

About SACRE

SACRE stands for Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education.

It is the statutory duty of every Local Authority (LA) to establish a SACRE.

1. The role and function of SACRE

The SACRE has a statutory duty:

- to advise Sunderland City Council upon matters connected with religious worship in community schools and in foundation schools which do not have a religious character. Religious education in these schools is to be given in accordance with the Agreed Syllabus;
- to advise Sunderland City Council on teaching methods, choice of materials and teacher training in religious education and collective worship;
- consider applications from schools who request to be released from the requirement that collective worship is “wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character.
- to produce an annual report;
- to require Sunderland City Council to review the locally agreed syllabus for religious education at least every five years.

1. SACRE Membership

SACRE is made up of four groups of members representing:

- Christian denominations other than the Church of England, and other faith groups that appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions of the area. Currently, SACRE has representatives from the religious backgrounds of Baha’i, Buddhism, Christianity (Roman Catholic, Non-Conformist, Quaker), Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism;
- the Church of England (Christianity);
- Teachers’ Associations;
- Sunderland City Council.

In addition, members are co-opted to the group to include people with particular expertise in the areas of religious education or to represent other groups (Humanism, Paganism and Universities)

Legal Requirements for Religious Education

Religious Education must be provided for all registered pupils in maintained schools, including those in Reception classes and sixth form.

Religious Education is a component of the basic curriculum, to be taught alongside the National Curriculum in all maintained schools. In all maintained schools, other than voluntary aided schools with a religious character, it must be taught according to a locally Agreed Syllabus, (School Standards & Framework Act 1998) which is a statutory order.

The headteacher must ensure the provision of Religious Education and ensure that sufficient time and resources are given to Religious Education to meet statutory requirements. For LA maintained schools, the governing body and the LA must also exercise their functions in securing this provision.

Academies may, but are not required to, follow the locally agreed RE syllabus. Alternatively, they can devise their own syllabus, but it must be in line with the legislation that underpins the locally agreed syllabus as mentioned above. Non-faith academies must provide collective worship that is wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character. Inspectors should note any requirements of their funding agreements.

Responsibilities of Governing Bodies

Extracts from Governing Bodies Handbook:

3.1.1 Religious education

All state-funded schools must teach religious education. In maintained schools the governing body shares responsibility with the headteacher and, where relevant, the LA, for ensuring that the requirements are met¹⁶. **Religious education is also compulsory in faith and non-faith academies as set out in their funding agreements.**

3.1.2 Collective worship

Academies must provide a daily act of collective worship by virtue of their funding agreement. An academy wishing to have the broadly Christian requirement removed and replaced by collective worship of another faith should apply to the Secretary of State via the EFA.

All maintained schools must provide a daily act of broadly Christian collective worship for their pupils. In community schools and non-faith foundation schools, the headteacher is responsible for arranging this after consulting the governing body. In voluntary-aided, voluntary-controlled schools and foundation schools with a religious character, the governing body is responsible for arranging the worship after consulting the headteacher.

In some maintained schools, the family background of some or all pupils may lead the headteacher and governing body to conclude that broadly Christian collective worship is not suitable. The headteacher can apply to the local Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) to have the broadly Christian requirement removed and replaced by collective worship of another faith and should consult the governing body in doing so Non-statutory guidance on the teaching of religious education in England is available. ¹⁷ .

Locally Agreed Syllabus

The Sunderland Agreed Syllabus 2014 was launched in July 2014, and should be followed in all maintained schools. [If an academy chooses not to follow The Locally Agreed Syllabus they should have published their own.](#)