

Employee Handbook

Diocese of Shreveport
March 1, 2017



GENERAL DECREE
PERSONNEL POLICIES - REVISED

Acting in accordance with Canons 29, 48-51, 391 and 466 of the Code of Canon Law and in my role as diocesan Bishop of Shreveport, I officially approve the Revised Personnel Policy Manual/Employee Handbook and order its implementation effective 1 March 2017. These Personnel Policies will be published to all clergy, religious and church employees in the diocese, and will be reviewed annually. Personnel Policies issued previously are to be replaced.

Given at the Chancery, Diocese of Shreveport, Caddo Parish, Louisiana, on the
14th day of February 2017.


Most Reverend Michael G. Duca
Bishop of Shreveport


Christine Rivers
Chancellor

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FUNCTION OF THIS HANDBOOK

This handbook covers personnel practices and other information relative to employment within The Diocese of Shreveport (“Diocese”). In this handbook employee refers to anyone employed by the Roman Catholic Church as it is constituted in the Diocese, i.e., churches, parishes, Catholic schools, campus ministry centers, Catholic cemeteries, and diocesan ministries.

This handbook is meant to provide an overview of policies. Nothing in this handbook is to be interpreted as a contract and no rights are granted to employees based on any of the content. **If you are an employee who has entered into an employment contract that has information that deviates from this handbook, the contract will override.** Employment contracts are generally offered to particular school personnel and other special categories of employees. If you have questions that are not answered in this handbook, please ask your supervisor or contact the diocesan Office of Human Resources.

This handbook supersedes all other handbooks that have been in effect prior to this publication throughout the Diocese relating to employment in the Diocese. This handbook states the minimum requirements for all diocesan locations, exceptions are noted. The Bishop must approve any policies over and above what is stated herein.

The policies of this handbook will not be construed or applied in a manner that restricts or interferes with an employee’s right to discuss wages, hours, benefits or other terms and conditions of employment with the Company, co-workers, or in any way limits an employee’s exercise of rights under the National Labor Relations Act.

Employment within the Diocese is “at will” which means that both the employee and the Diocese have the right to terminate your employment at any time, with or without notice, and with or without cause.

Policies and procedures are reviewed periodically and subject to change. Amendment of a policy is reserved to the Bishop. The approved changes will then automatically replace or change any policy in this handbook. Although our goal is to provide notification of changes whenever possible, the Diocese may change any of its policies, procedures, benefits and terms of employment without notice, consultation, or publication, except as may be required by law.

HISTORY OF THE DIOCESE OF SHREVEPORT

The Diocese of Shreveport, the seventh Catholic diocese in Louisiana and a mission diocese, was established by Pope John Paul II on June 16, 1986. The Shreveport diocese covers 16 civil parishes in north Louisiana – a total of 11,200 square miles – and includes 38 churches, 2 high schools and 4 elementary schools. The Most Reverend Michael G. Duca serves as the second Bishop of Shreveport, appointed April 1, 2008.

The area that makes up the Diocese of Shreveport was administered by the Diocese of Natchitoches beginning in 1853, was re-designated the Diocese of Alexandria in 1910 and the Diocese of Alexandria-Shreveport in 1977. Diocesan offices are located at 3500 Fairfield Avenue, Shreveport, Louisiana. The facility includes the diocesan ministerial, educational and administrative offices known as the Catholic Center as well as residence for the diocesan bishop and other clergy. This property was formerly known as the St. Vincent Convent and Academy.

The coat of arms of the Diocese of Shreveport is composed of a red field to represent the Red River that runs through the See City. On this red field is a gold sunburst charged with the monogram of the Holy Name (IHS). This symbolism is used here to represent Saint John Berchmans, titular of the Cathedral Church. From the sunburst issue three wavy bars to represent the three rivers that run through the Diocese – the Red, the Mississippi, and the Ouachita – and to represent the waters of Baptism that flow from God, our Father, to save all of humanity.

The principal patroness of the Diocese is Mary, under the title of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, whose Feast is celebrated on December 8th.

St. John Berchmans was named the Cathedral Church in June 1986 with the establishment of the Diocese. It is the second oldest parish in the city of Shreveport, established in 1902.

BENEFITS

Bereavement Leave

Bereavement leave up to three (3) days with pay will be granted to all employees in the case of a death in the immediate family. Immediate family is defined as a spouse or child; the parent, grandparent, grandchild, brother, or sister of either the employee or his/her spouse; a person who served in *loco parentis*, or any dependent who has been living in the employee's home. This includes "step" family members listed above.

Funeral leave of one (1) day with pay will be given to an employee to attend the funeral upon the death of a relative not in the immediate family.

A request for bereavement leave must be approved by the supervisor.

Civil Leave (Jury Duty)

An employee selected to serve on a jury needs to ensure that the work he/she does will have minimum interruption. Employees will receive their regular pay while serving on jury duty. The employee may retain any monies earned or reimbursed from the courts; however, documentation of service will be required to show proof of service.

Disclosure

All eligible employees in the Diocese are provided a benefit package. Benefit packages are subject to change without notice. Employees may direct questions to the Diocese's Office of Human Resources. Temporary employees are not eligible for benefit programs. Benefits are not transferable to other employees, for example employees may not donate or share vacation, sick or personal days with another employee.

Employee Development

Diocesan locations are encouraged to provide each employee with funds for professional development. Check with your supervisor for information regarding the availability of this benefit.

Family Medical Leave

Employees may take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave in a 12-month period (a rolling 12-month period measured backward from the date an employee uses any FMLA leave) for the following reasons:

- Birth,
- Adoption, or
- Foster care of a child.
- The employee is needed to care for a child, dependent, spouse, or parent with a serious health condition. The child can be an adult and parent includes related or non-related persons who were in *loco parentis* such as a grandmother who raised the employee.
- Care for the worker's own **serious health condition**. Again, medical verification can, and should be sought.

