

MONTANA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS-GFB



Policy Manual

SECTION 4000: SUPPORT STAFF HANDBOOK

Rev. 2023

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4000 Support Staff Handbook

4002 Publication, Purpose and Limitations

- This handbook is for general guidance and is not intended to be a contract. It is designed to acquaint Catholic school employees with the diocese and provide them with information about policies affecting their employment. The handbook also describes many of the employee's responsibilities as well as outlines the programs developed by the diocese to benefit employees.
- This handbook will be published and posted on the Montana Catholic School website. School Employees will be provided the URL to access this handbook at their convenience. Upon receiving the URL, Employees will sign a "Receipt of Employee Handbook Acknowledgement Form," which is to be filed in the employee's personnel folder. This handbook replaces and supersedes all previous handbooks.
- No employee handbook can anticipate every circumstance or question about policy. Therefore, the diocese reserves the right to edit, amend, revise, supplement, or rescind any policies or portion of the handbook, as it deems appropriate, in its sole and absolute discretion. The contents herein can only be altered by a written statement issued by the diocese. When any changes are made to this handbook, the diocese will inform the school administration who are to inform school employees.
- Since each Catholic school employee works for the Diocese and the Bishop is the head of the Diocese, all employees work for the Bishop. Even though contracts and work agreements might be signed by a local school administrator, each employee and volunteer ultimately enters into a working relationship with the Bishop and represents him and the Diocese.
- All employees are expected to respect all the moral and religious teachings and beliefs of the Roman Catholic Church and not to engage in any personal conduct or lifestyle that would be at variance with or contrary to the policies of the diocese, its parishes and schools, or the moral and religious teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.

4004 Nature of Employment

The school and the employee are contractually obligated to fulfill the terms and conditions of the employee's employment contract. In the event of economic necessity or in the event of an epidemic, pandemic, contagion, government ordered actions, including quarantines or other similar type events or requirements that impact school operations and after consultation with the Montana Catholic Schools, this agreement may be modified or terminated and if not so terminated and the School and its ongoing operation are considered safe, the employee will remain obligated to perform his/her duties and responsibilities under this agreement.

4006 Administration of Policies

The administration is responsible for implementing all personnel policies, establishing necessary procedures, and ensuring compliance with approved policies and procedures.

4100 Employment

4102 Selection of Support Staff Personnel

- When selecting people for employee positions in the Catholic school, the administration will make every reasonable effort to hire and retain the best and most qualified employees for its positions.
- The school administration has the responsibility to be the sole judge of merit, competence, and qualifications of applicants.

4104 Requirements for Employment

4104.1 Catholic Moral Standards

- Employees will live a lifestyle compatible with Catholic moral values. They must exercise conduct consistent with Catholic teachings and not engage in any practice, whether in their personal life or their employed capacity that may be in conflict with the Catholic Church teachings on faith and morals.
- Every employee of Montana Catholic school is a minister of the Catholic faith
- Catholic school employees are encouraged to participate in faith formation activities centered around Catholic theology, history, and practice.

4104.2 Federal, State, and Diocesan Prerequisites

The following are requirements for employment:

- The applicant must have a valid Social Security Number.
- The applicant must complete a W-4 form.
- The applicant must have completed a Diocese employment application.
- The applicant must assure the Diocese that he/she is in physical condition to perform the essential functions of the position with or without reasonable accommodation.
- The applicant must submit a clear Criminal History Summary. .
- The applicant must have appropriate documentation to establish his/her right to work in the United States as required by state and federal law.
- The applicant must be and all employees must remain insurable under the Diocesan general insurance liability policy. Notice of uninsurability from the Diocesan insurance company will immediately cause the employee to be considered ineligible for further employment.

4104.3 Health Requirement

All employees are expected to be in good health in order to fulfill and perform the essential functions of the employment position. Reasonable accommodations will be made for employees with a qualified medical disability.

4106 Hiring Procedures

4106.1 Selection Process

- Applicants shall submit a completed [Diocesan Employment Application](#).
- After screening the applications, the school administration will call those applicants selected for a preliminary interview
- Pre-employment tests may be used at any step in the employment process.

4106.2 References and Verification

Professional and personal reference checks will be conducted before any offer of employment is extended.

- The applicant's most recent employment will be contacted and verified.
- The applicant's education will be verified.
- A clear criminal record is a condition of employment.

4106.4 Offer of Employment

All offers of employment shall be in writing and state the position, responsibilities, salary, benefits, and effective date of hire. Generally schools use one of two work agreements: [over 30 hours](#) or [under 30 hours](#).

4108 Employment of Immediate Family

Employment of an employee's immediate family is prohibited if the relative is working in the same location or supervised by a Catholic school employee. For purposes of this Handbook, family is defined as spouse, parent, child, and sibling; the employee's spouse's parents, child, or sibling; the employee's child's spouse; grandparents, or grandchildren.

4110 Immigration Reform and Control Act

In compliance with Federal Immigration laws, the school only hires workers who are and continue to be eligible to work in the United States.

4112 Employee Orientation

All new employees shall be afforded an orientation and training to better acquaint them with the Catholic school, its protocol, processes, facilities, and employees.

4114 Employee Status Definitions

The following definitions of employee status will be used to classify employees when determining which employees are eligible for certain employee benefits:

4114.1 Probationary Employee

- All newly hired employees and/or present employees who have been transferred or promoted to a new position, except casual or temporary employees, are Support Staff as probationary employees for a period of six (6) months.
- Should the Administrator need additional time to evaluate the performance of the employee, an extension of probationary status may be granted.
- The purpose of the probationary period is to evaluate the employee's performance and ability to carry out the position's requirements. It also provides the employee and the employer the opportunity to determine whether continued employment is desired.
- A probationary employee may be terminated with or without cause, with or without notice, on or before the completion of the probationary period.

