

Camden Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) Protocol – this document should be read alongside the SACRE’s Terms of Reference

This Camden SACRE Protocol document exists as a supplement to the Camden SACRE Terms of Reference in Camden’s Constitution and the guidance and legal framework set out in the [Religious education in English schools: Non-statutory guidance 2010](#). This protocol outlines the areas of focus for Camden SACRE and expands on the expectations and responsibilities of Camden SACRE and its members.

1. Specific areas of focus for Camden SACRE

The SACRE provides an opportunity for people from the educational and religion/worldview communities to work together in an imaginative and creative way to help develop Religious Education (RE) and Collective Worship (CW) of pupils in Camden. It can provide an interfaith forum focused on the educational needs of the area. To this end SACRE will:

- Produce and publish an Agreed Syllabus for RE every five years
- Require the Local Authority (LA) to set up a Statutory Conference to review the Agreed Syllabus if, in the opinion of SACRE, this becomes necessary before the five year cycle
- Produce an annual report on the work of SACRE for the Department for Education (DfE) and the borough
- Encourage the implementation of the Agreed Syllabus and in this regard to monitor the production of teaching resources and support material
- Produce advice for schools on CW
- Review the provision for RE and CW in schools within the Borough
- Receive and decide whether Determinations for worship to be broadly or mainly Christian in character for the whole schools or groups of the school are appropriate
- Give advice on methods of teaching Agreed Syllabus RE including the choice of teaching materials
- Monitor inspection reports on RE, CW and Spiritual, Moral, Social, and Cultural development (SMSC)
- Consider complaints about the provision and delivery of RE and CW referred to it by the LA
- Sponsor or support any activity or project which it deems to be consistent with the other terms of reference mentioned in this document
- Produce a development plan to guide the work and set objectives for future development
- Represent the diverse community of Camden in its role as a broadly based community consultative organisation.
- Keep under review the effectiveness and appropriateness of the Agreed Syllabus until such time (and no later than five years after the publication of the last Agreed Syllabus) it decides to require the LA to convene an Agreed Syllabus Conference to institute a formal review
- Advise the LA on the provision and methods of teaching RE and CW, choice of teaching material and the continuing professional development (CPD) for teachers
- Advise on the effective and creative implementation of the collective worship requirements of the Education Act 1996 and consider requests by schools for determinations
- Demonstrate to OFSTED or any other Government body how SACRE supports RE and CW as well as general policies of religion and worldview inclusion

2. Bodies and organisations responsible for nomination of members

The overall purpose of this is to ensure that all key religious groups are represented on the SACRE:

- Church of England
- Diocesan Director of Education, London Diocesan
- Roman Catholic Education Service - London.
- Free Church Organisation
- Muslim, Sikh, Hindu, Buddhist and Jewish Communities plus any other which becomes known
- Humanists UK
- The local secretaries of all teachers' unions
- Head teacher representation from schools
- The local council
- The local governors' association
- Other local authority organisations which have links with religious communities in Camden. If it is difficult to gain formal nomination then the SACRE, at its discretion can appoint individuals to represent religious communities.

3. Camden SACRE meetings and agendas

- Camden SACRE meetings are held in public and members will count towards the quorum whether attending virtually or in person. The Agenda will be agreed by the SACRE and the Chair ensuring that all relevant items are being addressed throughout the year.
- Notice of meetings, minutes and agenda will be published by the LA and sent to members.
- Items on the agenda may include examination of OFSTED reports on the teaching of RE and on matters of Spiritual, Moral, Cultural and Spiritual Development that are raised in reports.
- It may also consider determinations if a local school requests that its worship provision should not be 'broadly Christian' but represent a dominant religious group within that school. In addition to the above the SACRE may set up a small subcommittee to advise the whole SACRE on matters of policy and development.

