

Portsmouth SACRE:

BACKGROUND AND PROCESS FOR A SCHOOL TO GAIN A DETERMINATION^{i ii}

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) schoolⁱⁱⁱ 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" in respect of some or all of the pupils in a school. 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 five years. Schools may apply to SACRE to change or revoke a determination at any time during that five year period.

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.

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 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. SACRE meeting dates are published here xxx. SACRE will seek to respond within 3 weeks of that meeting. The response will either be to grant or deny the determination or may request further information. Schools are strongly advised to have consulted with SACRE's professional advisers 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 may wish to seek the views of parents. It is advised that this consultation is undertaken with the involvement of SACRE professional advisers. 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 current analysis of the religious diversity of the pupils at your school
- Evidence of consultation with the governing body, including a section from the governing body minutes where approval was granted
- Evidence of consultation with parents of children currently attending the school
- Information on what the school's policy on collective worship is now going to be, how it will be managed and details of the form it will take

How SACRE will make a decision

Once the application and accompanying documentation has been received by the SACRE Clerk, a small group of SACRE members will hold a preliminary meeting before the Chairman's briefing preceding the next SACRE. This group will be convened as required by the Clerk to SACRE and consist of a representative of each of SACRE group/committee + 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.

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.

ⁱ This document known as 'Circular 1/94', pp. 20-25, contains explanation of the relevant statutes pertaining for Collective Worship and applications for determinations:

<http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/dfe/circular1-94.pdf>

ⁱⁱ This process does not apply to Local Authority maintained Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled schools, see bullet point 84 of Circular 1/94:

<http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/dfe/circular1-94.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ See footnote i above