

DERBY CITY COUNCIL STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP IN MAINTAINED SCHOOLS – APPLYING FOR A DETERMINATION OR REVIEW OF A DETERMINATION

NOTES FOR GUIDANCE

Section 70 and Schedule 20 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 require that, subject to the right of parental withdrawal, “each pupil in attendance at a community, foundation or voluntary school shall on each school day take part in an act of collective worship. ” The arrangements may provide for a single act of worship for all pupils or for separate acts of worship for pupils in different age groups or in different school groups. “School group” is defined as “any group in which pupils are taught or take part in other school activities. ” DfE guidance (Circular 1/94 paragraph 55) says that this does not mean a group reflecting particular religious beliefs. A school which wishes to divide its pupils on religious grounds for acts of collective worship must apply, under section 394 of the Education Act 1996, for a “determination” from the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) for its area.

Unless a school applies for a determination, daily collective worship must be “wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character” (paragraph 3 (2) Schedule 20 School Standards and Framework Act 1998). For these purposes, collective worship is of a broadly Christian character if “it reflects the broad traditions of Christian belief without being distinctive of any particular Christian denomination. ” Not every act of collective worship need comply with this, provided that, taking any school term as a whole, most such acts that take place in the school do comply.

Head teachers and Governors should be aware that considerable flexibility is already allowed. For example, it could mean that 51% of the acts of worship in a term must be “of a broadly Christian character.” The school has complete flexibility over the content of the other acts of worship. Furthermore, an act of worship might qualify as “of a broadly Christian character” if it contained Christian material reinforced by material from another faith.

Paragraphs 3 (5) and (6) of Schedule 20 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 also state that

- the extent to which (if at all) any acts of collective worship which do not comply with the requirement to be of a broadly Christian character take place in the school
- the extent to which any act of collective worship which does comply reflects the broad traditions of Christian belief, and
- the ways in which those traditions are reflected in any such act of collective worship

shall be such as may be appropriate having regard to any relevant considerations relating to pupils.

The relevant considerations are:

- any circumstances relating to the family backgrounds of the pupils which are relevant.
- their ages and aptitudes.

For the purposes of these requirements, acts of collective worship include acts which take place otherwise than on the school premises. Governors can make arrangements for acts of collective worship to take place elsewhere, if they are of the opinion that this is desirable, on a special occasion. They must consult with the Head teacher first. However, this only applies to special occasions, and the normal rule is that the required collective worship should take place on the school premises.

If, in spite of the flexibility already enshrined in the legislation, the intake of the school is such that worship “wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character” is inappropriate for the school as a whole or a substantial number of its pupils, the school should consider applying to its local SACRE for a determination which waives the requirement for worship to be of a Christian character either.

- ***for the whole school or***
- ***for a particular class or description of pupils within the school.***

In applying for or renewing a determination, SACRE needs information under three main headings.

1. Why is a determination (or the continuation of a determination) being sought?

The reasons given here should include information as to the religious allegiances of the pupils, and statistics where possible. There should also be information about the number of parents who withdraw their children from collective worship and (if known) on what grounds. However, parents are not required to give any grounds for the withdrawal of their children and cannot be pressed on this point. The aim must always be to make collective worship as inclusive as possible.

2. Does the decision to apply for a determination have wide-spread support among parents, pupils, Governors and staff?

Evidence should be given here of consultation procedures adopted. Please note that Sections 394 and 395 of the Education Act 1996 place an obligation on Head teachers to consult the Governing Body before making an application or any representations to SACRE as to a determination under review. On being consulted, the Governing Body may, if they think fit, consult all parents of pupils at the school.

3. How will decisions be made and recorded, on the balance of material used from different faith traditions within collective worship, and what practical arrangements will be made for the conduct of collective worship?

This should include details of the individual(s) or group responsible for the planning and conduct of collective worship, evidence of continuing professional development opportunities offered to those responsible for leading collective worship, and guidelines offered to visitors. In the case of an application to renew a determination, it should include an evaluation of how existing practice has worked, or, in some respects, failed to work.

PROCEDURE

The application form should be completed according to the guidelines given above. Before submitting the form, Head teachers are welcome to seek advice from:

Graham Falgate, Inclusion Manager, Learning and Inclusion Department, Children and Young People Directorate. Telephone 01332 256327 or at email graham.falgate@derby.gov.uk

If further information or clarification is needed, the Head teacher may be asked to attend the meeting of SACRE when the determination is to be considered.

The application will be considered by the next meeting of the SACRE, and written notification of the decision will be given to the Head teacher, specifying the effective date for the purposes of review.

A determination can be reviewed by SACRE at any time on an application made by the head teacher, and must, in any event, be reviewed no later than five years after the date on which it took effect.

Where applications are being made in respect of more than one group of pupils at the school, it is necessary to complete a separate application form for each group for whom a determination is sought.

Further guidance can be found in paragraphs 68 to 81 of Department of Education Circular 1/94.

**DERBY CITY COUNCIL
STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)**

**APPLICATION FOR DETERMINATION (SECTION 394,
EDUCATION ACT 1996)**

This is a first application for exemption from broadly Christian collective worship.

This is an application for a review of an existing determination. (Please give date of determination)

This application relates to the whole school.

This application relates to the following group of pupils *(please give details)*

1. Why is a determination (or the continuation of a determination) being sought?

2. Does the decision to apply for a determination have widespread support among parents, pupils, Governors and staff?
3. How will the decisions be made and recorded, on the balance of material used from different faith traditions, within collective worship, and what practical arrangements will be made for the conduct of collective worship?

Signed

Head teacher

Signed

Chair of Governors

Date

Date on which Governing Body was consulted
Please return the completed form to:

Steven Mason, Constitutional
Services Officer, Resources
Directorate, Derby City Council,
5th Floor, Saxon House,
Heritage Gate, Derby, DE1 1AN