

**KENT STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS  
EDUCATION**

**SACRE**

**about your  
RE**

**A message to Head Teachers,  
Chairs of Governors  
and Subject Leaders of  
Religious Education  
in  
Academies and Free Schools**

➤ **What is Kent SACRE?**

This is a statutory body made up of representatives of four groups:

- a. Christian denominations (other than the Church of England) and other denominations and religions as in the opinion of the Local Authority reflect the principal religious traditions in Kent.
- b. The Church of England
- c. Teacher Associations having regard to local circumstances.
- d. The Local Authority

➤ **What does SACRE do?**

- requires the local authority to review its current agreed syllabus
- advises the local authority on matters connected with RE given in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus and collective worship in authority schools
- offers advice particularly on methods of teaching, the choice of resources and the provision of training for teachers
- considers any application from a school for a 'determination' to lift the requirement for the majority of acts of worship in that school to be "wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character"
- monitors quality and encourages improvement in RE and collective worship

➤ **How could Academies benefit from working with SACRE?**

- offer a structure for your RE curriculum which is consistent with that of your partner schools across the age ranges
- keep abreast of developments in RE teaching and collective worship
- ensure the needs of students, schools and teachers are considered in developing RE teaching and learning

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- **Are you responsible for the leadership of religious education in your school?**
- **How clear are you about the duty on you to provide RE for all pupils?**
- **Is the school leadership clear about its responsibility for the provision of daily acts of collective worship?**

- **Are Free Schools subject to the same requirements as Academies?**

Free Schools are Academies in law and have the same requirement to provide RE and collective worship. In this document, any reference to Academies includes Free Schools.

- **Do Academies have to provide RE?**

Yes, under the terms of their Funding Agreement with the Secretary of State, all Academies have to provide RE for all their pupils, except for those whose parents exercise the right of withdrawal. The type of RE specified in the Funding Agreement depends on whether or not the Academy has a religious designation, and for converter Academies, on whether the predecessor school was a voluntary controlled (VC), Voluntary aided (VA) or foundation school.

- **Does an Academy with a religious designation have to follow a particular RE syllabus?**

Other than for Academies where the predecessor school was a VC or foundation school, the model funding agreement specifies that an Academy with a religious designation must provide RE in accordance with the tenets of the particular faith specified in the designation. They may, in addition, provide RE that is in line with a locally agreed syllabus and teach about other faiths if they choose.

- **What type of RE will an Academy that is not designated with a religious character provide?**

The Funding Agreement for an Academy without a religious designation states that it must arrange for RE to be given to all pupils in accordance with the requirements for agreed syllabuses that are

set out in section 375(3) of the Education Act 1996 and paragraph '(5) of Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This means a syllabus that reflects that the religious traditions in Great Britain are, in the main, Christian whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain.

- **Do all Academies have to offer a daily act of collective worship?**

An Academy's Funding Agreement is drafted to mirror the requirements for acts of collective worship in maintained schools. Each pupil must take part in a daily act of collective worship unless they have been withdrawn by their parents, or if in the sixth form they have decided to withdraw themselves. This applies to Academies with and without a religious designation.

- **In an Academy without a religious designation, does the act of collective worship have to be broadly Christian in nature?**

Such an Academy must provide collective worship that is wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character. A school can reflect the religious backgrounds represented in its community, as long as the majority of provision is broadly Christian.

- **Can an Academy without a religious designation apply for exemption from providing broadly Christian collective worship?**

Yes. A maintained school can apply to the local SACRE for an exemption not to provide broadly Christian collective worship for some or all of its pupils, having considered the family background of pupils attending the school. An equivalent provision applies to Academies but the Academy Trust would apply, through the EFA, to the Secretary of State for the determination.

- **Can parents withdraw their children from religious education and collective worship?**

Yes. Parents of children in Academies have an equivalent right to parents of children in maintained schools, to withdraw their children from religious education and or collective worship.