4. Further information about the Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) in Camden

An Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) is convened in order to produce an Agreed Syllabus for RE. It should take into account any guidelines provided by the DfE or any other statutory or non-statutory guidance. It is a separate legal entity from a SACRE. It contains the same four committees as a SACRE. Also it can be made up from SACRE members but need not do so. There is no provision for co-opted members. The LA can appoint the Chair of the ASC or the LA may allow the ASC to choose its own Chair. The LA's responsibility to convene an ASC implies a duty to provide funds for its work. This is laid down in 'Education Act 1996 Chapter 111 Schedule 31'.

5. Roles of SACRE members

Group A and B - Role of SACRE Members Representing Faith Communities

- Should present a positive image of the religion they represent
- Ensure that other members of their communities including parents with children at school are aware of the work and role of SACRE

- Represent any issues of concern to parents and other community members
- Create opportunities within SACRE meetings to raise awareness of issues of sensitivity in the teaching of RE to the children of their faith community
- Advise on issues relating to the teaching and content of RE supporting schools in their best endeavours to develop their teaching
- Support schools by helping to provide names of people suitable to resource teachers in the classroom or school assembly
- Form Committee A and B during an Agreed Syllabus conference

Group C - Role of SACRE Members Representing Teachers

- Ensure that the needs of the schools and teachers are considered by SACRE in their discussions
- Provide information about the context in which RE is taught
- Ensure that the associations they represent are informed about the work of SACRE
- Create opportunities for other teachers to learn about the work of SACRE and give them the opportunity to have their views expressed at SACRE meetings
- Consult other teachers on matters of particular importance to the work of SACRE
- Form Committee C during an ASC

Group D Role of SACRE Members Representing the LA

- Bring to the meeting the breadth of education issues and concerns that elected members have and place the role of RE within it
- Support RE in the various committee and structures of the LA
- Bring the voice of governors to all SACREs considerations around RE and CW
- Give political support to the teaching and resourcing of RE and CW
- Appreciate the issues raised by a multi faith, multicultural society and reflect these concerns within the LA
- Bringing the public dimension to debates about RE provision and support
- Form Committee D during and ASC

6. In addition to its duties, Camden SACRE may wish to:

- Make an annual presentation to the Assembly of the council on the work of SACRE before presentation of its annual Report to Chief Executive.
- To offer a presentation to any Youth Forum as a basis for initiating discussion on RE from the young people involved. This will provide an element of feedback which the schools wish to consider through the work of the School Improvement Service
- Disseminate an understanding of the educational role of RE and Collective Worship and to encourage the active involvement of local religious groups and organisations
- Create a summary of the annual report on the work of SACRE to be sent to schools for informing teachers and parents and to be published in the news and other appropriate organs of communication.

7. Appendices

Appendix A - The law concerning LA, SACRE, RE and CW taken from 'Religious Education in English schools: Guidance from the DfE 2010' (pages 4-7)

Appendix B - Camden SACRE Code of Conduct (page 8)

Appendix A - The Law concerning LA, SACRE, RE and CW

Taken from 'Religious Education in English schools: Guidance from the DfE 2010'

The role and responsibility of the LA

Each LA must:

- establish a permanent body called a standing advisory council on religious education (SACRE).¹ LAs must appoint representatives to each of four committees, representing respectively:
 1. Group A: Christian denominations and such other religions, worldviews and religious denominations as, in the authority's opinion, will appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in the area
 2. Group B: the Church of England
 3. Group C: teacher associations
 4. Group D: the LA
- establish an occasional body called an agreed syllabus conference (ASC) to review the agreed syllabus for RE adopted by the LA.² This may have common membership with the SACRE but is a separate entity and must therefore be separately convened
- institute a review of its locally agreed syllabus within five years of the last review, and subsequently every five years after the completion of each further review
- appoint members of the committees represented on the ASC³
- ensure that the composition of Group A on a SACRE and Committee A on an ASC is broadly representative of the proportionate strengths of the denominations and religions in the area. The statutory provisions recognise that there will be occasions when the interest of efficiency overrides the requirement for directly proportionate representation ⁴
- take all reasonable steps when appointing a person to be a member of a group on a SACRE or a committee of an ASC to represent any religion, denomination or association, to ensure the person appointed is representative of the religion, denomination or associations in question.⁵
- To ensure that people being considered for appointment to SACREs and ASCs are representative, it is normal for LAs to seek nominations from the organisations that have a right of representation on each of the groups or committees. While LAs should seek nominations separately for membership of SACREs and ASCs, as these are separate organisations with different functions, they may request that consideration be given by nominating bodies to nominating the same individuals for membership of both the SACRE and the ASC. There is nothing restricting membership of the LA group (SACRE) or committee (ASC) to elected members. LAs are free to include senior LA officers or others whom they consider can appropriately represent the authority.
- An LA should fund and support a SACRE and an ASC satisfactorily in line with the duty to constitute or convene each of these bodies and to enable them effectively to carry out their functions.

