

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education
17th June 2011
Report of the Director of Children's Services

The Student Council

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To brief members of SACRE on the planned changes to the organisation of the Staffordshire Student Council for Religious Education (SSCRE).

2 Summary

- 2.1 SSCRE has been in existence for several years and has been an effective body. As a group they meet four times a year, feedback to SACRE, design posters etc.

3 Recommendation

- 3.1 That members of SACRE are updated on new developments in this area.

4 Background

- 4.1 Members meet approximately four times each year. The SACRE logo was designed by members of the Council, as was the logo for the Council itself which features on members' black polo shirts. These are worn on all official occasions. Posters promoting religious education are produced and circulated to all secondary schools in the county. The SACRE receives feedback from the Council to inform its business, an annual report is produced as a record of what has been achieved each year. Some members have gone on to careers involving religious education.

5 Equal Opportunities

- 5.1 This report has been prepared in accordance with the County Council's policies on equal opportunities.

6 Financial implications

- 6.1 There are no immediate financial implications

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Changes to SSCRE

Currently there are 20 members of the student council. Attendance at meetings has been sporadic due to the examination and work commitments of members. They have had some great experiences including a visit to Wolverhampton yet the impact of their work is not as great as it could potentially be.

As the students are based across Staffordshire transport to and from SSCRE events and meetings is very costly.

The new proposal being trialled this year is for the members of the student council to attend the Global Student Forum (GSF). GSF is held annually at Westminster. It is a national student conference organised by the Damaris Trust. This years theme is: **DYING FOR LIFE: *Save the mothers, save the world***. It engages students with current ethical and moral issues, discusses faith, trains the students as peer educators and then challenges them to go back to their schools and peer educate 1000 other students and fundraise for a charity of their choosing.

SACRE has paid for an annual membership to GSF to allow the student councillors to attend. This has cost £340, roughly the cost of taxis for one student council meeting! £900 has also been sent into schools to contribute towards the cost of transport and to help fund the activities that will follow on from GSF once the students are back in their schools. This £900 was what remained of the 2010/11 budget.

Following GSF rather than the students meeting at Seabridge as has happened in the past I will expect to be invited to attend their own student led conference within school. This could be within their own school or within their feeder schools. The students will be expected to take assemblies and potentially contribute to RE lessons where appropriate. Through taking on such activities they will raise their own profile as members of SSCRE, raise the profile of RE within their own and other schools and have a far wider reaching impact than they currently achieve.

I will evaluate the success of this trial next year to see how best to organise the council the following year.

It should be noted that The Damaris Trust were extremely pleased with my suggestion of bringing a student council to GSF. They felt it was an innovative approach and are also interested to see the impact of bringing a range of students from different schools across a county as apposed to a small group from one school. They are hopeful that the information shared at the conference will reach more students in this way.