



Hackney Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Applying for a Collective Worship determination from SACRE

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The legal basis for collective worship is the Education Reform Act 1988, amended by the Education Act 1996.¹
- 1.2 Schools must provide a daily collective act of worship for all pupils. Arrangements in community schools are the responsibility of the headteacher after consultation with the governing body.
- 1.3 Collective worship in community schools "shall be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character" unless schools have a **determination** from SACRE that this requirement is inappropriate.
- 1.4 Collective acts of worship in community schools must take place every day according to one of the following:
 - (1) Section 7 of the Education Reform Act 1988;
*i.e. broadly Christian worship*²
 - (2) a determination from SACRE that the school will follow the approach contained in this document;
i.e. the Hackney SACRE 'Determination' Approach
 - (3) a determination from SACRE that the school will follow the approach described in its application to SACRE.
i.e. an approach drawn up by the individual school
- 1.5 If a school wishes to adopt an approach which differs from that of its determination, it should apply to SACRE for a new determination.

2. The benefits of collective worship

- 2.1 The Education Reform Act 1988 requires schools to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development. This is the work of the school as a whole. However, collective worship has a key role in the pupils' spiritual development, and should also contribute to their moral, cultural and social development.
- 2.2 SACRE believes that collective worship in Hackney will contribute to cohesion, stability and development of shared values in the school if account is taken of the background of pupils in the provision of collective worship.
- 2.3 Collective worship can contribute to the knowledge, awareness and understanding of each individual pupil. It can provide a secure framework within which pupils may develop their own spiritual and moral values and commitment. It also contributes to the sense of cohesion, stability and shared values in the school as a whole

¹ The relevant sections of the 1988 and 1993 Acts are reproduced in Annexe G of DfES Circular 1/94

² See the 'Hackney SACRE Approach to Collective Worship in non-denominational schools', 2003

The Hackney SACRE 'Determination' Approach

The purpose of these recommendations is to provide an approach for schools which are applying for a determination.

3. Organisation

- 3.1 Collective worship, subject to the right of withdrawal, is intended to be appropriate for and to include all pupils attending a school.
- 3.2 The timing and organisation of daily collective worship can be flexible. It need not be held at the start of the school day. There may be a single act of worship for all pupils or separate acts for pupils in different age groups or in different school groups.
- 3.3 Collective worship on specific occasions may be centred on one particular religious tradition.
- 3.4 Schools should be sensitive to any reluctance on the part of the pupils to take an active part in worship distinctive of a religious tradition other than their own.
- 3.5 Worship may involve members of local religious communities where appropriate.
- 3.6 Collective worship should provide opportunities for times of silence when pupils may pray privately according to their own religious traditions, or when they may reflect or meditate.

4. The aims of collective worship

- 4.1 To give public expression to the values and concerns of the school community and the community it serves.
- 4.2 To celebrate the contributions of individuals or groups to the life of the school.
- 4.3 To explore common universal human experiences in their diverse forms, such as mystery, wonder, joy and suffering.
- 4.4 To provide the opportunity for pupils to worship God, to consider spiritual and moral issues and to explore their own beliefs.
- 4.5 To explore universal values, such as courage, compassion, justice and forgiveness.
- 4.6 To mark important religious festivals and traditions related to universal human experiences and values.
- 4.7 To encourage respect for others.
- 4.8 To encourage a sense of purpose and service that is greater than the individual.
- 4.9 To develop knowledge, concepts and skills which contribute to spiritual and cultural development.
- 4.10 To deepen pupils' understanding of their own community or background.
- 4.11 To enable pupils to make connections between different aspects of the curriculum and different areas of their lives.
- 4.12 To encourage respectful observation of acts of worship distinctive of faiths other than their own.

5. Capacities and skills which promote spiritual development at collective worship.

Capacities:

- 5.1 a sense of awe, wonder, mystery
- 5.2 a sense of transience and constant change
- 5.3 a sense of pattern, sequence and order
- 5.4 an awareness that there is often more to things than meets the eye – a sense of transcendence
- 5.5 a sense of uniqueness, self worth and identity
- 5.6 a sense of oneself and others as feeling, thinking persons
- 5.7 a sense of community – its demands, values, rituals, celebrations
- 5.8 an awareness of achievement, celebration and joy
- 5.9 an awareness of loss, sadness and suffering
- 5.10 an awareness that life involves choices, right and wrong, good and evil
- 5.11 a sense of inter-dependence with the natural world and with each other
- 5.12 an awareness of the nature of commitment and how this affects a person's attitude to life
- 5.13 a celebration of meaning, purpose and direction
- 5.14 a sense of enquiry, exploration and open-mindedness
- 5.15 an awareness of a concept of deity
- 5.16 a sense of reverence, devotion and adoration

Skills:

- 5.17 an ability to listen
- 5.18 an ability to be still and aware
- 5.19 an ability to reflect
- 5.20 an ability to feel sympathetically for and with others
- 5.21 an ability to think and respond with imagination
- 5.22 an ability to interpret and evaluate experience
- 5.23 an ability to cope with paradox and contradiction

