

**BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL**  
**STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**  
**INTERIM CONSTITUTION NOVEMBER 2015**

**1. PURPOSE**

This document explains the duties and responsibilities of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education in Birmingham.

In carrying out its functions the SACRE, shall have regard to the following legal duties pertaining to SACRE and also more widely within the school system:

1. The duties in respect of Religious Education and Worship (The Education Act 1996, Sections 375-397)
2. The duties on governing body of a maintained school to promote the well-being of pupils at the school, and in the case of a school in England, to promote community cohesion (s 38 the Education and Inspections Act 2006)
3. The Public Sector Equality Duty (s149 the Equality Act 2010)
4. The human rights implications of its work (s 6 the Human Rights Act 1998)

In addition to the duties under the legislation SACRE shall also have regard to the following statutory guidance or other non-statutory matters including policy statements from Birmingham:

- Guidance issued by the Department for Education
- The Birmingham City Council's Values and Objectives
- Guidance and best practice issued by the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (NASACRE).

## **NOLAN PRINCIPLES**

Each member of SACRE is required to uphold The Seven Principles of Public Life - Nolan Principles and Birmingham City Council's Values and Objectives (appendix 1).

## **Equality Act Obligations**

SACRE Members must have due regard to the need to:-

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimization and any other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and who do not share it
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

## **Human Rights Act Obligations**

SACRE Members must have due regard to the Human Rights Act and recognise that all people have fundamental human rights. These rights apply regardless of race, age, gender, religion, sexual orientation or other differences a person may have

### **2. The functions of SACRE**

SACRE's main functions are:

"to advise the authority upon such matters connected with Collective Worship in county schools and the Religious Education to be given in accordance with an Agreed Syllabus ". [Education Act 1996 section 391]

SACRE also shall, on application by the head teacher of any county school maintained by the authority:

"...Consider whether it is appropriate for the Collective Worship requirement to apply to that school or in any class within that school. [Education Act 1996 section 394]

### **3. Terms of Reference**

The responsibilities of SACRE are:

- To provide advice to the LA on all aspects of its provision for R.E. in its schools (this does not include Voluntary Aided Schools)

- To monitor the effectiveness and appropriateness of the LA's Agreed Syllabus for R.E, decide when it needs to be reviewed and require that the LA carries out such a review, at least every five years
- To provide advice to the LA on Collective Worship in its schools (this does not include Voluntary Aided or Voluntary Controlled Schools)
- To advise on matters relating to continuing professional development (training) for teachers in R.E. and Collective Worship
- To provide advice on methods of teaching in R.E and the choice of teaching materials for R.E
- To monitor the effectiveness of R.E. and Collective Worship in community schools
- To grant a determination where it feels this would be appropriate. This allows the school to be released from the requirement for Collective Worship to be "wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character".
- To advise the LA upon such matters connected with the religious education to be given in accordance with an agreed syllabus as the LA may refer to the SACRE or as the SACRE itself may think fit.
- To offer advice to the LA on such matters connected with collective worship in community schools and foundation schools which have not been designated as having a religious character as the LA may refer to the SACRE or as SACRE thinks fit.
- To consider applications made by head teachers of community and foundation schools which have not been designated as having a religious character for determinations to lift the requirement for collective worship to be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character for some or all of the pupils at that particular school.
- To provide the Agreed Syllabus and learning resources to Birmingham City Council (BCC) schools and to work with Academy Schools and Free Schools that might use the BCC Agreed Syllabus
- To publish an Annual Report which outlines its work, details its findings and its advice to the LA. This is made available to all schools and a copy has to be sent to the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Authority (QCDA).
- To carry out any other activities necessary to achieve the SACRE's aims and comply with the law.

- To promote effective teaching and learning in Religious Education which allows pupils to explore what religious belief *and absence of religious belief* involves, promotes enquiry, independent thinking, discussion, collaboration, creativity and reflective thinking and enables pupils to develop positive values and beliefs by which to live their lives

#### **4. Membership**

1. The number of representative members shall be determined from time to time by the LA. The individual appointments shall be made by the LA after taking all reasonable steps to assure itself that the individual is representative of the denomination, or the teacher association concerned. It is desirable that all members have an interest in education in general and in religious education in particular.
2. SACRE is to be comprised of the members of the four Representative Groups, and members co-opted to SACRE.
3. The four Representative Groups shall be:
  - A. Such Christian denominations and other religions and religious denominations as, in the opinion of the LA, will appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in the City of Birmingham. The number of representatives of each religion and religious denomination appointed shall, so far as consistent with the efficient discharge of the Council's functions, reflect broadly the proportionate strength of that denomination or religion in the area as indicated by the 2011 census data and the findings of the British Social Attitudes Survey 2009 listed in Appendix 1.
  - B. The Church of England;
  - C. Such associations representing teachers, as in the opinion of the authority, ought to be represented; and
  - D. The Authority.
4. Group A shall not include persons appointed to represent the Church of England

