

## Constitution of Neath Port Talbot Standing Advisory Council (SAC) for Religion, Values and Ethics

There shall be constituted by Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council a Standing Advisory Council (SAC) for Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE) (the Council) for its local area.

The function of the Council is to advise Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council (the Local Education Authority (LEA/LA)) on such matters connected with the provision of teaching and learning, under the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 and Education Act 1996, either in respect of the mandatory elements of RVE, or the post-compulsory education in maintained schools of optional RVE which includes:

- methods of teaching
- the choice of teaching materials
- the provision of teacher training.

In addition, the Council may advise on any other matter the LEA may refer to the Council or as the Council may see fit within the scope of its RVE functions and pursuant to its Terms of Reference below.

The LEA must provide local arrangements for dealing with complaints regarding the provision of RVE. The Council will therefore consider complaints, on the request of the LEA, about the provision of or lack of provision of RVE. The arrangement will give parents and others the opportunity to ensure the proper provision of RVE across all schools in Neath Port Talbot (NPT).

### **Terms of Reference:**

1. To advise the LEA upon matters connected with collective worship in community schools, and county schools.
2. To advise the LEA upon matters connected with the provision of teaching and learning, under the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021, either in respect of the mandatory element of Religion, Values and Ethics (within the meaning of the Act), or under section 60 of that Act (post-compulsory education in maintained schools: Religion, Values and Ethics) as the authority may refer to SAC or as SAC may see fit.
3. To provide particular advice in respect of the above matters around methods of teaching, the choice of materials and the provision of training for teachers (section 391(2), Education Act 1996).
4. To carry out, in accordance with section 391(1A) (b) of the Education Act 1996, the functions conferred on SAC by section 394 of the same Act (determination of cases in which requirement for Christian Collective worship is not to apply).
5. Where the representative groups so demand (other than the group consisting of persons appointed to represent the local authority), to require the local authority, in accordance with section 391(3) of the Education Act 1996, to review and establish

the RVE agreed syllabus via an agreed syllabus conference in accordance with paragraph 3 of Schedule 31 to the same Act. In accordance with Welsh Government guidance, SAC should request a review of the RVE agreed syllabus at least once every 5 years.

6. To publish in each year a report as to the exercise of its functions and any action taken by its representative groups in terms of requesting a review of the RVE agreed syllabus during the last preceding year (section 391(6)-(7), Education Act 1996). A copy of that report must be sent to the Department for Education and Skills, Welsh Government.
7. At the request of the LEA, participate in the LEA's statutory complaints procedures in those instances where the complaints relate to RVE.
8. To handle legacy advisory functions formerly the responsibility of the Neath Port Talbot Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education ("SACRE"), relating to the RE syllabus for those school years in which the RVE agreed syllabus has not yet been implemented.

#### **Composition and Membership:**

9. The Council shall comprise persons appointed by the LEA to represent the following 3 groups respectively:
  - a. Such Christian denominations, and other religions and denominations of such religious and non-religious philosophical convictions as, in the opinion of the LEA, will appropriately reflect the principal religious and non-religious traditions in the area.
  - b. Such associations representing teachers as, in the opinion of the LEA, ought to be represented having regard to the circumstances of the area.
  - c. The LEA.
10. The Council may also include co-opted members, that is, persons co-opted as members of the Council by members of the Council who have not themselves been so co-opted.
11. The Council has agreed the following membership:
  - a. **Representatives from religious denominations and non-religious philosophical convictions.** This should not exceed two members from each group.

To optimise the efficiency of the Council, membership is sought from a wide range of religious traditions and non-religious philosophical convictions, which could include but is **not restricted** to:

    - i. The Church in Wales
    - ii. The Roman Catholic Church
    - iii. Free Churches
    - iv. Bah'ai
    - v. Buddhism
    - vi. Hinduism
    - vii. Islam

- viii. Judaism
- ix. Sikhism
- x. Humanism
- xi. Atheism

- b. **Teacher representatives.** This should not exceed two members from each group.

The relevant statutory provision gives discretion to the authority to determine which associations are to represent teachers and will therefore include.

Places from a range of teacher associations could include but is **not restricted** to members of:

- i. UCAC
- ii. NEU
- iii. NASUWT
- iv. NAHT
- v. ASCL
- vi. Chair of LLAN

- c. **The Local Authority**

A total of 6 members representing the local authority, and also the:

- i. Director of Education
- ii. RVE Support Officer
- iii. Clerk to the Council (the SAC Admin and Org Officer)

**12. Co-opted members (with no voting rights)**

Individuals who have an interest in RVE and collective worship and can assist the Council in its functions. Council members will vote as to whether accept the individuals' request to become a Co-opted member.

13. Membership of the Council is subject to the condition that the LEA has taken all reasonable steps to assure itself that the persons appointed are representative, as the case may be, of the denominations or associations in question. The LEA on the advice of the RVE Support Officer will have the final decision as to membership of the Council.
14. Members representing associations of teachers must include teachers or teachers in charge of RVE.
15. Individuals may be removed from the Council if they cease to be representative of the denomination, association or of the Authority they were appointed to represent.
16. Any member of the Council may at any time resign his or her office.
17. Members of the Council will remain on the Council until they are no longer representatives of their organisations on the Council or in the event of failure to attend three consecutive meetings. An individual's membership of the Council will be reviewed by the LA every three years or in the event of the LA determining that a

Member has breached the Code of Conduct (and the LA's decision regarding membership of the Council shall be final).