6. Meeting the needs of individual parents and religious communities

- 6.1 Collective worship should show respect for the values and aspirations which all religious traditions have in common. It should support the personal spiritual development of every pupil at the school and avoid giving offence. SACRE hopes that collective worship in Hackney schools will fulfil these aims and that parents will not wish to exercise the right to withdraw their children from collective worship. Such withdrawal could harm the cohesiveness and unity which school collective worship provides. However, while headteachers may persuade parents by explaining the educational value and nature of an educational approach to collective worship, they should not put pressure on parents over this decision³.
- 6.2 Hackney schools should be prepared to provide facilities for individual religious communities to organise worship on the school site should they make a reasonable request to do so. This would be in addition to the daily act of collective worship and should not interfere with the school's curriculum. Such additional acts of worship need not be provided every day or on a regular basis.

7. Collective Worship and Religious Education

Whilst collective worship can contribute to religious education, the two should be conceived of as being separate. In considering how to exercise their responsibility for collective worship, headteachers should bear in mind this would not normally form part of the responsibilities of teachers holding curriculum responsibilities for religious education.

³ The school brochure must contain a note on the of the legal right of withdrawl from Collective Worship. It may also explain that the school hopes that the right to withdraw children will not be exercised because its approach to Collective Worship is educational and inclusive.

HOW TO APPLY FOR A DETERMINATION

A "determination" from SACRE lifts the requirement of Section 7 (1) of the Education Reform Act 1988 that collective worship should be "wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character".

Advice to Headteachers

Background

Circular 1/94 paragraphs 68-81 summarises the position on determinations. If you consider that it is inappropriate for the school to provide collective worship "wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character", you can apply to SACRE for a **determination**. "Before doing so the headteacher must consult the school's governing body who in turn may wish to seek the views of the parents" (Circular 1/94).

"In considering whether to grant a headteacher's request, the SACRE must ensure that the proposed determination is justified" (Circular 1/94 paragraph 72). Determinations must be reviewed after five years.

"It is for each SACRE to decide how applications should be made" (Circular 1/94 paragraph 74) and your application is more likely to succeed if you follow these procedures carefully.

The Education legislation requires consultation with the governing body before an application can be made.

The procedure

1. You will need to collect and present data on the **percentage** of pupils belonging to different religions. This information should have been collected on the entry of each pupil to the school.
2. Ensure that collective worship is on the **agenda** of the appropriate meeting of the governing body. Schools may wish to prepare a presentation to governors on the provision of collective worship.

Consultation with governors

3. Hackney SACRE requests that, as part of the consultation with governors, headteachers bring to the attention of the governing body
 - a) the relevant sections of **Circular 1/94** and
 - b) the Hackney SACRE paper '**Applying for a Collective Worship determination from SACRE**', noting Section 2 on the benefits of collective worship.
4. Hackney SACRE requests that governors seek the **views of the parent body** as to whether or not an application should be made⁴.
5. You should **record** the views expressed by governors, the voting outcome if a vote was taken, and the date of the meeting.

Consultation with parents

6. Your application will not succeed if you cannot demonstrate that you have consulted parents on your decision to apply for a determination. You should write to parents, informing them of your decision to apply for a 'determination', and inviting them to respond⁵. A copy of this letter must be enclosed with the application. Collective worship could additionally be discussed at the annual meeting, at some other parents' evening, or on a child's entry to the school.

⁴ see example application letter on page 9

⁵ see example letter on page 7

Making the application

If, after these consultations, you decide to make an application, then this should be done in writing using the headings set out in the Example (see page 8). The following paragraphs give advice as to the evidence that SACRE will expect under each heading.

(a) Pupils to whom the application applies

If a school is proposing to adopt *Hackney SACRE's 'Determination' Approach* then the implication is that the proposal refers to the whole school. Schools could apply for determinations for particular groups of pupils.

(b) Reasons for application

The data on religious traditions represented in the school must be included in the application, demonstrating a multi-faith pupil population. The application would normally refer to the wish to follow the *Hackney SACRE 'Determination' Approach*. If an application does not refer to the *Hackney SACRE 'Determination' Approach* then you must clearly outline the reasons for seeking a determination and state what alternative approach you will use.

(c) Proposed arrangements for collective worship

Details of the intended arrangements must be included (eg time of day, nature of groups involved).

The application should explain how all pupils at the school will take part in such acts on a daily basis.

Secondary heads should note that the relevant requirements of the Act apply to all 16 to 19 year olds.

The Headteacher must **sign** the application.

Procedures for granting or rejecting applications

1. Applications should be received by Karl D'Cruz, SACRE Adviser, School Standards & Effectiveness Unit, The Learning Trust, Hackney Technology & Learning Centre, 1 Reading Lane, London E8 1GQ, usually about four weeks before SACRE meetings. *Please do not hesitate to ask Karl D'Cruz (Telephone: 07967 124973) for advice and support if you are unsure about any aspect of the legal requirements for collective worship or while preparing your application for a determination.*
2. Initially, written applications will be scrutinised by the Chair of SACRE.
3. Headteachers will normally be notified in writing of the recommendations that the Chair will be making to the full SACRE and the date of the SACRE meeting at which the final determination will be made. SACRE meetings are held once a term.
4. Headteachers are welcome to attend, and to make representations subject to the agreement of the chair. SACRE members may wish to discuss the application and SACRE will then either accept or reject the application. The headteacher will be notified in writing, normally within one week, of the decision made by SACRE.
5. If the determination made is to accept the application, it shall take effect from the date of that SACRE meeting and shall have effect for five years. (If a school wishes to continue using the *'Determination' Approach* after this period it will need to repeat the consultation and application process.)

