

Flintshire County Council
Standing Advisory Council for Religion, Values and Ethics

Constitution, Functions, Working Arrangements and Procedures
(adopted from the Handbook, from the Wales Association Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education)

Introduction

Why is there a Standing Advisory Council for Religion, Values, and Ethics?

The Council has a duty to constitute and apply a **Standing Advisory Council (SAC)** on Religion, Values and Ethics. From September 2026 the SAC will replace the existing **Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)**. Currently both committees co-exist with same membership.

The SAC is set up to represent a balance of all the interests of the local community. Flintshire SAC, following its predecessor SACRE, is a partnership for good religion, values and ethics,(RVE) and is made up of representatives from religious and non-religious belief communities, teachers' associations, and the local authority. It may also have co-opted members. Professional support to the SAC is provided by a specialist RVE Adviser and the Council's Chief Education Officer or their representative.

RE and collective worship are statutory requirements of education in Wales and have been since 1944. At that same time Local Education Authorities (LEAs) were empowered by law to set up a Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education, known in short as a SACRE. In 1988, when RE was confirmed as part of the basic curriculum, LEAs had a legal duty laid upon them to appoint a SACRE. The purpose of a SACRE is to advise the LEA (now local authority/LA) on matters concerned with the provision of RE and collective worship. RE is the only compulsory subject in schools which remains locally determined and must be given in accordance with an Agreed Syllabus. Moving forward, the SAC will continue to work with the LA to determine the Agreed Syllabus and support offered to schools.

With the introduction of the Curriculum for Wales, Religion, Values, and Ethics (RVE) is a statutory requirement of the Curriculum for Wales and is mandatory for all learners from ages 3 to 16. RVE forms part of the Humanities Area. This Area encompasses geography; history; religion, values, and ethics; business studies; social studies. These disciplines share many common themes, concepts, and transferable skills, whilst having their own discrete body of knowledge and skills.

RVE within the Curriculum for Wales can offer a distinctive contribution to the realisation of the four purposes for all learners. As such, this guidance supports schools and settings in developing provision for RVE that prepares learners in Wales for life and work in a fast-changing and diverse world, as responsible and informed citizens.

What is the composition of a SAC?

The structure of a SAC is defined by law (WO Circular 10/94 Para 102) and is made up of three “committees” as follows:

The numbers of members in each of the committees are set out in the SAC’s constitution. (*Membership is decided by the Authority, considering local circumstances and in collaboration with the organisations and communities represented*).

Committee A

Representatives of Christian denominations and other religions and their denominations reflecting the principle religious traditions of the area. Since 2018, on the Direction of the Welsh Government Cabinet Minister for Education, humanists can be full members of this Committee as well as other belief groups analogous* to religious beliefs.

**'To be “analogous” we consider the non-religious beliefs must in accordance with case law under the European Convention of Human Rights and the Human Rights Act 1998 attain the necessary level of cogency, seriousness, cohesion, and importance to attract protection under the Convention Rights.'*

Committee B: Representatives of teachers’ associations

Committee C: Representatives of the local authority

Each of these “committees” has equal voting rights and each “committee” has a single vote.

1.0 Constitution

1.1 Committee A membership

(a) Representing Religious Denominations and non-religious representatives upon the nomination by the following:-

- Two by the Church in Wales (St Asaph Diocese)
- Two by the Roman Catholic Church (Wrexham Diocese)

- One by the Presbyterian Church of Wales (English – Cheshire Flint & Denbigh Presbytery)
- One by the Presbyterian Church of Wales (Welsh – Cheshire Flint & Denbigh Presbytery)
- One by the Methodist Church (North Wales District)
- One by the Union of Welsh Independents (Dwyrain Dinbych A Fflint Association)
- One by the United Reformed Church (North Wales District)
- Two representative bodies of non-religious philosophical conviction.

1.2 Committee B membership

(b) Representing Teacher Associations by eight nominations by the Flintshire Headteacher Federations to represent the following phases of education: -

- **One** secondary headteacher
- **Two** primary headteachers
- **One** secondary RVE specialist
- **Two** primary classroom teachers
- **One** special school representative
- **One** college representative Deeside VI

1.3 Committee C membership

(c) Representing the Education Authority, the eight representatives of Flintshire County Council, are appointed through the Annual Meeting of the Council.

(d) Co-opted Members as follows:

- (i) Co-opted members as the SAC may decide will assist it in the performance of its functions, up to a maximum of five such members.
- (ii) Co-opted members will not have a vote
- (iii) Co-opted members will be elected annually

2. Terms of Office and Related Matters

2.1 Subject to the provisions of 2.2 and 2.3 below, all members appointed to the SAC as in 1.0 above, will hold office until 31st August in the year of the election of County Councillors, or until they resign, or until their successors are appointed, whichever is the earlier.

2.2 Any member of the SAC appointed by the LA may be removed from membership of the SAC if in the opinion of the LA he/she ceases to be representative of the religious denomination or teacher association which he/she was appointed to represent, or (as the case may be) of the LA.

- 2.3 A co-opted member of the SAC shall hold office upon such terms as may be determined by the SAC.
- 2.4 Any member may at any time resign his/her office by giving written notice to that effect to the clerk to SAC.

