convened, with papers prepared by the parties representing different views. The Chair and the LA Officer also prepare a paper offering possible options for resolution. If the problem is not resolved, the dispute is referred to Stage 3.
 - 12.1.3. Stage 3: If the issue is not resolved then guidance or clarification will be sought from the relevant government department.
- 12.2. Complaints from members of the public will be handled by through the Local Authority's complaints procedure.

AGREED SYLLABUS CONFERENCE

ARTICLE 13. ROLE AND DUTIES OF THE ASC

- 13.1. The Local Authority shall from time to time cause an ASC to be convened for the purpose of reconsidering any agreed syllabus for the time being adopted by the Local Authority.
- 13.2. The Local Authority must convene an ASC:
 - 13.2.1. where the SACRE Committees A, B or C have required a review of the Agreed Syllabus in accordance with section 391(3) of the Act and Article 8.3 of the SACRE Constitution; or
 - 13.2.2. at least every five years.

ARTICLE 14. MEMBERSHIP AND COMPOSITION OF ASC

- 14.1. The composition and membership of the ASC is the same as for the 'SACRE' as set out in ARTICLE 2 of the SACRE Constitution. Therefore, Article 2 of the SACRE Constitution shall apply to the ASC save for any reference to 'SACRE' shall be construed as a reference to the 'ASC'.

- 14.2. The ASC shall not appoint co-opted members to the ASC but may seek advice from external advisers who may attend any meetings of the ASC or the ASC Committees.

ARTICLE 15. TERMS OF REFERENCE OF ASC REPRESENTATIVE MEMBERS

- 15.1. The Provisions of ARTICLE 3 of the SACRE Constitution shall apply to the ASC save for any reference to the 'SACRE' shall be construed as a reference to the 'ASC'

ARTICLE 16. ASC COMMITTEES

- 16.1. The Provisions of ARTICLE 4 of the SACRE Constitution shall apply to the ASC save for any reference to the 'SACRE' shall be construed as a reference to the 'ASC'

ARTICLE 17. CHAIR

- 17.1. A Chair of the ASC shall be elected by the ASC Representative Members at the first meeting to be held, each Representative Member having one vote.
- 17.2. The Chair will be appointed from Representative Members of the ASC Committees. If there is more than one candidate, the Chair shall be elected following a simple majority vote for each role. In the case of a tied vote, the previous Chair shall have a casting vote.

ARTICLE 18. ASC SUB-COMMITTEES

- 18.1. The ASC may establish sub-committee to consider specific issues relating to the Agreed Syllabus. Such sub-committees shall have an advisory capacity only and shall not be authorised to make decisions on behalf of the ASC. The terms of reference for each sub-committee shall be prepared by the ASC.
- 18.2. Any sub-committees appoint by the ASC shall each include at least one member of each of the ASC Committees. The ASC may also appoint non-members in an advisory capacity to such sub-committees.

ARTICLE 19. FUNCTIONS OF THE ASC

- 19.1. The broad role of the ASC is to produce and recommend an Agreed Syllabus for RE which meets legal requirements and is educationally sound.
- 19.2. The ASC must comply with its statutory obligations as set out in the Act, in particular, in Schedule 31 of the Act.
- 19.3. The ASC shall consider or reconsider any Agreed Syllabus and may recommend to the Local Authority that the existing syllabus should be continued or can recommend that a new syllabus is adopted.
- 19.4. The ASC may specify what must be taught through the locally agreed syllabus and may give an indication of how much time their syllabus would require to help schools plan a teaching timetable.

ARTICLE 20. MEETINGS

- 20.1. The ASC shall meet as required and such meetings shall be open to the public unless, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, confidential information or information exempt from public disclosure would be disclosed.