Only employees who have worked for the Diocese for at least 12 months and who worked a minimum of 1250 hours within that 12-month period are eligible for the benefits of the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

Following the leave, the employee will be returned to his or her previous position, or an equivalent position (compensation, etc.), subject to the terms, limitations and exceptions provided by law.

During the leave, all benefits will be continued on the same basis as before the leave. The employee must pay the employee portion and any family coverage premiums of the medical insurance at the beginning of each month to the Office of Human Resources. Your health care coverage will cease if your premium payment is not received by the end of the month before the month of coverage. Employees on leave retain length of service, but sick and vacation time are not accrued during the unpaid portion of leave time.

Employees who wish to take Family Medical Leave must provide the Diocese with as much notice time as is possible. When the need for leave is foreseen, a minimum 30-day notice is expected, if not foreseen then soon as possible. The employer designates the time as family medical leave.

Military FMLA Leave: covers an eligible employee who is a spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin of a covered service member with a serious injury or illness up to a total of **26 workweeks of unpaid** leave during a “single 12-month period” to care for the service member. A covered service member is a current member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy, is otherwise in outpatient status, or is otherwise on the temporary disability retired list, for a serious injury or illness. A serious injury or illness is one that was incurred by a service member in the line of duty on active duty that may render the service member medically unfit to perform the duties of his or her office, grade, rank, or rating. The “single 12-month period” for leave to care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness begins on the first day the employee takes leave for this reason and ends 12 months later, regardless of the 12-month period established by the employer for other types of FMLA leave. An eligible employee is limited to a **combined** total of 26 workweeks of leave for any FMLA-qualifying reason during the “single 12-month period.” (Only 12 of the 26 weeks total may be for a FMLA-qualifying reason other than to care for a covered service member.)

Employees requesting or designated Family Medical Leave of Absence will be provided a copy of the diocesan Family Medical Leave of Absence policy and accompanying forms. For more information, contact your supervisor or the Office of Human Resources.

Eligible spouses who work for the same location are limited to a combined total of 12 workweeks of leave in a 12-month period for the following FMLA-qualifying reasons:

- the birth of a son or daughter and bonding with the newborn child,
- the placement of a son or daughter with the employee for adoption or foster care and bonding with the newly-placed child, and
- the care of a parent with a serious health condition.

Eligible spouses who work for the same employer are also limited to a combined total of 26 workweeks of leave in a single 12-month period to care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness (commonly referred to as “military caregiver leave”) if each spouse is a parent, spouse, son or daughter, or next of kin of the service member. When spouses take military caregiver leave as well as other FMLA leave in the same leave year, each spouse is subject to the combined limitations for the reasons for leave listed above.

Family medical leave will run concurrently with paid time off like vacation time, sick time or personal days.

The Diocese is not required to pay the full salary for weeks in which an exempt employee takes unpaid leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act. Rather, when an exempt employee takes unpaid leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act, the Diocese may pay a proportionate part of the employee's full salary for time actually worked. For example, if an employee who normally works 40 hours per week uses four hours of unpaid leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act, the Diocese may deduct 10 percent of the employee's normal salary that week.

Holidays

School employees need to check their school's handbook for holiday time off. That list will take precedence over the holiday list in this Handbook. Contract employees should refer to their contracts for definition of time away from work. For all other employees, the holiday policy is as follows. The number of holidays and the actual day the holiday is observed may vary from year to year. When the holiday falls on a weekend apply this schedule: Saturday - the holiday will be observed on Friday; Sunday - the holiday will be observed on Monday.

Paid holidays are the following:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving (Thursday and Friday)
- Christmas Break (24th through the 26th)

Other paid holidays may include the following but will be decided at each location based on business needs and how the holidays fall within the calendar year to year.

- Holy Thursday
- Easter Monday

All employees, other than temporary, school and contracted employees, who work 20 or more hours per week, are eligible for holiday pay when the holiday falls on their regularly scheduled workday.

If there is a need to have an employee work on a holiday, the employee may be required to float (move) the paid day off to another day.

Paid leave of any kind is not "hours worked" for purposes of calculating overtime (time worked over 40 hours in any given workweek).

Holy Days

Offices that suspend business on the following Church Holy Days of Obligation will provide regular wages to full-time, regular employees who normally would have been scheduled to work that day.

- Solemnity of the Assumption
- Solemnity of All Saints
- Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception

Whenever the Solemnities of the Assumption or of All Saints fall on a Saturday or a Monday, the precept to attend Mass is revoked. Thus, work would not be suspended when either of these holy days falls on a Monday.

Leave of Absence

A leave of absence without pay may be taken with the approval of the supervisor. Request and approval for such leave must be in writing and include the dates the leave is to start and end, as well as, the reason the leave is requested.

The diocesan portion of the medical coverage premium **will not be paid** while on leave and will be the responsibility of the employee taking leave to pay the employer portion. Vacation and sick time will not accrue while on leave.

Reinstatement following an approved leave of absence in excess of thirty (30) days will depend upon business conditions of the Diocese and available openings. Re-employment and reinstatement to an employee's previous position is not guaranteed.

Life and Long Term Disability Insurance

The Diocese provides life and long-term disability insurance at no cost to full-time, regular employees. The waiting period is two full calendar months after the first of the month. For example, if an employee's hire date is April 3rd, the benefits would be active on July 1st. Details of this benefit may be obtained from the employer location or the Office of Human Resources.

Maternity Leave Policy

Female employees can take up to 6 weeks of unpaid leave for a normal pregnancy, childbirth or related medical condition, and up to 4 months for a disability caused by pregnancy, childbirth or a related medical condition.

The employee who plans to take leave is to give the employer reasonable notice of the date such leave shall commence and the estimated duration of such leave. Check with you supervisor for requested notice times.

Medical Insurance

The Diocese participates in a group health insurance program. To be eligible, an employee must be a full-time, regular employee. The Diocese and the employee share the cost of the program. The Diocese pays a portion of the employee's premium with the remaining portion and any dependent add-on coverage paid by the employee. Employee payment is handled through payroll deduction.