#### **5. Composition of Representative Groups**

1.All representatives shall be expected to report back to their nominating bodies

2.Group A - to be nominated by the bodies listed in Appendix 2

Roman Catholic	3	
United Reform Church	1	
Methodist	1	
Other Christian denominations	4	Council of Black Led Churches
		Baptist and Evangelical (2)
		Orthodox Church
Buddhist	1	
Hindu	1	
Jewish	1	
Muslim	7	
Sikh	1	
	20	

Total: 20

3.Group B – The Church of England

The Bishop to nominate six Representatives

Total: 6

4.Group C

Teacher Association representatives to reflect the representation on the LA's Employees Consultative Forum as follows;

3 representatives of the BANUT  
3 representatives of the BANASUWT  
2 representatives of the ATL  
2 representatives of the NAHT  
1 representative of the ASCL

Total: 11

5.Group D

The LA to appoint eight members, who may, but need not be, members of the City Council.

Total: 8

## **6.Co-opted Members**

1. At any stage, the SACRE may co-opt members for the remainder of the municipal year.
2. These members are not members of any of the four Groups.
3. The co-opted members shall be appointed only by those members of SACRE who have not themselves been co-opted
4. Such co-opted members may participate fully in the discussion of the SACRE but may not vote or participate in the co-option of others.

## **7.Vacancies**

- a) A member appointed to fill a vacancy shall hold office only for the unexpired term of office of the member in whose place s/he is appointed.
- b) Any vacancy occurring within three months of the expiration of the term of office of a member need not be filled.
- c) The validity of proceedings of the SACRE or of the members of the SACRE of any particular category shall not be affected:
  - I. By a vacancy in the office of any member of the Council; or
  - II. On the grounds that a member of the Council appointed to represent any denomination or associations does not at the time of the proceedings represent the denomination or associations in question.

## **8.Officer Support**

1. The Strategic Director for Children, Young People and Families (or representatives) shall be able to attend all meetings of the SACRE and to offer advice.

## **9.The Clerk**

The LA shall appoint and supervise a Clerk to:

- a. Attend the meetings of the SACRE;
- b. Take appropriate minutes and notes at the meetings;
- c. Maintain and update the records of SACRE and its meetings; and
- d. Perform any other necessary administrative duties.

## **10. Appointment of Members to SACRE**

1. The LA shall appoint the members of the SACRE after consulting with the Nominating Bodies listed in Appendix 2 as appropriate.
2. Each Nominating Body will be required to complete a nomination form and the nominee will be required to complete an application form and to submit a curriculum vitae with the application form. (Appendix 4).
- 3.The LA shall consider each nominee's application to satisfy itself that the nominee meets the requirements to be appointed to SACRE.
4. Nominating Bodies will review their representation at the beginning of each municipal year or up to every three years as they see fit.
5. An individual representative member may resign at any time by giving notice in writing to their Nominating Body and to the Secretary of SACRE.
6. An individual representative member may be removed from membership by the LA, if, in the opinion of the LA, he or she ceases to be representative of the nominating denomination or teacher association.
7. An individual representative member may be removed from membership by the LA, if, in the opinion of the LA, he or she ceases to adhere to principles and values of SACRE, or act in some way to bring SACRE into disrepute
8. Following non-attendance of a member at two consecutive meetings without apology, the SACRE will recommend to the LA that a replacement nomination be sought from the relevant Nominating Body.

## **11.Chairmanship**

1. The LA will appoint the Chair of SACRE from the membership of Group D before the first meeting of SACRE in each municipal year.
2. The LA will appoint a Vice-Chair from the membership of Group D before the first meeting of SACRE in each municipal year.

## **12.Chairs' Consultative Group**

1. The Chairs' Consultative Group will consist of the Chair and Vice-Chair of SACRE, the elected Chairs of each Representative Group and a representative of the Strategic Director of Children, Young People and Families.
2. The Chairs' Consultative Group will meet in accordance with the cycle of SACRE meetings in order to support the Chair with regard to agendas, identifying priorities and deadlines.