4114.2 Regular Employees

- **Regular, Full – Time, 12 month**
 - A regular full-time 12 month employee is scheduled to work 40 hours per week year-round on a regular basis and has satisfactorily completed the probationary period.
- **Regular, Full-Time, 10 month**

- A regular full-time 10 month employee is scheduled to work 40 hours on a regular basis during the school year and has satisfactorily completed the probationary period.
- **Regular, Part – Time, 12 month:**
 - A regular part-time 12 month employee is scheduled to work at least thirty (30) hours and less than forty (40) hours per week year round, and has satisfactorily completed the probationary period.
- **Regular, Part-Time, 10 month:**
 - A regular part-time employee is scheduled to work at least thirty (30) hours and less than forty (40) hours per week during the school year, and has satisfactorily completed the probationary period.

4114.4 Casual Employee

A casual employee is scheduled to work fewer than thirty (30) hours each week.

4114.5 Temporary Employee

- A temporary employee is hired to work a limited, predetermined length of time for either the temporary replacement of an existing employee unable to work due to vacation or a leave of absence, or to aid with clearly defined short-term projects.
- A temporary employee will be provided with a set period of expected work, with a clear understanding that employment ends when the job is completed or the absent employee returns to work.
- Temporary employees are not eligible for employee benefits except as required by law.
- The hire date of temporary employees who are subsequently hired on a regular basis will be the date on which they actually begin work as a regular full or part-time employee.

4114.6 Exempt & Non-Exempt Status

All employees are Support Staff as either exempt or non-exempt based upon criteria set forth in the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and applicable Montana Law. The School shall determine which regular employment positions are Exempt or Non-Exempt based upon the provisions of the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act, case law, and the guidance of the Director of Human Resources of the Diocese.

4116 Support Staff Positions

4116.1 Paraprofessional (10 month)

- Paraprofessionals, such as aides, whether paid or volunteer, may be involved in clerical, supportive, and/or non-professional capacities.
- Paraprofessionals may be utilized in the instructional program only under the direction and supervision of a certified teacher.
- Paraprofessionals shall fulfill the duties and responsibilities of regular staff members and they shall participate in all regular support staff and departmental meetings.

4116.2 School Office Staff (12 or 10 months)

Secretary / Receptionist / Administrative Assistant: The School Office Staff either paid or volunteer, shall function under the direction of the Administrator and shall be responsible to the Administrator.

4116.3 Pre-Kindergarten Staff (12 or 10 months)

Child Care / Pre-School / Early Education: Employees of a school's Pre-Kindergarten Program shall observe all state, county, and city regulations concerning personnel and physical facilities. All Catholic Schools Child Care Center and Pre-School employees shall have a criminal and child protective services background check completed each year.

4116.4 Food Service Staff (12 or 10 months)

Cook / Kitchen / Cafeteria: Employees that provide food service to students shall observe all state, county, and city health regulations concerning personnel and physical facilities.

4116.5 Transportation Staff (12 or 10 months)

Bus Driver / Vehicle Maintenance / Mechanic: Employees hired to drive a school and/or Diocesan vehicle must comply with Diocesan insurance policies and procedures.

4116.6 Facility Maintenance / Cleaning Staff (12 or 10 months)

Custodian / Maintenance

- The custodian and/or cleaning staff, either paid or volunteer, shall function under the direction of the Administrator and shall be responsible to the Administrator.
- Employees hired to maintain the school's mechanical infrastructure (heating, cooling, plumbing, electrical, etc.) shall have the proper and appropriate license / certification.

4116.7 Catholic Identity / Spiritual Formation / Campus Ministry Staff (12 or 10 months)

Campus Minister / Retreat Director / Chaplain

- The Catholic Campus Ministry Staff, either paid or volunteer, shall function under the direction of the Administrator and shall be responsible to the Administrator.

4116.8 Marketing / Development / Advancement Office Staff (12 or 10 months)

Alumni Relations / Advancement Director / Fundraising Coordinator / Marketing Director, etc.

- The school's ancillary staff charged with marketing, development, advancement, fundraising, etc., either paid or volunteer, shall function under the direction of the Administrator and shall be responsible to the Administrator.

4118 School Volunteers

The school is strongly encouraged to incorporate volunteers, especially parents, grandparents, parishioners, and civic resource personnel into the school programs for the benefit of the students and their learning. Volunteers do not receive monetary compensation. Volunteers in all school programs are responsible to the Administrator or his/her delegate.

The following is expected of volunteers before they are invited to volunteer at the Catholic school:

- Participation in the Diocesan Safe Environment program
- Submission of a Criminal Background Check form

Volunteer expectations:

- They are covered by workers compensation only if conducting maintenance work
- They are expected to be covered by their own medical insurance
- They shall be provided a brief description of the functions they agree to perform
- They shall be aware of the period of time they are welcome to volunteer for the school
- They are entitled to training and supervisory assistance from the school

4120 Catholic Preference

It is the unique responsibility of a Catholic School to provide means and opportunities for religious education and development of students. For this reason, preference in hiring Support Staff will be given to persons who are not only Catholic but who also have an understanding of the Catholic faith and an active commitment to living that faith.

4122 Equal Opportunity – Non-Discrimination

All Catholic schools under the jurisdiction of the Roman Catholic Bishop do not discriminate on the basis of age, sex, race, color, national, or ethnic origin in its employment practice.