Full details of the group health insurance, its cost and coverage, may be obtained from the Office of Human Resources. The waiting period is two full calendar months after the first of the month. For example, if an employee's hire date is April 3rd, the health insurance coverage would be active on July 1st.

Military Leave (USERRA)

We will provide military leave in accordance with, and as provided by law. Employees with need for leave and information on leave should contact the Office of Human Resources.

Retirement

The Diocese sponsors a 403(b)-retirement program for the benefit of lay employees. Employees may authorize voluntary contributions at any point during employment. Employer contributions do not require matching and the employer contribution is as follows:

| <u>Length of Service Completed</u> | <u>Contribution Percentage of Income</u> |
|---|---|
| 3 years | 1% |
| 4 years | 2% |
| 5 years | 3% |
| 6 years | 4% |
| 7+ years | 5% |

Sick Leave

The Diocese provides periods of time with pay when an eligible employee must be absent due to illness. Sick leave may be used for personal illness, to secure medical or dental treatment, or to permit absence to care for a sick member of the immediate family. Immediate family is defined as a spouse, child, parent, grandparent, or grandchild or a spouse's child, parent, grandparent, or grandchild. Temporary and part-time employees are not eligible for this benefit. Contract employees should refer to their contracts for definitions of time away from work. All school employees need to check their school's handbook regarding its sick leave policy. It will take precedence over this sick leave policy.

Again, leave time earned cannot be shared with or transferred to other employees.

Sick leave will be accrued monthly for all employees, other than temporary, who are classified as full-time. Sick leave time does not accrue when an employee is on unpaid leave.

Eligible employees earn one sick day per month. Sick leave is earned on a pro rata basis, for example, an employee who works 37.5 hours per week will accrue 7.5 hours of sick leave per month; an employee working 20 hours per week will accrue 4 hours sick leave per month.

An employee is eligible to take paid sick leave after a balance has been accrued.

To be eligible for paid sick leave, an employee must notify his or her supervisor at least 30 minutes prior to the start of your work time. When the need for sick leave is foreseeable, employees are expected to provide their supervisors a minimum of 30 days' notice before the leave commences. Except in the case of hospitalization or known lengthy illnesses, an employee on sick leave must contact his or her supervisor on a daily basis to advise whether or not the employee is able to return to work.

To the extent possible, employees should schedule medical/dental appointments/treatments to minimize their time away from work and the disruption of their workplace, for example, scheduling appointments for the first or last part of the day.

If an employee is absent due to illness for three or more days, or at the employer's request, a doctor's certificate may be required upon returning to work.

Employees may accumulate a maximum of sixty-five (65) workdays of sick leave at which time the accrual stops until the balance falls below the maximum.

The purpose of sick leave is to provide for illness during employment and as such is not a benefit for which an employee is entitled to receive pay upon termination, resignation, or retirement.

Contract employees need to reference their contracts and school employees, their school's handbooks for allotted days available.

Vacation Leave

Paid vacation leave is offered to eligible full-time, regular employees under the following guidelines. Contract employees should refer to their contracts and school employees, their school's handbooks for definition of leave time. Vacation time is not available to temporary employees.

An eligible employee accrues vacation leave annually as follows:

| <u>Service Completed:</u> | <u>Vacation Leave:</u> | <u>Maximum Accruing Balance</u> |
|---------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 0-5 Years | 10 Work Days | 15 days |
| 6-11 Years | 15 Work Days | 22.5 days |
| 12 Years + | 20 Work Days | 30 days |

Employees accrue vacation leave on a pro-rata basis based on paid hours. Vacation time does not accrue when an employee is on unpaid leave.

Salary or wages will not be paid in lieu of vacation leave. This means an employee is not able to "cash in" any part of their accrued balance while employed. Upon termination, any earned but unused vacation leave will be paid.

Time accrued cannot exceed a balance equal to one and a half times (x1.5) the employee's current annual accrual rate. When the employee's balance reaches the Maximum Accruing Balance limit (see table above), then the accrual shall stop until the balance falls below the maximum amount allowed. For example, if an employee accrues a balance of 10 days a year then the balance cannot exceed 15 days. When a balance of 15 days is reached, then no vacation leave time is accrued again until such balance falls below this maximum amount of 15 days. Of course, the maximum balance changes when the employee reaches a new level of accrual due to years of service, allowing the rate of days earned to increase, for example, going from 5 years to 6 years or 11 years to 12 years.

An employee's length of service will be determined by the anniversary date of his or her employment.

The employee's immediate supervisor must approve vacation leave. Employees should avoid critical work periods when scheduling vacation leave. Requests for vacation leave are expected at least 30 days prior to the commencement of extended leave, for example, if the leave will be one week or longer. In some departments or locations, 30 days notice may not be feasible due to the fluctuating nature of the work. Check with your supervisor for specific guidelines.

Although vacation leave cannot be used in place of coming to work on time, with proper notice and approval, it can be used for any other time the employee needs to be away from work.

Exempt employees who have a zero or insufficient vacation balance may not acquire a negative balance. If an employee does not have sufficient time available and vacation leave is approved for an exempt employee, leave must be for whole days only and will be deducted from his or her wages by deducting days not worked from their regular rate of pay. Exempt employees will not be allowed to take partial vacation time if he or she does not have enough time in his or her vacation balance.

Weather Days

When an employee is unable to get to work due to severe weather, the location determines the status of compensation, and if the employee's wages will be docked or vacation time must be used.

Worker's Compensation

Worker's Compensation Insurance that provides coverage for occupational illness and injury covers all employees of the Diocese. This program is administered in accordance with the State of Louisiana's Worker's Compensation laws and all applicable federal regulations. If you are hurt on the job, it must be reported to your supervisor. Appropriate documentation will be completed even if only for documentation purposes and no medical attention was sought.

COMPENSATION

Garnishments

If the employing location receives a garnishment or wage assignment, the employee will be notified whenever possible, and the amount will be deducted on the first possible pay period in accordance with the specified court date. State laws require that the Diocese honor garnishments of employee wages (including child support) as any court order or other legal judgment may instruct.

