

## **Applying for a Determination to Southampton SACRE**

### **Background**

All maintained schools must provide a daily act of collective worship (CW). The act of CW must be "wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character". For some schools this may not be appropriate, for example, if their pupils are predominantly from non-Christian faiths.

A Local Authority (LA) maintained school can apply to the local Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) for an exemption from the requirement to provide CW that is "wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character".

### **This does not remove the requirement to hold a daily act of CW.**

This application will be assessed by the SACRE who will come to a "determination" on whether an exemption can be allowed. A determination lasts for up to five years. Southampton SACRE would request an update be provided annually to SACRE from the head teacher regarding any determinations that are granted.

This process does not apply to LA maintained voluntary controlled or voluntary aided schools, since the character and content of CW in these schools is determined by the governing body.

An Academy must apply for a determination from the DfE. Southampton SACRE requests that any Academy who is granted a determination informs Southampton SACRE for its records and knowledge of the local picture.

### **The Process**

Any LA school seeking to apply for a determination should complete the attached form and send it with the required accompanying documents to the email address provided, for consideration by SACRE.

Completed applications should be with the SACRE Clerk at least SIX weeks before the SACRE meeting that will consider the application.

Southampton SACRE meets at least once a term and so the determination discussion and decisions will be taken to the next available meeting. SACRE will seek to respond within 3 weeks of that meeting. The response will either be to grant or deny the application for a determination or may request further information.

Schools are strongly advised to have consulted with SACRE's professional adviser in advance of making an application.

### **The Application**

Applications for a determination can only be made by the head teacher of the school.

If a school is considering making an application the head teacher must consult the school's governing body, who in turn should seek the views of all parents. It is advised that this consultation is undertaken with the involvement of SACRE professional adviser.

There is no set period for any consultation to have taken place, but the school should provide appropriate guidance for those involved which explains what the proposed changes would mean.

It is important that enough time is given for all concerned to respond.

Head teachers, together with the governing body, should take the results of the consultation into account when deciding whether to proceed with their application.

Applications received will be assessed based on the following evidence, to include:

- An explanation of why a determination is needed
- A clear set of information about requests for withdrawal from collective worship for three consecutive academic years, including the current year.
- A breakdown (in percentages) of children from families they believe the determination will apply to from current roll
- Evidence of consultation with the governing body
- Evidence of consultation with parents of children currently attending the school
- Evidence of any indication of how many children may be withdrawn from the current pupils roll if the determination is granted, and how this differs to current requests for withdrawal

#### **How SACRE will make a decision**

Once the application and accompanying documentation has been received by the SACRE ([SACREinfo@southampton.gov.uk](mailto:SACREinfo@southampton.gov.uk)), an agreed representative group of SACRE members will hold a preliminary meeting before the next SACRE. This group will be convened as required by the professional adviser to SACRE and consist of a representative of each of SACRE group + one co-opted member + SACRE Professional Adviser(s). If there is insufficient time to convene this group before the next SACRE meeting, then a recommendation regarding the determination will be put before the following SACRE meeting as a confidential item.

If a determination is granted, any request for renewal of an existing determination must be submitted by the head teacher to SACRE for review at least 6 months prior to the lapse of the determination. This review should follow the same process as the initial application. This timescale is to safeguard, assuming all circumstances remain the same as before, there is no break in the determination. Southampton SACRE requests that each head teacher, for whose school there is determination granted, update SACRE annually as to the continuing relevance of the determination.

Notes: The current and relevant legislation and statutory powers upon which this document has been prepared are: s.394(1) Education Act 1996, s70 and Schedule 20 of School Standard and Framework Act 1998. Schools may find it helpful to refer to a document known as "Circular 1/94", pp. 20-25. Whilst being aware that some of the legislation referred to has been repealed, it gives explanation of the position pertaining in general to Collective Worship and applications for determinations: <http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/dfe/circular1-94.pdf>