3.0 FUNCTIONS

3.1 The principal responsibilities and functions will be as prescribed under the provisions of the 1988 and 1993 Education Acts, and The Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 (the Act). The Act established the Curriculum for Wales in law and replaced the basic curriculum (which includes, for example, the national and local curricula set out in Part 7 of the Education Act 2002). The Act makes provision about progression and assessment in connection with the curriculum for 3 to 16 year olds.

(a) to advise the LA upon matters connected with religious worship in county schools and the teaching and learning of RVE to be given in accordance with an agreed syllabus (including methods of teaching, the choice of teaching material, and the provision of teacher training) including: the mandatory RVE provision for learners aged 3-6 in all maintained schools and non-maintained nursery settings and the provision of optional RVE for sixth formers which will come into effect in September 2027

(b) to monitor and support the effective provision of RVE in schools and consider whether any changes need to be made to an agreed syllabus or in the support offered to schools. This role includes the review of existing provision. SAC can provide advice on methods of teaching, choice of teaching materials, provision of teaching training and any other matters the LA refers to it or as the SAC sees fit.

(c) to monitor the provision of daily collective worship in schools, and to consider any action which might be taken to improve such provision. SAC can provide advice on collective worship in community schools and foundation schools which do not have a religious character

(d) to determine, on application by the Headteacher of a county school, whether the requirement of Christian collective worship under section 6 of the 1988 Act shall not be applied, in whole or in part, in that school.

Having first consulted the governing body, the headteacher can apply to SAC to have the broadly Christian requirement disapplied, that is, to be released from the requirements for acts of worship to be wholly, mainly of a broadly Christian character, if the school composition might require this.

(e) to consider such matters as may be referred to them by the LA.

(f) to require the LA to convene to a Conference under the provisions of Schedule 5 of the Education Act 1944 for the purpose of reviewing the RVE Agreed Syllabus adopted by the LA

(g) to review information on schools following inspection by the Office of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools in Wales (ESYYN)

(h) to offer advice to the LA on such matters not referred to SAC by the LA, but which are related to the SAC's functions.

(i) to publish an Annual Report on the work of SAC covering the academic year, specifying any matters on which they have advised the LA, broadly describing the nature of that advice, and setting out the reasons for offering any advice on any matters not referred to the SAC by the LA in the first place; The report to be presented to Wales Government annually by 30 December.

(j) in accordance with the provisions of the 1993 Act, a copy of the Annual Report is to be sent to WASACRE (Wales Association Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education)

4.0 WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 Appointment of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson at the first meeting the SAC shall appoint a Chairperson and a Vice-Chairperson from amongst their members.

4.2 The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson shall not be appointed from the same representative group of members.

4.3 The electing of such Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons from a rotating pattern of the three representative groups should be followed.

4.4 The provision of 4.3 above does not prevent a previous Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson from being eligible for re-election.

5.0 Officers of the Local Authority

5.1 The LA will appoint a clerk to the SAC.

5.2 The Director of Education and/or his/her representatives shall be entitled to attend all meetings of the SAC.

5.3 The Religion, Values and Ethics Education Adviser for the time being of the LA shall be the Adviser to the SAC.

6.0 Specialist Speakers

- 6.1 The SAC may, if it so wishes, arrange the attendance at a meeting of a specialist speaker who is not a member of the SAC.
- 6.2 Each or any of the representative groups may require the attendance of a specialist speaker who is not a member of the SAC, but only for the period during which any relevant matter is under consideration and provided that at notice of such requirement is given to the Clerk for inclusion in the agenda for the meeting.

7.0 Meetings

- 7.1 The SAC shall meet at least once in each school term, and at other times as may be required.
- 7.2 Each member of SAC shall be given by the Clerk, at least five working days written notice of the date, time, and place of the meeting, with the agenda and any relevant papers being despatched at least three clear working days in advance of the meeting.
- 7.3 In accordance with the statutory regulations, public notice will be given for all meetings of the SAC and Agreed Syllabus Conference, and both meetings will be open to members of the public, unless there are matters under discussion which would be more appropriately discussed in private. All relevant documents for a meeting should also be available for members of the public attending, and for public inspection at other times.

8.0 Chairing of Meetings

- 8.1 If both the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson are absent from a meeting, a person to take the Chair for the meeting shall be appointed upon the collective consent of the members present at the meeting. Should the Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson arrive during the rest of the meeting, the appointed substitute will hand over to them as soon as the item under discussion on their arrival is completed.

9.0 Quorum

- 9.1 The quorum for a meeting shall be **one-third** (rounded up to the nearest whole number) of the total membership.

10.0 Voting Procedures

- 10.1 It will be for the SAC to work based on consensus if it feels that this will facilitate effective and smooth working procedures.

10.2 However, if there is not a consensus, or whenever a representative group requests to do so, voting should in accordance with the prescribed procedure of one vote for each representative group.

10.3 In such a case, the representative group will determine how they are to cast their single vote by a majority decision of the members of that group.

10.4 Members of each of the representative groups shall regulate their own proceedings and may meet separately as a group if they so choose.

11.0 Validity of Proceedings

11.1 The validity of proceedings of the SAC or of any representative group with the SAC shall not be affected: -

(a) by any vacancy in the membership of the SAC or of a representative group.

(b) on the ground that a member of the SAC appointed to represent any denomination or association does not at the time of the proceedings represent the denomination or association in question.

11.2 The constitution is based on the most recent national guidance arising from the Wales Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (WASACRE), currently edition March 2021.

Draft May 2024