18. The RVE Support Officer will be able to claim travelling expenses when completing work for the Council, this can include traveling for WASACRE and NAPfRVE meeting as well as delivering training to community schools and county schools.
19. Teacher members of the Council will be entitled to claim teaching cover costs for attending meetings or representing the council at WASACRE meetings.
20. Members shall adhere to the Member's Code of Conduct (found at Annex A) (for the avoidance of doubt, Members who are elected members of the LA shall continue to comply with their LA Code of Conduct).

### **Procedures:**

21. The Council shall meet not less than once in each academic term. Meetings will be called by the RVE Support Officer and the Chairperson of the Council. The schedule of meetings will be set in the first meeting of the academic year or in a year when there is an ordinary election of the LA councillors, the first meeting held after the election (the Annual General Meeting). Public notice of the time and date of meetings shall be given not less than two weeks prior to the date of the meeting. The minutes of the previous meeting, agenda and papers will be distributed electronically prior to the meetings.
22. Meetings and meeting papers are open to members of the public unless confidential or other sensitive information is to be disclosed.
23. The Council shall annually elect from its membership a chairperson and vice chairperson at the Annual General Meeting. The chairperson and vice chairperson in any one year shall not be drawn from the same representative group. An outgoing chairperson may be re-appointed.
24. On any matter to be decided by the Council only the representative groups on the Council shall be entitled to vote, and each member group will have a single vote. Prior to any voting procedures each member group will be permitted time to discuss and decide their agreed decision on the matter under consideration. Matters to be decided by the Council will be determined by a unanimous vote.
25. Co-opted members are not entitled to vote.
26. The agenda for each meeting shall be determined by the chairperson and vice chairperson in consultation with the Clerk to the Council, Director of Education Representative and the RVE Support Officer. Any voting member of the Council shall be entitled to propose items for an agenda. Proposed agenda items shall be shared with the Clerk to Council not less than 7 working days prior to the meeting.
27. In the case of any member not being able to attend a Council meeting, a substitute may be nominated by the body which that person represents, provided that the substitute meets the eligibility criteria and the Education Directorate of the LEA and the Clerk to the Council is notified not less than 7 working days in advance of the meeting.
28. A meeting of the Council will be deemed to be quorate if at least one member of each of the three representative groups is present.

29. The validity of proceedings of the Council shall not be affected by a vacancy in the office of any member of the Council or on the ground that a member of the Council appointed to represent any religion, denomination, philosophical conviction or associated does not at the time of the proceedings represent the religion, denomination, philosophical conviction or associations in question.
30. The representative groups on the Council, other than that representing the Local Authority, may call at any time, for a review of the agreed syllabus current in the Authority. At such time, an Agreed Syllabus Conference shall be constituted and convened.
31. The Council shall consider its annual report at the first meeting to be held in each academic year. Upon the Council's ratification of the report, it shall proceed to publication.
32. The Clerk to the Council shall arrange for copies of the annual report to be sent to all community schools and county schools within the Authority, to WASACRE, to Welsh Government, the National Library and to such other individuals and institutions as the LEA sees fit.
33. The Council is a member of WASACRE (the Welsh Association of SACREs). It shall nominate up to four members, including the RVE Support Officer, to represent the Council at WASACRE meetings.
34. The RVE Support Officer is also a member of NAPfRVE (National advisor panel for RVE) and is expected to attend these meetings.
35. The Council shall review this constitution on a four yearly basis. The review will be undertaken in partnership with the LA's Legal Services and the three member groups of the Council. All changes will need to be agreed to by the three member groups of the Council.
36. Complaints regarding the Council or its Members will be handled in accordance with the LA's complaints policy and procedures.

## **Annex A**

### **Members Code of Conduct**

Members must:

- Regularly attend the meetings of the Council and take part in the deliberations and work of the Council.
- Where attendance is difficult, endeavour to ensure a substitute member is nominated who can attend.
- Ensure apologies are submitted when attendance is not possible.
- Carry out their duties and responsibilities with due regard to the principle that there should be equality of opportunity for all people, regardless of their gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, age or religion.
- Participate in and review the work of the Council for the benefit of the whole community.

- Show respect and consideration for others and not use bullying behaviour or harass any person.
- State views and opinions honestly, whilst respecting and listening to each other's contributions.
- Respect the rights of other members to disagree with your point of view.
- Be nominated from a recognised professional body and / or faith and belief community and have the support of their nominating body behind them.
- Must not disclose confidential information or information which should reasonably be regarded as being of a confidential nature, without the express consent of a person authorised to give such consent, or unless required is entitled by law to do so; or prevent any person from gaining access to information to which that person is entitled by law.
- Must not in your official capacity, or otherwise, use or attempt to use your position improperly to confer on or secure for yourself, or any other person, an advantage or create or avoid for yourself, or any other person, a disadvantage.