Overtime Compensation

A supervisor must expressly authorize a **non-exempt employee's** overtime in advance. A non-exempt employee will be paid overtime when he/she is authorized to work more than 40 hours in a workweek. Any vacation, sick or other non-worked but compensated time is not used to calculate if overtime is to be paid. **Exempt** employees are not eligible for overtime. An employee paid on a salaried basis does not necessarily constitute an exempt status. A workweek is defined as Saturday to Friday.

Pay Procedures

The employer will determine and communicate the frequency of paychecks. Check your location's payroll office.

It is the employee's responsibility to determine if the amount he/she is paid is correct and if it is not correct, to notify his or her supervisor.

Personnel Records

Employees are required to promptly notify their location's human resource/payroll departments of any change of name, address, phone number, number of dependents, emergency contacts or other relevant and pertinent information.

Personnel records are the property of the Diocese and its locations. The State of Louisiana allows the employee or their representative to view records related to employee exposure to potentially toxic materials or harmful physical agents, employee medical records and any analyses made using employee exposure or medical records. Otherwise, the location has the right to retain those records.

Severance Benefit

Severance benefit is extended to all regular, non-contracted, non-temporary employees who are terminated after six months of employment regardless of the reason or circumstances of termination (except for gross misconduct) and have not resigned their position.

The one-time severance benefit is an amount equivalent to four (4) weeks salary of regular wages. If the hours worked per week were variable, then an average of the last 6 months wages will be used to calculate the benefit.

Time Sheets

All employees must complete time sheets. Non-exempt employees must provide days and hours worked each day and any leave that is used. Exempt employees do not record hours worked but must indicate whether they took any leave during the pay period and on which days. Also, any

time taken due to FMLA approved leave, even intermittent partial day leave, must be noted on time sheet as FMLA leave.

Each time sheet is to be verified with the signature of the employee's director or direct supervisor. In the case of multiple supervisors, each supervisor will verify the employee timesheet. It is the responsibility of the employee for the accuracy of the timesheet.

Transfer Within The Diocese

Employees who transfer from one location to another within the Diocese keep the benefits and years of experience earned in their previous position, for example calculating their accrual rate for vacation time. Lateral transfers within the Diocese may be put on hold for up to four (4) weeks to allow the losing location time to recruit a replacement. Any remaining balance of vacation time an employee accrued while in his/her previous position at the old location will be paid out when the employee is transferred, and the employee will start to accrue vacation time anew at the new location. Sick time accrued balance will be transferred to the new location.

Transfer Within the Location

When an employee (either exempt or non-exempt) voluntarily transfers within his/her location to a position with lower pay, the employee retains his/her current level of compensation and is not subject to a reduction in pay.

The employee also retains eligibility for the customary, approved cost of living increase that might be offered annually by the location, regardless of the time of transfer to the position of lower base pay.

Unemployment Compensation

The Diocese is a nonprofit, tax-exempt church organization that does not participate in the State Unemployment Compensation Program.

ETHICAL CONDUCT

The teaching of the Church binds together work, social justice, and the Kingdom of God. Employment guidelines are presented to apply the principles of justice as derived from the Gospel, the teachings of the Church, the Code of Canon Law, the Diocese's Code of Pastoral Conduct, and principles of civil law to employees who serve parishes, institutions, and agencies in the Diocese.

The Diocese represents to its people and to the local community an organization based on strong moral and ethical principles. **Employees are to be aware of their responsibilities to conduct themselves in harmony with these principles, and at all times reflect the Church's teachings, integrity, and Christian concern for others.**

Anti-Harassment and Anti-Retaliation Policy

Harassment of employees, applicants, or guests on the basis of sex, gender, race, color, national origin, ancestry, marital status, religion, age, disability, genetic information, current or prospective service in the uniformed services or any other legally protected characteristic, is prohibited. Supervisory or managerial personnel are responsible for taking proper action to end such behavior in their workplace. Positive action will be taken to insure that all employees comply with the effort to make our work environment free from harassment and retaliation.

Prohibited Conduct

Verbal: Epithets, slurs, jokes, innuendo, negative stereotyping and comments which make fun of, or that ridicule, denigrate, belittle, insult, degrade, or that are not flattering or show hostility or aversion toward an individual because of or regarding a person's gender, sex, nationality, ancestry, race, marital status, color, religion, age, disability, genetic information, current or prospective service in the uniformed services or other legally protected characteristic.

Non-verbal: Distribution, display or discussion of anything or item, or written or graphic material that makes fun of, ridicules, denigrates, insults, belittles, or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual, or group, because of sex, nationality, ancestry, race, marital status, color, religion, gender, age, disability, genetic information, current or prospective service in the uniformed services or other legally protected characteristic. This includes but is not limited to calendars, clothing, music, cartoons, photographs, magazines, newspapers, drawings, posters, e-mails and text messages.

Sexual harassment does not refer to behavior or occasional compliments of a socially acceptable nature. In addition to the above, other examples of prohibited sexual conduct are:

1. **Verbal:** Sexual innuendoes; suggestive comments; jokes of a sexual nature; unwelcomed sexual propositions; lewd remarks; threats; requests for any type of sexual favor; repeated and unwelcomed requests for dates; verbal abuse or "kidding," which is oriented towards one gender or is based on gender.
2. **Non-verbal:** The use, distribution, display, or discussion of any written or graphic material, including calendars, posters, cartoons, clothing, music, photographs, magazines, newspapers, drawings, e-mails, and text messages that are sexually suggestive, or show hostility toward an individual or group because of sex or gender; suggestive or insulting sounds; leering; staring; whistling and obscene gestures.

3. **Physical:** Unwelcome, unwanted physical contact, including but not limited to, touching, massaging, tickling, pinching, patting, brushing up against, hugging, cornering, kissing, fondling, sexual intercourse or contact, or assault. Sex at the workplace or while on the job is prohibited.

Normal, courteous, mutually respectful, pleasant, non-coercive interactions between employees, including men and women, that are acceptable to and welcomed by both parties, are not considered to be harassment.