EXAMPLE

If a school already has statistics about pupils religious affiliation it may choose to use this letter.

To: Parents/ Guardians

School address
Tel:.....
Fax:.....

Dear Parents/ Guardians,

I am writing to inform and consult you about my proposal to make changes to collective worship in our school.

All community schools in England are legally required to provide a daily act of collective worship of a Christian character for their pupils. Schools usually provide this during assemblies. As our pupils come from a wide range of religious and non-religious backgrounds we have decided to find a way of providing collective worship which meets the needs of everyone in our school.

The governors of the school are supporting my proposal to apply for a determination so that our school can follow the Hackney SACRE (Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education) 'Determination' Approach. A copy of this document is available in the office.

This approach is educational in nature and promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils while drawing from a range of religious and non-religious traditions. For example, we may address themes such as 'community' or 'peace' which concern both religious and non-religious people. We will of course continue to mark the main religious festivals and occasions of the principal religious traditions.

I very much welcome the SACRE 'Determination' Approach as we will be able to make our collective worship relevant to everyone in our school. If you want to discuss this proposal further, please contact me within the next two weeks.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

EXAMPLE

If a school does not have statistics about pupils religious affiliation it may use this draft letter.

School address
Tel:.....
Fax:.....

To: Parents/Guardians

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP IN HACKNEY SCHOOLS

Survey of religious background of pupils: a request for your help

Community schools in England are required to provide daily collective worship. We are keen in Hackney to make sure that collective worship in schools meets the need of all pupils. To help it do this better we are conducting a survey. We would like to find out more information about the religious background of our pupils.

We hope that you will be able to help us by answering these questions:

1. Name of pupil.....
2. Class/Tutor group.....
3. Religious tradition to which your child belongs. (For example, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh. By all means add the name of a place of worship if you wish). Please write 'none' if your child does not belong to a religious tradition.

Parent/Guardian 1.....

Parent/Guardian 2.....

Information about individual pupils will not be given to anyone outside the school.

Please return this letter to your child's school within one week of receiving it.

Thank you for your help. If you would like to discuss this survey in any way please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

EXAMPLE
APPLICATION TO HACKNEY SACRE FOR CONSIDERATION
THAT SECTION 7 (1) OF THE ERA 1988 SHOULD NOT APPLY TO A SCHOOL

1) Name of School:

2) Name of Headteacher:

3) Pupils to whom application applies: This application applies to the whole school.

4) Reasons for application:

The school has 453 pupils.

The proportions of pupils from different religious traditions is as follows:

Christian	38%
Muslim	37%
Hindu	19%

There are small numbers of pupils belonging to the religious traditions:

Sikhs	(4)
Buddhists	(2)
Jains	(2)
Seventh Day Adventists	(7)

In addition, 10 pupils belong to no religious tradition.

The school would like to enable **all** children to take part in a daily act of collective worship of a type that would be acceptable to parents. Therefore, we hereby apply to SACRE for a determination to adopt the *Hackney SACRE 'Determination' Approach*. (Alternatively if applying for renewal: We have been following *Hackney SACRE's 'Determination' Approach* since we were previously granted a determination, and wish to continue to do so). Our policy on collective worship is to be based on the *Hackney SACRE 'Determination' Approach* and our programme of collective worship will reflect the "*Determination' Approach*."

5. Details of consultation with governors:

The application was discussed at the Governors' meeting on _____ and the governors unanimously supported my proposal to adopt *Hackney SACRE's 'Determination' Approach*.

6. Details of consultation with parents:

A letter was sent to parents/guardians (copy enclosed) informing them of my decision to apply for a determination based on the *Hackney SACRE 'Determination' Approach* inviting them to respond if they objected. No parents objected to this application. In addition, widespread and informal discussions have taken place. This involved groups of parents who meet in the school (eg representatives of the PTA; a group of Muslim parents; community classes; neighbourhood English classes; parent governors) and many conversations with individual parents.

Some applications to withdraw their children from assemblies are received each year. Two applications to withdraw were recently received, but when the *Hackney SACRE 'Determination' Approach* was discussed with them, the parents were satisfied.

7. Proposed arrangements for collective worship:

We will reflect the *Hackney SACRE 'Determination' Approach* within our existing pattern of assemblies:

- i) on two days of the week collective worship will form part of the assembly. The lower and upper school meet separately on each of these days.
- ii) on one day of the week collective worship will form part of the whole school assembly.
- iii) on the fourth and fifth days collective worship will take place in individual classrooms at various points in the day.

8. Signature of headteacher:

Date: