

National updates – Collective Worship

News from NASACRE

Determination renewals

After correspondence with the DfE at the beginning of the pandemic, NASACRE was able to confirm that LA schools with [Determinations](#) in relation to Collective Worship could continue to operate as if such a determination were still in force even if, in fact, it had actually lapsed at some point in the spring or summer terms. This was in recognition of the fact that schools had other significant issues to face during such a challenging time and it would not be realistic to expect them to engage in the process of applying for a renewal. Now that schools have returned, some SACREs are asking if this 'period of grace' might be extended until the spring to give time for appropriate preparations to be made by those schools.

Although the DfE has reminded us that technically, there is no legal period of grace (there has been no change in or relaxation of legislation) in the current circumstances, it would be reasonable for administrative reasons for LAs/SACREs to allow those schools that may have been due for reconsideration during lockdown or are due for reconsideration this term, a little longer - for example, until the end of autumn term - to submit their renewal applications. The ESFA is likely to take a similar position in relation to academies. Please note York SACRE at present does not have any determinations but our guidance can be found here: <https://www.york.gov.uk/downloads/file/2999/york-sacre-appendix-2-collective-worship-determination-guidance>

Groupings for Collective Worship

The other point that has come up in discussion with some schools and with SACREs is about groupings for Collective Worship (CW) – the guidance says that any groupings already in place within a school can be used for Collective Worship – traditionally, this has been interpreted to mean the whole school, key stage groups, year groups and individual class groups. In the present circumstances, other groupings such as 'bubbles' / 'pods' formed by schools to manage appropriate social distancing could also be included in this list.

This is in accordance with the legislation (Schedule 20 of the School Standards & Framework Act 1998) which states that:

(2) The arrangements for the required collective worship may, in respect of each school day, 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.

(3) For the purposes of sub-paragraph (2) a "school group" is any group in which pupils are taught or take part in other school activities.

The DfE view is that this gives schools a lot of flexibility to conduct CW in any grouping that they think appropriate, including 'bubbles' or 'pods'.

Please note York SACRE guidance including model policy and self-evaluation documents can be found here: <https://www.york.gov.uk/SACRE>