Complaint Procedures

1. Any employees who feel that this policy has been violated or that they have encountered sexual, gender, racial, religious, age, disability, or other prohibited discrimination or harassment, or feel that they have been retaliated against for making a complaint of discrimination or harassment, should contact the Human Resources office immediately. If the Human Resources Director is unavailable, or the employee believes it would be inappropriate to contact that person, the employee should contact the Chancellor. The Human Resources office, the Chancellor, or their designee, will process all complaints, and will be responsible for coordinating investigations. All employees are required to cooperate in all investigations.
2. Employees are encouraged to utilize this Complaint Procedure. All complaints and investigations will be kept as confidential as possible, and no employee will be penalized or retaliated against for using this procedure. Any employee who feels they have been penalized or retaliated against by anyone at any time or place for using this procedure, for filing any type of legal claim, making a complaint or report, participating in an investigation, reporting a violation of law or diocese policies, handbooks or rules, or any other reason, should use this complaint procedure.

Enforcement and Discipline

1. After an investigation, prompt and appropriate corrective action will be taken for any violations of this policy.
2. Depending on all of the circumstances, violations of this policy may warrant discipline, up to and including termination.

EMPLOYMENT IN THE DIOCESE

“At Will” Employment

Employment in the Diocese is “at will”. This means that either the employer or the employee may terminate the employment relationship for any reason with or without cause or notice. The “at will” relationship exists regardless of any other written statements or policies contained in this Handbook, any diocesan documents other than fully executed employment contracts or any verbal statement to the contrary. For example, compensation agreements, which are for explaining how one is to be paid, are not employee contracts.

Exception to terminating an employee “at will” are where an employment contract exists. The terms of the employment relationship will be stated within the contract, including termination of employment. These contracts must be in writing and signed by the designated authority and the employee of the Diocese to be valid.

Background Checks

In making an offer for employment, the Diocese will conduct an investigation of the applicant’s background. For certain positions within the Diocese, state law requires that the Diocese obtain the applicant’s fingerprints in conjunction with the background check. The hiring location pays for all costs associated with producing and processing fingerprints and background checks and there is no cost to the employee/applicant. All information obtained as a result of a background check will be used solely for employment purposes.

All background check information will be kept confidential. The Diocese complies with all applicable federal, Louisiana state and local laws regarding background checks.

The Office of Human Resources for the Diocese is responsible for the administration of this policy. If you have any questions regarding this policy or if you have any questions about background checks that are not addressed in this policy, please contact the Office of Human Resources.

Contract Employee

Contract employees have an employment agreement outlining terms that may be different from those outlined in this handbook. Where items differ between the contract agreement and this handbook, the contract will supersede. These contracts must be in writing and must be signed by the designated authority of the Diocese and the employee.

Dress for Work

Office dress is neat, modest and businesslike. When dressing for work it is important to wear appropriate dress that is respectful to those who come to the Catholic Center, especially to those an employee might be receiving into his/her office. Regardless of the day, employees still need to look professional at work. Shorts, faded jeans and casual t-shirts with slogans on them are examples of clothing that are too casual for the office even on casual dress days. If there is a need to dress differently due to a special function, employees are required to change back into appropriate dress if they are to be in the office areas for more than one hour during normal business hours.

If an employee's poor hygiene is an issue, the supervisor should discuss the problem with the employee in private and should point out the specific areas to be corrected. If the problem persists, supervisors should follow the normal corrective action process.

Only two piercings of the ear lobes (one per ear) are allowed to be visible. Any other visible piercings must be removed while at work.

Safety and common sense dictate that some positions will require different attire from that stated above. If you have any questions about dress for your position, ask your supervisor.

Employee Eligibility

In compliance with the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 ("IRCA"), the Diocese will hire only individuals legally authorized to work in the United States. Therefore, within three days of hire or rehire, all new employees are required to present the Diocese with documentation sufficient to establish their identity and eligibility to work in the United States and to sign INS Form I-9. Persons under 18 years of age may be hired only with presentation of all work permits required by law. In the State of Louisiana, any person under 18 must produce an "Attention to Employ Form" which can be acquired from the Louisiana Workforce Commission or your local high school.

Employees working under temporary permits are required to keep their work status current. Whenever you have any status change affecting your work authorization, you must notify the Office of Human Resources immediately. If you are no longer legally able to work in the United States (for example, expiration or revocation of permit/visa) the Diocese can no longer employ you.

Employee Supervision

It is the policy of this Diocese that the work of all employees is to be assigned, directed, and reviewed by a supervisor. Employees ordinarily will have only one supervisor to whom they report but occasionally, multiple supervisors will share the resources of one assistant. Any leave requested by the employee will need to be approved by all supervisors and timesheets should also be approved by all supervisors. Regular meetings between employee and supervisor(s) are strongly encouraged.

Equal Employment Opportunity/ADA

The Diocese is committed to a policy of equal employment opportunity for all of its employees. The Diocese actively seeks and employs qualified persons in all job classifications and administers all personnel actions without regard to sex, gender, race, color, national origin, ancestry, marital status, religion, age, non-job related disability, genetics, military or veteran status, or any other basis prohibited by law.

The Diocese complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as amended by the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA), the Louisiana Employment Discrimination Law (LEDL) and all applicable local fair employment practices laws, and is committed to providing equal employment opportunities to qualified individuals with disabilities. Consistent with this commitment, the Diocese will provide a reasonable accommodation to disabled applicants and employees if the reasonable accommodation would allow the individual to perform the essential functions of the job (essential functions of a job are determined by the Diocese and will not be modified), unless

doing so would create an undue hardship. An individual who can be reasonably accommodated for a job without undue hardship will be given the same consideration for a position as any other applicant.

Individuals who desire a reasonable accommodation should contact the Human Resources Director promptly.

The Diocese can ask the applicant/employee to provide supporting medical documents for the disability if it is not obvious.