## **13.Sub-Committees**

1. The SACRE may establish such sub-committees as it sees fit and in doing so shall establish the Terms of Reference and membership of each Sub-Committee.
2. Any sub-committee shall normally be comprised of members of the Representative Groups and a representative of the Strategic Director for Children, Young People and Families.
3. A Sub-Committee shall report back to the SACRE with any recommendations as appropriate.

## **14.Budgetary Management**

The SACRE shall:

- a) Monitor the use of funds provided by the Council for its activities and
- b) Appoint one of its members (who shall be elected annually by the SACRE) to oversee the SACRE budget, meet with the Chair of SACRE and



Council officers at least three times a year and report to SACRE at each meeting on the use of the funds.

#### **15. SACRE Voting and other Procedures**

1. Meetings of SACRE shall be quorate when each Representative Group is represented.
2. SACRE will meet once each school term as a whole Council.
3. To facilitate discussion, SACRE meetings may divide into Representative Groups.
4. Any question to be decided by a vote shall require a majority of the votes cast. Only the Representative Groups shall be entitled to vote on any question and each such group shall have a single vote.
5. The vote on behalf of each Representative Group shall be cast by its Chair.
6. It shall be the responsibility of the LA to ensure that minutes are kept of all meetings of SACRE, its Representative Groups and sub-committees.

#### **16. Meetings of SACRE**

1. Meetings will be called by the Clerk in consultation with the Chair and the Officer serving the SACRE and will generally be open to the press or the public.
2. The SACRE must meet at least three times a year, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Chair.
3. Special meetings may be called by the Chair and the LA acting jointly.
4. Details of the business to be considered at the meeting, which will be included in the agenda, must reach the Clerk not later than ten days before the meeting.
5. The Clerk, in consultation with the Chair, shall no later than five days before the meeting;
  1. Prepare the agenda; and

2. Circulate the agenda to those Members and bodies entitled to receive a copy of the minutes.
  3. Each agenda shall, amongst other matters, include:
    - a. An invitation to the SACRE to approve the minutes of the previous meeting; and
    - b. Any applications for a determination if any have been received.
6. It is expected that all members of the SACRE will attend the meetings planned unless they are prevented from so doing due to circumstances over which they have no control.
7. Meetings of the SACRE shall be held in public except where an item of business is being considered which involves the consideration of confidential information in accordance with the Religious Education (Meetings of Local Conferences and Councils) Regulations 1994.
8. For the purpose of suppressing or preventing disorderly conduct or other misbehaviour at a meeting the SACRE may exclude any person from a meeting.
9. Public notice of the time and place of a meeting of the SACRE shall be given by posting it at the Council House of the LA at least three days before the meeting.
10. Copies of the agenda for a meeting and copies of any reports for the meeting shall be available for inspection by members of the public at the Council House of the LA at least three days before the meeting unless an item is added to the agenda to be considered as a matter of urgency or the report relates only to items during which the meeting is not likely to be open to the public.
11. After a meeting of the SACRE a copy of the agenda and any report which relates to an item during which the meeting was open to the public and a copy of so much of the minutes of the meeting as relates to any such item shall be available for inspection by members of the public at the Council House of the LA for a period of 6 years from the date of the meeting.
12. The right to inspect any document shall include the right to make copies or to take extracts except where it is considered that such copying may infringe copyright.

## **17. Representative Group Procedures**

The following procedures will be adopted for meetings of Representative Groups:

1. Each of the four SACRE Representative Groups will elect its own Chair from its members.
2. Any question which needs to be decided by a vote in a Representative Group shall require a majority of the votes cast by those present who are entitled to vote.
3. Each member of the Representative Group shall be entitled to one vote, with the exception of the Chair who will have a casting vote in the event of a tie in voting.

## **18. Validity of Proceedings**

1. The validity of the proceedings of SACRE or of any Representative Group shall not be affected:
  - a. by any vacancy in the office of any member.
  - b. on the grounds that any member of SACRE appointed to represent any denomination or association does not at the time of the proceedings represent the denomination or associations in question.
  - c. by reason of an individual not having received written notice of a meeting or a copy of the agenda.

## **19. Voting**

A proposal shall not be deemed to be carried unless it has been approved by at least three representative groups unless otherwise required by the law or guidance issued by Parliament, the Department for Education or the LA.

## **19. Annual Report**

1. SACRE will publish an annual report on its work:

- (a) specifying any matters on which it has given advice to the LA;
  - (b) broadly describing the nature of that advice;
  - (c) setting out its reasons for offering advice on any matters which were not referred to it by the LA; and
2. The SACRE will send a copy of each report prepared by them to the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency and such other interested parties as they see fit.