4200 Personnel Records

4202 Maintenance of Records

The School maintains the personnel records including, but not to be limited to, the employee's application, resume, pre-employment material, and all major documentation concerning employment including, but not to be limited to, salary information, absences, insurance(s), and job performance appraisals.

- The following documents shall be included in the employee's personnel file:
 - A signed copy of the [Support Staff Handbook Acknowledgment Form](#)
 - Signed copy of the [Moral Standards](#) agreement
 - Signed copy of the [Acceptable Use Policy](#)
 - Records of Social Security, name change, benefits, etc.
 - A signed resume of professional accomplishments, commendations, and acknowledgements
 - Signed copies of disciplinary actions
 - A record of absences, tardiness, and leaves.
 - All official certificates and licenses
- At the end of employment, employee's personnel records will be kept on location indefinitely.

4204 Employee Review of Personnel File

Access to personnel files is limited to the school administration and school employees. Employees may review their own personnel file in the presence of the school administration provided they arrange for an appointment with the school administration. Personnel files and their contents may not be removed from the school. Employees shall be provided a copy of their personnel file at the employee's expense.

4208 References/Verification of Employment

Any calls, documents, or questions concerning reference, unemployment claims, employment and salary histories, home addresses and telephone numbers, the location, or any other confidential matters regarding current or former employees will be referred to the school administration. Unless authorized by the employee, the school administration will only release the dates of employment and job title for reference calls. If the employee provides written authorization, the school administration may release additional information.

4210 Change of Employee Information

It is the responsibility of each employee to inform the Administrator or his/her delegate of any changes in employee information (e.g., name, address, telephone number).

4300 Working Conditions and Expectations

4304 Work Week and Hours

- The normal workweek schedule for employees extends from Monday through Friday for a total of 40 hours. Employees usually work eight hours in a workday. The Administrator may determine different working conditions and hours for specific jobs.
- The School will follow the provisions of the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act and any applicable state laws.
- During times of infectious disease outbreaks, the following considerations take effect:
 - Administrators are responsible for ensuring that their respective school buildings have in place plans for regular cleaning and disinfection of the building, including classrooms, common spaces, and bathrooms.
 - Employees will be provided personal protective (equipment), which may include face masks/shields and gloves. Employees will be given access to sanitizer or areas for handwashing. Employees will also be provided an area to change clothing prior to going home for the school day and, if available, can access showers.
 - Administrators may implement changes to the dress code to address health and safety concerns in consultation with the Superintendent and Diocesan Office.
 - The administrator is responsible for monitoring employee use of protective gear and employee safety for his or her respective assigned school building. Cleaning concerns should be brought to the Administrator/supervisor.
 - Employees will have concerns related to their own safety as well as the safety of others with whom they share a residence. If an employee states that he/she cannot physically work at a school while the pandemic remains ongoing, the administrator should try to accommodate their concerns, if possible

4304.1 Lunch and Rest Periods

- Rest and meal periods are intended to provide Support Staff Employees an opportunity for rest and a brief break from assigned job duties.
- Support Staff Employees are required to take a minimum lunch break of 30 minutes.
- Support Staff Employees working more than five (5) hours per day, but less than six (6) hours per day may waive their lunch break subject to the mutual written agreement of the Administrator and the employee.
- Support Staff Employees working less than five (5) hours per day are not required to take a lunch break.
- At the discretion of the Administrator, Support Staff Employees may work through their lunch period.

- A ten-minute rest period for every four hours (or major portion of a four hour period) worked by an employee will be granted. The Administrator or delegate will schedule rest periods in mid-morning and mid-afternoon.

4308 Employee Assignment

- Support Staff employees receive their assignment from the school administration.
- The school administration has the responsibility to determine all employee assignments and reassignments based on the school's needs. It may be necessary to add or alter the duties of an employee in lieu of reassignment.

4310 Attendance

- Each employee has the responsibility to maintain an excellent attendance record and to be present every day during the prescribed work hours.
- By accepting employment with the Catholic school, individuals are indicating that they will take appropriate action to manage their personal affairs; take precautions against accidents, both on and off the job; maintain good health standards; and be at work promptly every scheduled workday.
- While some allowances will be made for occurrences beyond the control of an employee, absenteeism may be cause for corrective action, up to and including termination of employment.

4312 Personal Appearance

- Each Employee of the Catholic School represents the local Catholic community and the greater Roman Catholic Church in his or her appearance as well as by his or her actions. The appearance and dress of school employees will be appropriate for such representation as well as for the working conditions, in accordance with the assigned responsibilities.
- The school administration is the final arbiter of appropriate professional dress.

4314 Personal Gain/Conflict of Interest

Employees have an obligation to conduct business within guidelines that prohibit actual or potential conflicts of interest. A conflict of interest occurs when an employee is in a position to influence a decision that may result in a personal gain for the individual employee or for a relative, as a result of the Diocesan operations. For the purposes of this section, a relative is any person who is related by blood or marriage, or whose relationship with the employee is similar to that of persons who are related by blood or marriage.

4314.1 Duty to Disclose

In connection with any actual or possible conflict of interest, an interested person must disclose the existence and nature of his or her financial interest and all material facts to the applicable council, board, committee, or diocesan director

4314.2 Gifts

Employees of the diocese shall not furnish services to or seek or receive for personal or any other person's gain, any payment, loan (except from a lending institution), gift or discount of more than nominal value or entertainment which goes beyond common courtesies usually associated with accepted business practice.

4316 Charitable Solicitation

Charitable contributions by employees may be given at their own discretion.