All employees are required to comply with safety standards. Applicants who pose a direct threat to the health or safety of themselves or others—when such threat cannot be eliminated by reasonable accommodation—will not be hired. Current employees who pose a direct health or safety threat will be placed on appropriate leave until an organizational decision has been made about the employee's immediate employment situation. The HR Director is responsible for implementing this policy, including the resolution of reasonable accommodation, safety and undue hardship issues.

Any employees with questions or concerns about any type of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation in the workplace are encouraged to bring these issues to the Human Resource Director. If the question or concern involves the Human Resource Director, the employee should contact the Chancellor. Employees can raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal. Anyone found to be engaging in any type of unlawful discrimination, harassment, or retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Employee Classifications

Exempt Employee

An **exempt** employee is paid a regular salary to function generally in a position that is (1) bona fide administrative, executive, or professional; (2) outside sales; or (3) a highly skilled professional computer technician. An exempt employee, as defined by the Department of Labor, is not eligible for overtime.

An exempt classification as defined by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) means that an employee is paid an established salary to perform their job duties to the satisfaction of their employer regardless of how many hours per week they actually work. The employer is not required to give the exempt employee time off in exchange for hours worked over 40 per work week. Doing so could affect the employee's exempt status.

The exempt employee's schedule will need to be worked out in advance with the supervisor and should not be deviated from without the prior approval of their supervisor.

An exempt employee can be required to work a specified schedule; and the supervisor is allowed to require exempt employees to track hours of work if the employer has a business reason for doing so.

Non-Exempt Employee

A **non-exempt** employee will be paid one and one-half times his/her hourly wage for every hour worked *over* 40 hours per work week. Residential care employees are paid overtime for hours

worked over 80 in a 14-day work period or for hours worked over 8 in a day whichever is greater. Due to Department of Labor laws, nonexempt employees are not allowed to eat lunch or other meal breaks at their desk as this could be viewed as time worked. Also, an employee must not engage in off-the-clock or unrecorded work. Calculating overtime hours will not include hours paid for hours not worked like holiday, sick and vacation time.

Full-Time Employee

A regular full-time employee is scheduled to work 20 or more hours of work per week. Such an employee is eligible for diocesan benefits as outlined in each respective program. If a person is employed at multiple diocesan locations working more than 20 hours per week combined, then that individual is considered full-time and eligible for benefits as of reaching full-time status.

Part-Time Employee

A regular part-time employee is scheduled to work fewer than 20 hours per week, and is paid for the actual time worked. Such an employee is not eligible for diocesan benefits.

Temporary Employee

A temporary employee is one who is employed with the understanding that the position is for a prearranged period of time generally not to exceed 6 months, and can be terminated at will by either party. This employee may work a full-time or part-time schedule based on the needs of the unit. The employee is not entitled to or eligible for diocesan benefits. If the temporary position becomes regular or the employee decides to change positions to a regular one, the employee's status and benefit accounting will be retroactive where possible to the original date of employment.

Performance Evaluations

The job performance of each employee should be evaluated throughout the year and an annual evaluation shall be completed. Check with your supervisor on how performance or any evaluations shall be done.

Resignation

When a non-exempt employee chooses to resign, it is requested that he/she provide written notice at least two weeks in advance of resignation. Exempt employees who plan to resign are asked to provide written notice as soon as possible with a minimum of four weeks being expected. Any letter of notice should give the specific date of resignation and be submitted to the employee's immediate supervisor.

Termination

An employee's termination may occur for various reasons such as resignation, disability retirement, regular retirement, layoff or termination with or without cause (See Employment "At Will"). It is the intent of the Diocese that there will be a communication process between the employer and the employee prior to any termination of employment.

Work Week

A work week is defined as a calendar period from Saturday to Friday.

An employee with more than one supervisor and who wishes to schedule time away from work, must check with all supervisors for approval to be away.

WORK HABITS

Abuse or Neglect of Minors/Safe Environment

The Diocese is firmly committed to the safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults and expects that all persons performing work for the Diocese will safeguard them. Each person serving the Diocese is to comply with all state laws (as well as all applicable local or federal laws) regarding incidents of abuse or neglect of a minor. Every employee will receive a copy of the *Diocesan Policy Concerning the Sexual Abuse of Minors by Clerics, Employees or Commissioned Volunteers* and *The Code of Pastoral Conduct*. The employee must sign a statement that he/she received, read, and will adhere to these policies. These policies may also be received and acknowledgement of receipt through our online safe environment system at www.virtus.org upon registration of an individual's account.

The employee is to meet all requirements of the Diocese's sexual abuse policy and programs. This includes the online continuing education program and keeping up to date with this training.

All employees, no matter their status, are required to attend a Protecting God's Children session at the beginning of their employment. Each location has a Local Safe Environment Coordinator. Ask him/her for details.

Attendance of Non-exempt Employees

The Diocese depends on its employees to fulfill our ministry whether or not the employee's position is a direct area of ministry or supports a ministry in one way or another. Reliable, consistent attendance is an important requirement of all employees. The following behaviors are prohibited:

1. Unexcused absence. An absence without proper notification or satisfactory reason is unexcused. An absence for three (3) consecutive days without notification or satisfactory reason is considered a voluntary termination.
2. Repeated tardiness. Tardiness is defined as arriving at work past the appointed starting time without proper supervisory approval.
3. Failure of employees to report to their work place at the beginning of their work period.
4. Leaving work prior to the end of the work period or failing to inform the supervisor as applicable when leaving the work area.

Children in the Workplace

All diocesan employees may occasionally experience the need to bring children to the workplace. The following guidelines are established to clarify the diocesan practice regarding such situations.

It is only permissible for the employee to bring his or her own child, grandchild or child for whom they are the legal guardian into the workplace.

Employees who are responsible for the care of minor children are expected to arrange childcare away from the work site. The Diocese does not condone bringing children into the workplace, except as provided below. The Diocese accepts no liability for the actions of children on diocesan property. The grandparents, parents or legal guardians assume all such liability and the Diocese will not tolerate any corporal punishment on diocesan property. Bringing children into the workplace creates a distraction for both the employee and their coworkers, impeding the

performance of diocesan duties. The immediate manager or supervisor will counsel or warn employees who bring children to work without proper advance authorization.