**20. Agreed Syllabus**

- 1. The Representative Groups of SACRE, other than Group D, may at any time require a review of any agreed syllabus for the time being adopted by the LA.
- 2. Each Representative Group shall have a single vote on the question of whether to require such a review.

**21. Availability of papers to the public**

All papers of the SACRE shall be available on the local authority's website, except in relation to any matter deemed by the SACRE to be confidential.

## Appendix 1 – 2011 Census

### Population by religion (2011)

	England & Wales		West Midlands		Birmingham	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
<b>Christian</b>	33,243,175	59.28	3,373,450	60.22	494,358	46.07
<b>Buddhist</b>	247,743	0.44	16,649	0.30	4,780	0.45
<b>Hindu</b>	816,633	1.46	72,247	1.29	22,362	2.08
<b>Jewish</b>	263,346	0.47	4,621	0.08	2,205	0.21
<b>Muslim</b>	2,706,066	4.83	376,152	6.71	234,411	21.85
<b>Sikh</b>	423,158	0.75	133,681	2.39	32,376	3.02
<b>Other religion</b>	240,530	0.43	25,654	0.46	5,646	0.53
<b>No religion</b>	14,097,229	25.14	1,230,910	21.97	206,821	19.27
<b>Religion not stated</b>	4,038,032	7.20	368,483	6.58	70,086	6.53

			Fractional	Whole numbers
<b>Christian</b>	494,358			
<i>Church of England</i>	229,318			
<i>Roman Catholic</i>	99,102	17.8%	2.85	3
<i>Presbyterian</i>	25,352	4.6%	0.73	1
<i>Methodist</i>	14,981	2.7%	0.43	1
<i>No denomination</i>	13,828	2.5%	0.40	1
<i>Others</i>	107,169	19.3%	3.08	4
<b>Buddhist</b>	4,780	0.9%	0.14	1
<b>Hindu</b>	22,362	4.0%	0.64	1
<b>Jewish</b>	2,205	0.4%	0.06	1
<b>Muslim</b>	234,411	42.1%	6.74	
	1			7
<b>Sikh</b>	32,376	5.8%	0.93	1
		100%		21

<b>Religion/Denomination</b>	<b>Percent %</b>
No religion	50.7
Church of England	19.9
Roman Catholic	8.6
Presbyterian/Church of Scotland	2.2
Methodist	1.3
Other Protestant	1.2
Christian (no denomination)	9.3
Other Christian	0.4
Muslim	2.4
Hindu	0.9
Sikh	0.8
Judaism	0.4
Other religions	0.3
Refused / NA	0.4

British Social Attitudes Survey 2009

## **Appendix 2**

### **Nominating Bodies**

Muslim Liaison Committee

Jewish Representative Council

Roman Catholic Board of Education, Archbishop of Birmingham

Council of Black Led Churches

Such other organisations as determined by the City Council as to be representative of religions or denominations to be nominated to Committee A.

## APPENDIX 3

### BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL CONSTITUTION - VALUES AND OBJECTIVES

Underpinning the Council's approach to carrying out its obligations are a number of key values and objectives:

- Maintaining the highest standards of propriety and accountability
- Being open and transparent
- Being agile and efficient in making decisions and taking actions
- Respecting the importance of the democratic mandate
- Leading to ensure a clean and safe city
- Protecting vulnerable people of all ages
- Improving health and well-being
- Helping people into work and improving education and skills
- Collaborating between service areas and other public agencies

### THE NOLAN PRINCIPLES

The Seven Principles of Public Life, known as the Nolan Principles, were defined by the Committee for Standards in Public Life. They are:

- **Selflessness** Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.
- **Integrity** Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organizations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.
- **Objectivity** In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

- **Accountability** Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.
- **Openness** Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands it.
- **Honesty** Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.
- **Leadership** Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.



## **APPENDIX FOUR**

### **DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF MEMBERSHIP OF THE STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

I \_\_\_\_\_ have been appointed to membership of the  
Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education.

I affirm my commitment to:

- the Values and, Objectives of the SACRE.
- the Seven Principles of Public Life and to the Values of the Council.
- Comply with the obligations under the Equality Act and the Human Rights Act

If a SACRE Member fails to act within the parameters of this Code of Conduct,  
the appointment of the Member concerned will be reviewed and depending  
on the nature and severity of the conduct it may be terminated.

I will adhere to the standards of conduct, behaviour and practice referred to in  
this document.

Signed.....

Print Name.....

Date.....

\*The relevant protected characteristics are age, disability, gender  
reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual  
orientation.