4317 Political Advocacy

Schools and school leaders, including but not limited to teachers, administrative staff, coaches and school volunteers should avoid candidate endorsements, contributions, partisan political activism and other impermissible political activity when such activity occurs within the context of an official school function (e.g., classroom instruction) or could otherwise be attributed to the school.

Requests by candidates or campaign organizations to accommodate a photo opportunity at a school function or facility or to otherwise access the Catholic school population must be approved by the diocese or the Montana Catholic Conference.

Please see the [Montana Catholic Conference's policy on Advocacy and Political Lobbying](#).

4318 Use of School Equipment

School equipment will be available for official use only. When using school equipment, employees are expected to exercise care, perform required maintenance, and follow all operating instructions, safety standards, and guidelines.

4320 Safety and Health

- The safety and health of all employees is of vital concern to the school. No employee is required to work at a job he/she knows is not safe or healthy.
- All employees are expected to carry their share of the responsibility for a safe and healthy work environment including:
 - Cooperate fully with all aspects of the school's safety and accident prevention program;
 - Comply with all rules and regulations regarding safety practices;
 - Be alert to possible hazards, and report any hazards to the person responsible for the work area.

4322 Safe Environment Training

In compliance with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, all school employees and volunteers who are regularly involved with minors and/or who have regular, unsupervised access to children shall have on file evidence of training and current compliance with the diocesan Safe Environment Program. All school employees shall have on file:

- An approved background check indicating they have no criminal conviction of a crime against a person
- Evidence that they have attended a Safe Environment Training offered by the diocese and are current with the training
- Noncompliance with any portion of this policy is cause for immediate termination.

The Diocese of Great Falls-Billings [Child Protection Policy](#) and the [Code of Pastoral Conduct for Employees](#).

4322.2 Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect

All school employees and volunteers are mandatory reporters and thus are required to report suspected child abuse or neglect promptly to:

- Montana Child and Family Services Division – 866.820.5437
- The school administration
- The Superintendent (who will notify the Bishop’s office)
- See [MCA 41](#) for more information.

4322.3 Cooperation

Upon request of any civil authority, Diocesan personnel shall cooperate fully in any investigation of child abuse and/or neglect. This includes investigations of alleged sexual abuse of minors who are now adults. They shall also cooperate in any resulting judicial proceeding.

4324 Work Related Injury or Illness

- All accidents, injuries, or illness incurred by the employee while on the job shall be reported to the school administration as soon as possible.
- The school and employee shall immediately initiate the Workers Compensation procedures established by the Diocese and/or local school.
- If medical treatment is required, the employee will be required to provide a release from a physician before being allowed to return to work.

4328 Outside Employment & Activities

Employees may engage in outside employment as long as it does not occur during their assigned Basic Work Day or affect the quality of their work in the school. When an employee is employed outside of their school employment, he/she will notify the school administration of the outside employment and include the employed responsibilities and activities. Catholic school employees may not maintain an outside interest or business or engage in any outside business or activities that may conflict with the doctrines of faith or morals of the Catholic Church.

4330 Discrimination, Harassment, & Intimidation

- The Catholic school and the diocese expect that all employees will act responsibly to establish a pleasant working environment free of discrimination, harassment, or intimidation.
- The Catholic school prohibits all forms of discrimination, harassment, or intimidation because of age, race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical or mental disability, or medical condition.
- The Diocese and the Catholic school prohibit any employee to discriminate, harass, or intimidate another employee. Examples include but are not limited to:
 - Verbal conduct such as epithets, derogatory jokes or comments, slurs or unwanted sexual advances, invitations or comments, or threats
 - Visual conduct such as derogatory and/or sexually oriented brochures, posters, photography, cartoons, drawings or gestures
 - Physical conduct such as assault, unwanted touching, blocking normal movements or interfering with work
 - Retaliation for having reported or threatening to report harassment.

4330.1 Reporting and Investigation Process

Any employee who believes that he or she is being harassed, discriminated against, or intimidated, for any reason, by a supervisor, co-worker, student, parent, vendor or anyone else in the school workplace should promptly take the following steps:

- Report the alleged act immediately to the School Administration. The complaint should include details of the incident, names of the individual(s) involved and the names of any witnesses.
 - An investigation of all complaints will take place immediately by school administration..
 - The privacy of the aggrieved individual, as well as that of the employee under investigation, will be respected at all times.
- If, after what the aggrieved employee considers to be a reasonable length of time, he/she believes inadequate action is being taken to resolve the complaint, he/she should go directly to the Superintendent or the diocesan personnel director with the complaint. The Superintendent, the diocesan personnel director, or delegate will fully and effectively investigate the complaint.
- Neither the school nor the diocese will retaliate against an employee for filing a complaint. The School and the diocese prohibit retaliation by supervisors or co-workers against any employee who makes a complaint regarding harassment or who cooperates in an investigation subsequent to a complaint.

4332 Confidentiality

- Any information obtained in the course of employment with the school is considered the property of the school and should not be disclosed to anyone outside of the school or inside the school, unless approved by the school administration.
- All information relating to personnel matters or the personal matters of school personnel, students or families of students are the private domain of the school. Unless approved by the school administration, such information shall not be discussed with anyone unless approved by the school administration.
- Employees with access to confidential information are charged with the responsibility and obligation of protecting the information. Access, authorized or not, does not confer the right to disclose such information.

4334 Tobacco, Alcohol, and Drug Free Environment

Catholic schools in the diocese shall be tobacco and drug free. Smoking shall be strictly prohibited within all school buildings for all employees, volunteers, visitors, and students. Though schools cannot enforce this rule at parish events, administrators should encourage this guideline for all events held in school buildings.