Exceptions for specific, individual employee circumstances are quite rare. If an employee needs to bring a child to the workplace on a particular occasion, the employee must obtain approval in advance from his/her immediate manager or supervisor as soon as the need is known. Approval may be granted for each single instance if **all** of the following conditions are met:

1. The employee's need to bring the child to work is urgent, compelling, not recurring, and of short duration (no longer than half a day).
2. The only alternative to bringing the child to work is the employee's absence from work.
3. The Diocese derives a clearly identifiable benefit from the employee being at work at that particular time (e.g., meeting a deadline).
4. Arrangements for the safety and supervision of the child are satisfactory to the manager or supervisor.
5. Does not violate the Protecting God's Children program or the Diocese's sex abuse policy.
6. The manager or supervisor believes that distractions for the employee and their coworkers are minimal.
7. The child is not ill (unable to attend daycare or school).

If approval is granted for an exception, but the manager or supervisor determines that one or more of the conditions listed above ceases to exist, the employee will be directed to leave the workplace. Upon return to work, the employee must report the absence. Approval of the absence will be automatically granted for the period of time for which the employee originally had approval to bring the child to the workplace. Approval for an additional period of absence, if any, will be considered in accordance with the customary guidelines and procedures. The immediate manager or supervisor will determine the appropriate accrual or leave to be used for the time off (e.g. family medical leave, leave without pay, sick time, vacation time, etc.).

Confidentiality

The Diocese acknowledges that employees may come into contact with confidential information in the course of carrying out their duties. Such confidential information may include, but is not limited to, personal information regarding employees, volunteers, contract labor, church membership, as well as financial and operational data. Employees must exercise good judgment and care at all times to avoid unauthorized or improper disclosures of confidential information.

Conversations in public places, for example restaurants, elevators, and public transportation, should be limited to matters that do not pertain to information of a sensitive or confidential nature. Employees are required to use discretion and take all precautions to ensure that access to confidential information be restricted to authorized persons. Employees may not disclose, divulge, or make accessible confidential information belonging to, or obtained through their affiliation with the Diocese to any person, including relatives, friends, and business and professional associates, other than to persons who have a legitimate need to know such information and diocesan permission to do so. Unauthorized or improper disclosure of confidential information will be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Conflict Management and Grievance Procedure

Employees are encouraged to raise work-related concerns with their immediate supervisor before addressing any complaints. Grievances are to be resolved at the most basic level of authority, as quickly as possible, and according to fair and just principles. It is requested that all complaints/grievances be in writing.

Conflicting parties should meet to seek resolution through one or more meetings. If a resolution is not achieved, the parties should meet with their mutual supervisor, or with their respective supervisors. The supervisor(s) should assist the disputing parties in their efforts to achieve resolution.

Presentation of a complaint or grievance by an employee will not result in any retaliatory action against that employee. Any retaliation upon an employee for bringing forward a complaint or grievance may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

If at any time during or after the grievance process, an employee feels he/she is being mistreated and cannot proceed or has not received a just resolution, that employee has the option of pursuing a complaint to a higher supervisory level.

Work related problems can arise in any place of employment. We hope individuals will try to reconcile differences on an individual basis. Should this not be possible, to resolve a problem quickly and fairly, the Diocese has developed a grievance procedure using the following steps:

1. If you have a problem, notify your supervisor in writing. Most difficulties can be settled promptly at this point. The supervisor shall respond in writing within five (5) days of meeting with you.
2. If the problem is not resolved to your satisfaction, you (and a co-worker of your choice, if you wish) may go to the next supervisory level or the Human Resources Director and verbally explain the problem; or you may instead submit the problem in writing. This step should be taken within five (5) working days after your supervisor has given their decision or after the incident giving rise to your grievance, whichever is later. If the circumstances require it, the previously identified official will conduct an investigation.
3. Following the investigation, the supervisor or the Human Resource Director will respond in writing to your grievance. The decision shall be final.

Credit Cards

Due to the nature of their job duties, some employees will be issued a credit card. This credit card is for diocesan business use only. Any other use of a diocesan credit card will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. Check with supervisor for clarification and the proper use of the diocesan credit card.

Drug, Alcohol, Weapons and Search Policy

1. The Diocese has established a Drug, Alcohol, Weapons and Search Policy to assist in providing a safe, healthy and productive work environment for all employees, and to protect individuals, facilities and property.

2. The distribution, purchase, transfer, use, possession, sale or manufacture of the following items or substances in diocesan vehicles or vehicles used for diocesan business, on diocesan property, premises, or work sites, and while at work or on diocesan business is prohibited:
 - Illegal drugs, controlled substances, designer drugs, or any other substance which may have the effect on the human body of being a narcotic, depressant, stimulant, hallucinogen, or cannabinoid (herein called “illegal drugs”).
 - Alcoholic beverages unless for diocesan use. Under no exception may open alcoholic containers be transported.
 - Unauthorized items - drug paraphernalia
 - Unauthorized prescription drugs
3. Arriving on diocesan property, premises, or work site, or being at work or on diocesan business under the influence of or impaired by alcohol or an illegal or unauthorized drug or testing positive for alcohol or an illegal or unauthorized drug, is prohibited.
4. Drug or alcohol tests may be administered to the following; applicants, new hires, when any treatable injury occurs, or when there is reasonable suspicion that the employee is intoxicated, impaired or using illegal or unauthorized drugs or alcohol. The tests will be administered by professionals in accordance with the law.
5. Test results and information may be given to law enforcement authorities for investigation or prosecution, may be used as evidence and may be obtained and disclosed in any public or private administrative or disciplinary proceeding or hearing or in court where drug or alcohol use by the employee or applicant is relevant. Violations of this policy may be a basis under the law for disqualification from unemployment benefits or worker’s compensation benefits.
6. **Any employee that violates this policy, refuses to take a test, tries to or alters or contaminates a specimen, interferes with testing procedures, tests positive, (or has any specimen reported as dilute; altered; improper pH, temperature or specific gravity; contaminated; or inconsistent with human or that employee’s urine) for alcohol or an illegal or unauthorized drug, will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination, and may be disqualified from unemployment and worker’s compensation benefits. Compliance with the policy is a condition of employment.**
7. All employees are required to report to their supervisor any criminal, drug or alcohol statute arrest or conviction within five (5) days after the arrest or conviction. Any criminal, drug or alcohol statute arrest or conviction may subject the employee to disciplinary action up to and including termination.
8. The possession of weapons, firearms, explosives and ammunition on diocesan property or premises, in diocesan vehicles, or while at work or on diocesan business, without written permission of the Bishop, or where that right is mandated by law, will be grounds for immediate termination.