An LA may:

- decide on matters to refer to its SACRE, including in particular methods of teaching, choice of teaching material and provision of teacher training⁶
- give its SACRE a role in the local statutory complaints procedure under Section 409 of the Education Act 1996.

The role and responsibility of a SACRE

A SACRE must:

- advise the LA on RE given in accordance with the agreed syllabus, and on matters related to its functions, whether in response to a referral from the LA or as it sees fit. ⁷
- publish an annual report on its work and on actions taken by its representative groups, specifying any matters on which it has advised the LA, broadly describe the nature of that advice, and set out reasons for offering advice on matters not referred to it by the LA. ⁸
- send a copy of the report to the DfE and the National Association of SACRE (NASACRE). ⁹
- meet in public unless confidential information is to be disclosed. ¹⁰
- make minutes of its meetings available for inspection at the LA's offices (so far as the minutes relate to the parts of meetings that were open to the public). There are also provisions about public access to the agenda and reports for meetings.¹¹

A SACRE should:

- monitor the provision and quality of RE taught according to its agreed syllabus, together with the overall effectiveness of the syllabus
- provide advice and support on the effective teaching of RE in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus; provide advice to the LA and its schools on methods of teaching, the choice of teaching material and the provision of teacher training
- in partnership with its LA, consider whether any changes need to be made in the agreed syllabus or in the support offered to schools in the implementation of the agreed syllabus, to improve the quality teaching and learning of RE
- offer advice to the LA, and through the LA to schools, concerning how an existing agreed syllabus can be interpreted so as to fit in with a broad, balanced and coherent curriculum.

A SACRE may:

- require its LA to review the agreed syllabus and, if after discussion a vote is taken on this matter, the LA group on SACRE is not entitled to cast a vote.¹² A majority decision by the three other committees is sufficient
- decide to advise the LA on matters related to its functions to the LA – equally, an LA may decide to refer matters to its SACRE ¹³
- co-opt members who are not members of any of the four groups ¹⁴ – such co-opted members may provide educational expertise, young peoples' views or religious and non-religious views that reflect a diverse multi-cultural society.

However, on any question to be decided by a SACRE, its constituent groups each have a single vote but co-opted members do not have a vote.¹⁵

Decisions within a group do not require unanimity. Each group must regulate its own proceedings, including provision for resolving deadlock. Many SACREs have chosen to adopt a constitution to regulate their proceedings and ways of working.

The role and responsibility of an Agreed Syllabus Conference

Every LA is required to establish and support an occasional body called an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC).

An ASC must:

- produce and recommend to the LA an agreed syllabus for RE which is educationally sound and meets legal requirements – as indicated earlier, this process should take account of the illustrative primary programme of learning and secondary programme of study but is in no way bound by them
- with any sub-committee it may appoint,¹⁶ meet in public, subject to exceptions in relation to confidentiality¹⁷
- unanimously recommend a syllabus for adoption by the LA (each committee having a single vote) - there are provisions for the Secretary of State to become involved where an ASC is not unanimous¹⁸
- include on any sub-committee at least one member of each of its constituent committees.

An ASC may specify what must be taught through the locally agreed syllabus.

In recommending a syllabus the ASC may not specify the amount of curriculum time that must be allocated to RE by schools, but they may provide an estimate of how much time their syllabus would require, to help schools to plan their timetable.