- 20.2. Whether information is confidential or exempt shall be determined in accordance with Part 4 of the Local Authority's Constitution for the time being in force.
- 20.3. The Provisions of Articles 10.4, 10.5.1, 10.6 to 10.9 and 10.12 to 10.25 of the SACRE Constitution shall apply to the ASC save for any reference to the 'SACRE' shall be construed as a reference to the 'ASC'

Voting Procedures in the ASC

- 20.4. Except as provided for in ARTICLE 17, on any issue to be decided by the ASC, only the four ASC Committees shall be entitled to a vote and each ASC Committee shall have a single vote. Individual ASC Representative Members cannot vote separately.
- 20.5. Any recommendation put forward by the ASC in accordance with Article 19.3 must be unanimous for the recommendation to be adopted by the Local Authority.

ARTICLE 21. ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

- 21.1. The Provisions of ARTICLE 11 of the SACRE Constitution shall apply to the ASC save for any reference to the 'SACRE' shall be construed as a reference to the 'ASC'.

ARTICLE 22. DISPUTES AND COMPLAINTS

- 22.1. The Provisions of ARTICLE 12 of the SACRE Constitution shall apply to the ASC save for any reference to the 'SACRE' shall be construed as a reference to the 'ASC'.

ARTICLE 23. ALTERATIONS TO THE SACRE & ASC CONSTITUTION

- 23.1. Any proposal to alter the Constitution of the SACRE or the ASC shall be made at a meeting of the SACRE or the ASC (as the context requires) and shall be approved only by a unanimous vote at the meeting. The proposal will be considered for adoption by the Local Authority.

Appendix A

PRINCIPLES OF REPRESENTATION ON CAMBRIDGESHIRE SACRE OR ASC

The SACRE and ASC comprises of four groups of representative members. These are:

- Christian denominations, other religions and world views (other than the Church of England) (Committee A)
- Church of England (Committee B)
- Teacher representatives from Unions (Committee C)
- The Local Authority (Committee D)

The following principles of representation shall be applied to the following groups:

Individuals to be nominated as Representative Members for each SACRE/ASC Committee shall meet the following requirements:

Committee A - Christian denominations, other religions and world views (other than the Church of England)

This group should reflect the variety of belief systems in Cambridgeshire. Representatives should have the support of their particular community in Cambridgeshire.

The representatives should, as far as possible, be nominated by the appropriate local faith or belief group. In circumstances where this is not possible, representatives should be nominated by the appropriate national organisations, district, town or city committees, or by a senior member of a local faith community.

In some circumstances it may be appropriate to consult with more than one committee in order to receive a nomination (e.g. where there are no countywide committees)

In circumstances where faith or belief groups have countywide education committees, they should be the nominating group for SACRE/ASC members.

Committee B - Church of England

The Diocesan Boards of Education for Ely Diocese should nominate these representatives.

Committee C - Teacher Representatives

The five teaching professional associations recognised by the Local Authority should each nominate one representative.

Committee D - The Local Authority

The Local Authority should nominate its representatives using its established procedures for appointments.

Nomination Process:

The steps to be followed for nomination as a Representative Member are:

1. The individual should email or write to the Clerk, expressing their interest and outlining their reasons for wanting to join SACRE/the ASC.
2. New members are required to get two written references from a recognised organization to support their application to the Local Authority to become a member of the SACRE/ASC

3. New members must give a short presentation to SACRE/ASC about their reasons and motivation for joining SACRE/ASC. At this time they will be asked, so that it can be minuted, whether they agree and support the statutory duties of SACRE/ASC as set out in the Education Act 1996 and in the constitution.

Next Steps

- Following the presentation by a new member to SACRE/ASC as to his/her reasons for joining SACRE/ASC, SACRE/ASC will approve or refuse the application. The Clerk or the SACRE Adviser will inform the Local Authority of SACRE/ASC's decision for ratification by the Local Authority.
- Following ratification of SACRE/ASC's decision, the individual will either be appointed to the relevant SACRE/ASC Committee or be denied membership to SACRE/ASC by the Local Authority.