

# PLYMOUTH STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RE - CONSTITUTION

## TERMS OF REFERENCE:

1. To advise the authority upon such matters connected with religious education, in accordance with the local agreed syllabus and matters of collective worship. The main areas of SACRE's work in Plymouth will include:-
  - a) the monitoring and improvement of the standards, quality of teaching and provision in RE.
  - b) the partnership between the SACRE, the LA and other key stakeholders.
  - c) the effectiveness of the locally agreed syllabus
  - d) the monitoring and improvements of the provision and quality of collective worship
  - e) the contribution of SACRE to the promotion of social and racial harmony.
2. In particular the advice must cover methods of teaching, the choice of materials available and the provision of access to training for teachers.
3. In each year to publish a report as outlined in legal requirements and uploaded to the NASACRE site. And shared with Plymouth schools.
4. When appropriate to require the Authority (on a vote of three groups representing the Church of England, other denominations, and teachers' associations) to review the agreed syllabus by convening a statutory conference for this purpose.
5. In accordance with legal requirements, on receipt of an application, to make a determination about whether the requirement for mainly Christian collective worship is appropriate in that community school.
6. To receive reports on any complaints made under the Authority's complaints procedure which relate to collective worship or RE and to provide advice about such cases to the Authority and governing bodies.
7. To draw up and periodically review guidelines for the regulation of its business.

## MEMBERSHIP:

8. The Authority is responsible for constituting SACRE and for confirming the appointment of nominated members other than co-opted members. It must take reasonable steps to be assured that persons appointed are representative of the denominations or associations in question and may remove an appointed member if in the opinion of the Authority they cease to be so representative.
9. The legal requirements for a SACRE are that four groups should be appointed. In order to reflect the requirements of the agreed syllabus in Plymouth and the religions taught in Plymouth schools the membership of each group shall be as follows:

**Group A** Christian and other religions (with the exception of the Church of England)

### Christian denominations

Baptist Church	- 1
Methodist Church	- 1
Roman Catholic Church	- 1
United Reformed Church	- 1

Sub-total - 8

**Group B** The Church of England - 5

Sub-total - 5

**Group C** (teachers associations)

NAS UWT	- 1
NAHT	- 1

### Religions

Buddhist Community	- 1
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NEU	-	1	
Prospect	-	1	
NATRE	-	1	
ASCL	-	1	
VOICE	-	1	
Sub total	-	7	
<b>Group D</b>	-	6	(The Authority, in total)

10. There shall be up to 6 further places which SACRE, in partnership with the LA, may fill by co-option.
11. In making appointments the Authority will encourage the denominations and associations to nominate teachers with experience of teaching RE. The authority hopes Group C would consist of active, serving teachers who are able to consult with colleagues on issues of RE and collective worship. All members of Plymouth SACRE are encouraged to take an active interest in RE and collective worship, particularly in provision, practice and standards in Plymouth schools. SACRE members, in addition to attending SACRE meetings, are encouraged to develop their involvement in RE and collective worship through attending INSET courses and visiting schools.

#### **TERMS OF OFFICE:**

12. "On any question of formal matters to be decided by the council only the representative groups on the council shall be entitled to vote and each such group shall have a single vote. The authority group (D) may not vote on a proposal to require the Authority to review the agreed syllabus. It is actively encouraged however that Plymouth SACRE will conduct its normal business by consensus. At least one member from each group a,b,c and d should be present and decisions cannot be made unless there is at least one person present from each group to cast each group's single vote.
13. Although co-opted members do not have a vote on issues requiring formal vote (such as the revision of the Agreed Syllabus) they are encouraged to take a full and active part in SACRE meetings and express their views and preferences on SACRE matters.
14. The Authority shall ensure that all groups are represented and that all nominated places are filled. Temporary substitution is permitted, following consultation with the RE Adviser.
15. The appointment of the members of all four groups will usually be for a period of four years when the Authority may renew or discontinue an appointment.

#### **FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS:**

16. The Council shall hold a scheduled meeting at least once each term, one of which will be the annual meeting. At that meeting the annual report will be agreed (usually the summer term meeting).

#### **CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE:**

17. The Authority can alter this constitution but must consult SACRE before doing so.

# **GUIDELINES FOR SACRE PROCEDURES**

## **COMPOSITION:**

1. The composition of SACRE is for the Authority to determine, but SACRE should make recommendations in the light of experience.