Any employee with a potential or actual drug and/or alcohol dependency will be encouraged to seek medical assistance through the Employee Assistance Program.

Possession of alcohol and/or drugs in the workplace, as well as reporting to work under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs is grounds for immediate dismissal. All employees share in the responsibility for adhering to and enforcing this policy. Any problems should be brought to the attention of the appropriate supervisor and handled through the normal chain of command.

4336 Communications with the Media

The school administration or its delegate is the sole media spokesperson for the school. Any questions from the media or when the media is requesting a comment from the school, they shall be referred to the school administration.

4338 Emergency Procedures

- The school shall have an Emergency Procedure Manual for all employees that will be annually updated and distributed.
- It is expected that all school employees will read and become familiar with the Emergency Procedure Manual.
- The school shall comply with the disaster and exit drills as required by Montana law

4340 Computer Technology Use and Access

4340.1 Hardware, Network, E-Mail, and Internet Use

- All school computers, files, servers, and e-mail, as well as school internet access and software are the property of the school and/or diocese and intended for official use only. Employees may use the technology at the level for which they have authorization.
- Employees may not use computers, files, servers, e-mail, and the internet in ways that are disruptive, offensive to others, harmful to morale, or that may be contrary to the Catholic moral standards.
- School equipment and email may not be used to solicit others for commercial ventures, political causes, outside organizations, or other matters that are not affiliated with the Catholic faith, diocese, or school.

4340.2 Software Use

- The School shall obtain a license for each software program used in the school for school operational purposes. Unless authorized by the software developer, the School does not have the right to reproduce any software for use on more than one computer.
- Employees are not allowed to install unauthorized software into school computers.
- Employees may only use software on local area networks or on multiple machines according to the software license agreements.

4340.3 Technology Use Agreement

Prior to using or accessing the school computers, servers, network, Internet access, email system, and/or software, all employees will read and sign the Electronic Mail, Network, and Internet Use Agreement.

4342 Technology Related Communication

In order to address the issue of electronic communication between adults and young people, the diocese has implemented the following guidelines.

4342.1 Emailing Students

School employees shall only use email accounts that are provided by the Catholic school to communicate electronically with students.

4342.2 Social Networking with Students

School employees will decline or disregard invitations from students to interact one-on-one through instant messaging, texting, and social networking sites.

4342.3 Texting with Students

School employees should avoid using a personal communication device or email account to contact students. However, in the event this occurs (when a school employee communicates with students involving schedule changes, cancelation of practice, weather cancellations, etc.), the following shall take place:

- School employees (and volunteers) should use school-administered communication platforms.
- If that is not possible, the parent(s) and the school administrator must also be notified by including them in the communication.
- If the parent(s) and the school administrator cannot be included in the message, the employee shall keep a record of that communication.

4342.4 Video Calls with Students

School employees will not use a webcam or Internet type of phone (telephony) that permits video transmission to communicate with students for personal communication. During school-authorized remote learning, webcams can be utilized but teachers/staff should use one-on-one video communication sparingly and with administrative supervision.

4342.5 Video Gaming with Students

School employees may not knowingly participate in any type of online games with students.

4342.6 Social Media Behavior

Engagement in technology related communication, including blogs and social networking, such as, but not limited to: Facebook, Instagram, SnapChat, Tik Tok, etc., may result in disciplinary action, if the content of the communication violates the confidentiality expectations or includes defamatory comments regarding the school, its employees, its students, the Catholic parishes, or the Catholic faith.

4344 Copyright Guidelines

Employees may copy media for personal and/or instructional purposes, in compliance with the federal copyright guidelines.

4358 Purchase Orders and Purchasing Process

The Administrator or his/her delegate is responsible for all purchases in the name of the school and shall authorize payment for goods and services.

4400 Compensation

4402 Salary, Pay Rate, and Anniversary Date

- The Catholic school will provide support staff with hourly rates of pay as recommended by the Diocese, within the financial resources available to the school, and that are equitable in relation to positions with comparable responsibilities. Support Staff compensation shall be adopted at a local level and will be socially just in its foundation and implementation.
- Exempt support staff employees may be paid on a salary basis depending on regulations.
- Non-exempt support staff employees shall be paid on an hourly basis.
- The Support Staff compensation structure will be reviewed annually. Any adjustments/changes to an individual employee's compensation will take place with the new fiscal year.
- An employee's anniversary date is defined as the employee's first day on the job with the school. Salary adjustments, when made, will take into account the anniversary date but will not take effect until the start of the fiscal year.

4404 Time Records

- The School is required by federal and state wage and hour laws to maintain daily time records for all non-exempt employees.
- All non-exempt employees must accurately record the starting and ending time of the workday, daily lunch breaks, and paid/unpaid absences such as vacation, sick days, leaves, and holidays on their time cards/sheets.
- The Administrator is required to approve the time cards/sheets of the employees.
- No employee may log in or out another employee's time card/sheet or allow another employee to log in or out his/her time card/sheet. Either action may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal (See Section 4700).

4406 Overtime for Non-Exempt Employees

- The Administrator must approve all overtime in writing in advance of the overtime.
- If an employee works overtime without written permission from the administrator, disciplinary action up to and including dismissal may result.
- Overtime shall be paid in accordance with applicable state and federal law after 40 hours of work in a workweek. The rate of pay will be 1.5 times the hourly rate for all hours worked after 40 hours in a week.
- Only hours worked are counted for the computation of overtime hours (e.g., holidays, vacation, paid & unpaid absences and leaves are not counted towards overtime).