To maintain a safe, healthy and productive work environment, the Diocese reserves the right at all times to search or inspect employees’ surroundings and possessions. This right extends to diocesan facilities and equipment, and employees' persons and property. Searches may include the person,

personal effects, lockers, desks, offices, computers, files, equipment, diocesan vehicles or vehicles being used for diocesan purposes, purses, personal baggage or any other items on diocesan property, premises or work site. Refusal to permit a search or to cooperate fully in a search will be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Employee Corrective Action and Discipline

The goal of diocesan employers is to help employees be successful. If problems arise, the employee and supervisor should meet and explore suggestions to resolve the problem.

Depending upon particular circumstances, an employee may be subject to discipline, up to and including termination, for any inappropriate or disruptive conduct.

Major violations include but are not limited to:

- Reporting for work under the influence or having the possession of narcotics or intoxicants while on diocesan property or on diocesan business or activities
- Refusal to follow a supervisor's direct order or willful neglect of duty
- Repeated tardiness
- Repeated absenteeism without notice or without good reason
- Directing profane language at another employee
- Intentional damage to diocesan property, or the property of a co-employee
- Fighting or provoking a fight or engaging in any form of violence
- Theft
- Refusal to complete any required drug and/or alcohol screen in accordance with diocese policy
- Possession of weapons or contraband on any diocesan property
- Flagrant violation of safety rules
- Refusal to perform assigned work
- Sleeping on company time
- Conviction of a felony offense
- Falsification of work records or other diocesan records including forgery
- Misappropriation or misuse of diocesan funds or property
- Breach of confidentiality or violation of a standard of conduct
- Inappropriate use of computer or internet resources or excessive personal business
- Conflict of interest
- Repeated discourtesy to visitors
- Spreading false or malicious rumors or information about the Diocese, its employees, or individuals associated with the Diocese
- Failure to comply with diocesan policy

Keys and Other Equipment

Any employee who is issued keys, radios or other equipment in the course of their employment is required to safeguard and only use such items for business reasons. Each employee is also required to return such items upon resignation, termination or request.

Outside Jobs

If employees maintain another job outside of their diocesan position, they are requested to report the nature of their outside employment to their immediate supervisor. The outside job(s) must not interfere in any way with or present a conflict of interest with work for the Diocese, or be in conflict with or contrary to the Church's teachings on ethics or morals nor should office hours be used to conduct business related to the outside job. In addition, diocesan resources are not to be used for outside work without prior authorization and proper reimbursement to the Diocese for the resources used.

Professional Time for Exempt Employees

The Diocese recognizes the fact that exempt employees often work in excess of their regularly scheduled workweek. Since wellness and balance are a value, employees may need to take occasional time off (hereafter called "professional time") for the sake of recreation and recuperation. It is understood that the request for such time off would be first discussed with and approved by the immediate supervisor. This could differ if the employee is a contract employee, for example teachers.

The following principles and procedures are to guide the use of professional time for exempt employees.

1. Exempt employees are expected to put in the time needed to get one's job done and are appropriately compensated for the extra time that might be worked through their annual salary.
2. Professional time does not apply to coming in before or after established office hours, which is considered part of professionalism, nor is it intended to foster an hour-for-hour mentality. It applies to work such as unusual events, projects or special assignments.
3. Professional time should be taken in close proximity to the time when the "excess" hours occur to avoid unreasonable work stress.
4. Convention days are considered eight hour days even if there is night work. Travel to and from conventions is not considered for professional time unless not on a regular work day.
5. All professional time granted must be taken before the last day of employment. No financial reimbursement will be paid in recognition of professional time. This is not an earned benefit. Rather, it is a mere gratuity.
6. If you work a weekend event then one may have time off without using vacation time by either late arrival on Monday no later than 1p or leave early the Friday before no earlier than noon will be considered sufficient time to recoup from or prepare for the weekend time worked.

Rest Periods, Lunch Breaks

Full-time employees will generally be allowed an unpaid lunch break each day. This could differ with contract employees. Non-exempt employees are not allowed to work through a lunch break without permission from a supervisor and are not allowed to take their lunch break at their desks since it could unintentionally cause an overtime situation. Each location will establish the norms for lunch breaks and any other rest periods that may be allowed. Absence from the work area without permission is grounds for discipline up to and including termination. By law, any lunch breaks that are less than 20 minutes must be paid breaks and cannot be classified as time off the clock.

Smoking

The Diocese maintains a smoke-free workplace. Smoking, vaping, e-cigarettes and other tobacco products are prohibited everywhere in our buildings. An employee who chooses to smoke must do so outside in the designated areas and with the approval of the supervisor. The designated area should be located far enough away from entrances and air intakes so that the smoke stays outside. With safety at the forefront of all of our actions, please ensure that when finished smoking, you have fully extinguished cigarette butts and matches and that they are disposed of properly.

Use of Equipment and Resources

During work hours, personal usage of diocesan equipment (including but not limited to telephone, fax, copiers, computer, postal machine, etc.) should be limited to emergencies or when extenuating circumstances warrant it and with the knowledge of the supervisor.

Employees should exercise care that no personal correspondence is placed on office stationery. All employees will read the Diocese's *Policy on the Use of Computer, Internet, E-Mail and Communication Media* and provide a signed statement that the policy was read, understood, and will be followed.