Membership of an ASC

- An ASC is required to be made up of four committees¹⁹
- Committee A – Christian denominations and such other religions and religious denominations as, in the opinion of the LA, will appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in the area;
- Committee B - the Church of England
- Committee C - teacher associations
- Committee D - the LA.

There is no legal provision for an ASC to include co-opted members, but it can seek the advice it considers appropriate from those it considers appropriate, to inform the development of effective RE provision in its area.

The agreed syllabus

The locally agreed syllabus is a statutory syllabus of RE prepared under Schedule 31 to the Education Act 1996 and adopted by the LA under that schedule. It must be followed in maintained schools without a designated denomination.

Once adopted by the LA, the agreed syllabus sets out what pupils should be taught and can include the expected standards of pupils' performance at different stages.

Every locally agreed syllabus must reflect that the religious traditions of Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain.²⁰

The law does not define what the principal religions represented in Great Britain are. ASCs can decide which are the principal religions represented in Great Britain, other than Christianity, to be included in their agreed syllabus.

Agreed syllabuses in any community school and any foundation, voluntary-aided or voluntary-controlled school without a religious character cannot require RE to be provided by means of any catechism or formulary which is distinctive of a particular religious denomination.²¹

This prohibition does not extend to the study of catechisms and formularies.

SACRE membership

SACREs have many opportunities to engage all their members as stakeholders and ambassadors of RE. Increasingly, LAs and SACREs are adopting innovative good practice by co-opting representatives of pupils on their SACREs, or by having parallel young people's SACREs. However, on any question to be decided by a SACRE, its constituent groups each have a single vote but co-opted members do not have a vote.³⁴ Decisions within a group do not require unanimity. Each group must regulate its own proceedings, including provision for resolving deadlock. Many SACREs have chosen to adopt a constitution to regulate their proceedings and ways of working.

Footnotes references:

1 Section 390, Education Act 1996

2 Schedule 31(2), Education Act 1996

3 Schedule 31(4), Education Act 1996

4 Section 390, Schedule 31(4), Education Act 1996

5 Schedule 31(7), Education Act 1996; Section 392(2), Education Act 1996

6 Section 391(1)(a), Education Act 1996

7 Section 391(1)(a), Education Act 1996

8 Section 391(6) and (7), Education Act 1996

9 Section 391(10), Education Act 1996

10 Religious Education (Meetings of Local Conferences and Councils) Regulations 1994, SI 1994/1304

11 Religious Education (Meetings of Local Conferences and Councils) Regulations 1994, SI 1994/1304

12 Section 391(3), Education Act 1996

13 Section 391(3), Education Act 1996

14 Section 390(3), Education Act 1996

15 Section 390(7) and Section 391(4), Education Act 1996

16 Schedule 31(6), Education Act 1996

17 Regulation 3, S1 1994/1304

18 Schedule 31(10), Education Act 1996

19 Section 390(2) Education Act 1996; Schedule 31, para 4, Education Act 1996

20 Section 375, Education Act 1996

21 Para 3 of Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998

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Appendix B - Camden SACRE Code of Conduct

The central aim for SACRE is to improve the quality of provision in RE and CW for all pupils in Camden.

We aim to embody The Seven Principles of Public Life (known as the Nolan Principles)

1. Selflessness

Members should act solely in terms of the public interest.

2. Integrity

Members must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

3. Objectivity

Members must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

4. Accountability

Members are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

5. Openness

Members should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

6. Honesty

Members should be truthful.

7. Leadership

Members should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

SACRE Meetings and Membership

Camden SACRE encourages all its members to attend all SACRE meetings and take a full and active part in its work by:

- participating in and reviewing the work of SACRE for the benefit of the whole community in Camden;
- listening with respect to the views of other members and where a situation of disagreement occurs, disagree respectfully;
- express views and opinions openly, honestly and sensitively, always recognising others may have views different to one's own and be open to discuss these, and
- to be mindful that on SACRE, members are at times representing a larger group, not just their own personal view.