4408 Makeup Work

- An employee shall petition the administration - in writing - to make up work hours that would be lost by the employee's absence from work due to a personal obligation.
- A formal request to makeup time must be submitted to and approved by the school administration in advance of the absence.
- If the administration grants make up work hours, the makeup work hours performed must be completed in the same workweek as the work time that was missed due to the employee's absence.
- An employee may not work through his/her lunch period to make up time missed due to an absence.

4414 Compulsory Deductions

- Federal and state income taxes along with Social Security and Medicare taxes will be deducted from an employee's gross salary. This tax is forwarded to the Federal Government together with a matching amount paid by the school. Federal and state income taxes vary with the number of exemptions claimed by each employee.
- Employees with children in the school may have their tuition obligation deducted from their pay.

4416 Voluntary Deductions

Employees may authorize deductions from their paychecks for dependent insurance and for other diocesan or school approved reasons.

4418 Garnishments

In the event garnishment or similar proceedings are instituted against an employee, the school will deduct the amount required by law.

4420 Reimbursement for Work Related Expenses

- The School will pay all actual and reasonable school / education-related expenses incurred by employees in the performance of their job responsibilities.
- Before the school provides reimbursement, the administration will approve all such expenses, including travel and materials expenses incurred by an employee, in advance.
- Mileage reimbursement will be calculated at the IRS rate per mile.
- Use of an employee's personal automobile on business requires the explicit prior approval of the administration. The employee shall possess a valid driver's license and minimum insurance coverage as required by the State of Montana and as required by the employee's insurance carrier for business use of a personal vehicle.

4500 Support Staff Employment Benefits

Eligible employees are provided a wide range of benefits. A number of the programs cover all employees in the manner prescribed by law. Employees working 0.75 FTE or greater (1,560 hours annually) are benefits eligible. Employees assigned to less than 0.75 FTE (1,560 hours annually) are not benefit eligible..

4501 Leave and Return to Work

The employee has no job responsibilities while on any type of leave described in this section.

4502 Holiday Leave

Annually, the following days will be considered paid holidays for 12 month benefit-eligible support staff and days upon which school will not be in session. Any changes to the Holiday Leave schedule will be approved by the Superintendent.

- New Year' Day
- Good Friday
- Easter Monday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Thursday
- Thanksgiving Friday
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas

After consultation with the local school governance, the local school may choose to include Washington's Birthday and/or Martin Luther King Day as Holiday Leave.

4502.1 Eligibility for Paid Holiday

- Only Regular 12 month Employees (4112.2) are eligible for holiday pay.

- Employees must work the last scheduled workday before a holiday and the first workday after a holiday to be eligible for holiday pay, unless time off on these days has been excused with pay (e.g. vacation, sick leave).
- Work on holidays is discouraged, since holidays are scheduled by the school as a provision for employee relaxation and time away from the job.
- If an employee is required to work on a scheduled holiday, the Administrator will authorize the work in advance and in writing.
- Non-exempt employees who must work on holidays will be compensated for the hours worked at their regular pay.

4502.1.1 Calendar Conflicts

- A designated holiday that falls on a Saturday will be observed on the preceding Friday.
- A designated holiday that falls on a Sunday will be observed on the following Monday.
- If a designated holiday falls within an employee's vacation period, the holiday is not counted as a vacation day.
- If a designated holiday falls within an employee's sick leave, it is not counted as a sick day.
- If a designated holiday falls within an employee's personal time off, it is not counted as personal time.

4504 Vacation Leave

The School provides paid vacations for all regular 12 month benefit eligible support staff employees for the purpose of rest and renewal.

4504.1 Eligibility

- The length of the vacation leave is based on the length of employment as a regular employee with the school.
- A probationary (new) employee becomes eligible to take vacation after his/her probationary period is successfully completed.
- During an employee's probationary period of employment, vacation time is accrued, but may not be used.
- Vacation accrual begins with the first month of hire regardless of the day of the month the employee was hired.
- Monthly accrual rates are determined by the employee's anniversary date, according to the schedule that follows:
 - Years of Service: Less than one (First year of employment)
 - 0.833 days/month with a maximum of 10 days
 - Years of Service: 1 through 5
 - 1.25 days/month with a maximum of 15 days
 - Years of Service: 6 through 12
 - 1.50 days/month with a maximum of 18 days
 - Years of Service: 13 through 19
 - 1.75 days/month with a maximum of 21 days
 - Years of Service: More than 19

- 2.00 days/month with a maximum of 24 days

Regular 12 month benefit-eligible employees are eligible for paid vacation prorated on the number of hours they regularly work each week. An employee does not accrue vacation during any period of unpaid leave, furlough, or planned layoff. Vacation time must be taken in no less than 30 minute increments. Exceptions may be given at the discretion of the Administrator. If the employee's 5th, 15th, 20th, or 25th anniversary date is on or before the last workday of the month, the employee will accrue the higher rate for that month.

4504.2 Vacation Scheduling

Annual vacation time will ordinarily be taken during a period when students are not in attendance. Use of several vacation days at once must be submitted in writing at least one month prior to the date of the planned vacation for approval by the school administration.

4504.3 Vacation Accrual

Regular full-time 12 month benefit eligible employees may not accrue vacation time beyond his/her maximum yearly total. When an employee has accrued unused vacation up to his/her maximum yearly total, no additional vacation time will be accrued until the employee has used accrued vacation to bring his/her unused vacation accrual under this maximum accrual cap. Employees will not receive pay in lieu of taking their vacation leave except upon termination.

4504.4 Holidays Falling in Vacation Periods

When an authorized holiday falls within an employee's vacation period, it will not be counted as a vacation day.