## **CHAIRING OF MEETINGS:**

2. The offices of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson shall be open to any member of the representative groups and shall be appointed for a minimum of one year, and may serve a second year as Chair, subject to the approval of the meeting and the designated groups. Elections will usually take place at the Annual meeting. In the absence of the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson will take the chair and in the absence of both of these a member will be elected for one meeting. The Chairperson and Vice-chair person will be entitled to a briefing by officers prior to meetings. It is the expected practice for the role of Chairperson to be rotated around the four groups.

## **ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS:**

3. Meetings will normally be held in the Council House but meetings in faith communities will also be considered. All members may claim travelling expenses; supply cover for teachers from LA schools will be funded. In the case of a member who, without consent of SACRE, has failed to attend SACRE meetings for a continuous period of twelve months SACRE may remove a co-opted member or may recommend to the Authority the removal of a representative member.

## **VOTING:**

4. In the interests of achieving consensus SACRE should only take a vote of the four groups when it is necessary to make a formal record of a decision, or if there are opposing views.
5. In the event of a formal vote being necessary, an officer shall designate adequate spaces for each group to meet, normally in the same room and there shall be an agreed time limit for deliberation.
6. At the annual meeting each group should elect a spokesperson who should also act as Chairperson of the group. The spokesperson must allow all members of the group to express an opinion and to vote. A record of this vote shall be reported to the full meeting, but the single vote of the group must be cast in favour of the simple majority in the group. In the case of a tied vote, the whole group vote must be presented as an abstention.

## **SUB-GROUPS AND WORKING PARTIES:**

7. SACRE may appoint members to working parties which may include non-members with expertise to contribute. The terms of reference of a working party will normally involve exploratory work rather than decision making. The composition of a working party will normally include members from all groups.
8. Where a sub-group of the Council is established with a brief to take action its membership and decisions must reflect the single vote system of the four groups.
9. There shall be a permanent sub-group of the Council able to give immediate guidance to officers (especially the RE adviser) and to deal with urgent business between meetings. This sub-section shall consist of the Chairperson and the spokesperson of each of the three groups other than the one to which the chairperson belongs. Members may meet or consult informally by letter or telephone.

## **CO-OPTIONS AND OBSERVERS:**

10. Up to six co-options may usually be made but more are possible if required. Co-opted members may discuss any item including co-options but may not vote on formal matters requiring votes from each of the four groups.
11. The terms of office of a co-opted member will usually be four years.
12. This requirement is designed to give SACRE greater flexibility in balancing interests on the Council. In making co-options SACRE should have regard to representation of the areas of Plymouth, types and phases of school and of minority interests.
13. SACRE must take reasonable steps to be assured about that the co-opted member is genuinely representative. The procedure for co-options should normally include a period between meetings for enquiries to be made. An invitation to become a co-opted member and to attend a meeting may be made for the chairperson by an officer but the invitation to attend SACRE on a full basis will usually be taken by the whole meeting.
14. In addition to an administrative officer or officers appointed by the Authority there should be in attendance the RE Adviser or facilitator with teaching experience in RE.
15. It shall be open to SACRE to invite people of expertise or special interests to attend on an occasional basis.

## **AGENDA:**

16. The agenda of a meeting must give priority to items raised by the Authority. Members may, with three weeks notice, raise other matters which lie within the scope of the terms of reference. SACRE can only give advice to the Authority. It cannot take independent action.
17. The annual report will cover a school year and will be agreed at an annual meeting to be held in the Summer Term. The annual report should include:-
  - Any specific matters on which SACRE has advised the LEA
  - A broad description of the nature of that advice.

Arrangements should be made for the annual report to be distributed to Plymouth schools and other interested groups.

## **REPRESENTATION / COMMUNICATION:**

18. All SACRE members should ensure they are fully representative of their membership group and seek to consult colleagues as widely as possible on relevant issues.
19. Members of Plymouth SACRE should direct any press enquiries to the RE Adviser/facilitator and/or the Chair.
20. Communication with national organisations e.g. the DfE, STA, Ofsted and NASACRE should normally be through the Chair and RE Adviser. Such communication should make it absolutely clear whether the views being expressed are on behalf of Plymouth SACRE or purely an individual perspective.