4504.5 Employment Termination and Vacation Time

- Upon termination, any accrued, unused vacation time will be paid to the employee at the employee's regular rate at the time of termination.
- It is recommended that when a regular full-time employee transfers to another Catholic school in the Montana, in lieu of paying the employee for unused vacation time, the new Catholic school honor all accrued vacation time on the employee's account.

4504.6 Personal Days for 10 month Support Staff Employees

10 month benefit eligible employees are provided with 3 paid personal days per year for periods of temporary absence.

- Personal days do not accumulate annually or upon termination.
- The cap of personal days is 3 at any time.
- Unused personal days are not compensable either annually or upon termination.

4506 Sick Leave

Benefit eligible support staff employees are provided with 10 paid sick days for periods of temporary absence due to personal illnesses or injuries or illnesses or injuries of immediate family members and may not be used for any other absence.

- Immediate family is defined as the employee's spouse, parent, child, sibling; the employee's spouse's parent, child, or sibling; the employee's child's spouse; grandparents or grandchildren.
- Sick leave can accumulate up to 63 days.

- Employees are not reimbursed for unused days either annually or upon termination.

4506.1 Process

Employees who are unable to report to work due to illness or injury should notify the school administration before the scheduled start of the work day.

- Sick leave time must be taken in no less than 30 minute increments.
- Sick leave benefits are intended solely to provide income protection in the event of illness or injury and may not be used for any other absence. Unused sick leave benefits will not be paid to employees while they are employed or upon termination of employment.

4506.2 Sick Leave Verification

- The administration has the right to require employees to provide medical verification of an illness or injury if he/she has taken five (5) or more consecutive days of sick leave.
- The administration has the right to request and receive confirmation from the appropriate licensed health/medical professional (e.g. physician, psychiatrist, and/or psychologist) that the employee is able to return to work if the employee has taken five (5) or more consecutive days of sick leave.
- Employees are to provide medical verification every month for a disabling condition that lasts for more than ten (10) consecutive calendar days.

4508 Child Care

Benefit eligible employees are provided with childcare assistance as outlined in the following paragraphs.

4508.1 Cafeteria Plan / Flexible Spending Account

Employees choose benefits (including childcare) from a list of options and contribute a part of pretax salaries to a childcare account. This option allows employees to minimize the federal and state tax they must pay on childcare dollars.

4508.2 Flextime Scheduling

Employees may request the opportunity to vary their work schedules (within the school-defined limits) to better accommodate childcare responsibilities.

4510 Workers' Compensation Insurance

- All school employees are provided workers' compensation insurance. This program covers any injury sustained in the course of employment that requires medical, surgical, or hospital treatment. Subject to applicable legal requirements, workers' compensation insurance provides benefits after a short waiting period or, if the employee is hospitalized, immediately.
- Employees who sustain work-related injuries, regardless of how insignificant the injury may appear, should immediately inform the Administration and/or Diocesan Human Resource Director, who will in turn, immediately call the accident into the current insurance carrier. No matter how minor an on-the-job injury may appear, it is important that it be reported immediately.
- If more than 30 days have elapsed since the work-related injury is reported, neither the insurance carrier nor the diocese will cover the worker's job-related injury.

- Neither the school, the diocese, nor the insurance carrier will be liable for the payment of workers' compensation benefits for injuries that occur during an employee's voluntary participation in any off-duty recreational, social, or athletic activity sponsored by the diocese or the school.

4512 Time Off to Vote

If employees are unable to vote in an election during their nonworking hours, the schools will grant up to one hour of paid time off to vote. Employees should request time off to vote from the Administration at least two working days prior to Election Day.

4514 Bereavement Leave

- Benefit eligible employees are provided Bereavement Leave benefits for periods of temporary absence due to a death of an immediate family member.
- Up to five (5) work days of paid bereavement leave will be provided to eligible employees.
- Immediate family is defined as the employee's spouse, parent, child, sibling; the employee's spouse's parent, child, or sibling; the employee's child's spouse; grandparents or grandchildren.
- At the discretion of the Administration, employees may have time off to attend funerals of non-family members.
- Bereavement Leave days do not accumulate annually and will not be compensated upon termination.

4516 Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

The diocese may provide an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to all benefit eligible employees. Additional information on the EAP is available from the Administration or his/her delegate.

4518 Jury Duty

The diocese encourages employees to fulfill their civic responsibilities by serving jury duty when required. The school will not deduct personal days.

4518.1 Salary Compensation

If the employee on jury duty received compensation, the employee will present to the Administration his/her receipt of jury duty compensation. Upon completion of jury duty service, the school may deduct from the employee's salary the amount the employee received for jury duty compensation.

4520 Benefits Continuation - FMLA

- Continuation of the health insurance benefit under this clause shall be in compliance with the US Family Medical Leave Act.
- The FMLA entitles eligible employees of covered employers to take unpaid, job-protected leave for specified family and medical reasons with continuation of group health insurance coverage under the same terms and conditions as if the employee had not taken leave. Eligible employees are entitled to:
 - Twelve workweeks of leave in a 12-month period for:
 - the birth of a child and to care for the newborn child within one year of birth;

- the placement with the employee of a child for adoption or foster care and to care for the newly placed child within one year of placement;
- to care for the employee's spouse, child, or parent who has a serious health condition;
- a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the essential functions of his or her job;
- any qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that the employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent is a covered military member on "covered active duty;" or
- Twenty-six workweeks of leave during a single 12-month period to care for a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness if the eligible employee is the service member's spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin (military caregiver leave).

4522 Parental Leave

- Parental leave is available for benefits-eligible parents at the time of birth or adoption of a child.
- Benefits-eligible employees will be granted six consecutive calendar weeks of paid leave at the time of birth or adoption. Benefits-eligible employees can then utilize up to 6 more consecutive calendar weeks of unpaid leave. Benefits will continue during this unpaid leave provided the employee is still under contract.
- After the paid leave, the employee is not eligible for sick leave unless there is another qualifying event. The employee can use personal/vacation days to reduce the financial impact of the unpaid leave.

4524 Health Insurance

Benefits-eligible employees shall be afforded access to a comprehensive health insurance plan on the first day of the month following commencement of employment. Employees working 0.75 FTE or greater shall have health insurance provided by the school or receive a supplement. The amount paid will depend on the Diocesan plan.

Employees assigned to less than 0.75 FTE are not eligible for the health insurance benefit.

- The health insurance benefit may be extended to include dependents (spouse and/or children) of benefit eligible-employees.
- A change in employment classification that would result in loss of eligibility to participate in the health insurance plan may qualify an employee for benefits continuation

4524.1 Health Insurance Premium Reimbursement

The Catholic school may reimburse the spouse of a benefit eligible employee who chooses to participate in a spouse / family health insurance plan. The spouse shall provide the Catholic school with evidence of financial payment to his/her health insurance plan for the Catholic school employee. The total reimbursement to the spouse may not exceed what it would cost the Catholic school employee to participate in the Diocesan health insurance plan.

4524.2 Medicare Health Service

An employee of Medicare age has the choice of the Diocesan Health Insurance Plan and/or Medicare. All financial obligations associated with the Medicare premium shall be paid by the employee.

4526 Life Insurance

The diocese may provide a basic life insurance plan for benefit-eligible employees. Eligible employees may participate in the life insurance plan subject to all terms and conditions of the agreement between the diocese and the insurance carrier. Details of the basic life insurance plan, including benefit amounts, are described in the Summary Plan Description provided to eligible employees.

4528 Long-Term Disability

The diocese may provide long-term disability (LTD) insurance to benefit-eligible employees to cope with an illness or injury that results in a long-term absence from employment. LTD is designed to ensure a continuing income for employees who are disabled and unable to work. Eligible employees may participate in the LTD plan subject to all terms and conditions of the agreement between the diocese and the insurance carrier.

4530 Savings Plan - 403(b) (7)

The diocese may provide a 403(b) (7) Savings Plan to benefit eligible employees for future financial security for retirement. The timeline upon which an employee is eligible to join the Diocesan 403(b)(7) Savings Plan and the employer / employee contribution are determined by the Diocesan 403(b)(7) Savings Plan.

4534 Family/School Leave

Parents, grandparents, and legal guardians shall be allowed to take up to twenty (20) hours of paid leave per school year to observe or participate in their children's (or grandchildren) school activities at any Kindergarten through 12th grade level. The employee is required to provide the Administration with at least five (5) calendar days advance notice when using this benefit and only applies to benefits-eligible employees.

4536 Tuition Assistance

Benefit eligible employees shall receive K – 12 tuition assistance for their children attending a Diocesan Catholic School. The rate of tuition assistance shall be established by the administration after consultation with the school Council/Board.

4540 Retirement Incentive - Health Insurance Continuation

An individual Catholic school/Catholic school system may offer a retirement incentive for employees as a retirement incentive with the following conditions:

- The employee has twenty or more years of full-time service
- The employee is at least 60 years old
- The school administration consults with the school Council / Board and receives supportive consensus for a Retirement Incentive.
- The Retirement Incentive shall be approved by the Superintendent.

4542 Military Leave

A military leave of absence will be granted to employees who are absent from work because of service in the US uniformed services in accordance with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). Advance notice of military service is required, unless military necessity prevents such notice or it is otherwise impossible or unreasonable.

4546 Leave Without Pay (LWOP)

An employee may request LWOP for personal leave reasons only after his/her personal leave days are used. An employee may request LWOP for sick leave reasons only after his/her sick leave days are used. LWOP Provisions:

- Employees granted LWOP for more than 10 (ten) work days may be required to pay for all benefit insurance premiums (health, vision, dental, disability, life, etc.) while on LWOP.
- Employees granted LWOP for more than 20 (twenty) work days shall be responsible to pay all benefit insurance premiums (health, vision, dental, disability, life, etc.) while on LWOP.
- LWOP may not exceed 60 (sixty) work days. Upon the 61st work day of LWOP, the employee will either return to work or resign from employment.

4600 Performance Appraisal / Evaluation

4602 Philosophy

The Diocesan employee evaluation and observation is predicated upon several basic beliefs.

- The primary focus of an evaluation and observation process must be upon what is and what contributes to effective education in the spirit and principles of the Roman Catholic Faith.
- The evaluation and observation process must be applied uniformly and fairly.
- The evaluation and observation process must be a continuous process, capable of yielding useful information and valid conclusions.

4604 Accountability

The purpose of an evaluation and observation process is to assess the employee and his/her effectiveness, promote professional growth, provide a basis for personnel decisions, and comply with the policies of the diocese and laws of the State of Montana. The evaluation and observation process will assure a high quality of education for students, foster continual improvement of instruction, spirituality & education, promote employee growth and development, enhance employee - administration communication, and provide a basis for identifying sub-standard and/or unsatisfactory performance that may require appropriate personnel action, including termination or non-renewal of employment.

4606 Definitions

4606.1 Emerging Employees (first or second year of employment)

- Informal Observations:
 - All Emerging Employees will have at least two (2) documented Informal Observations each year.
 - The Emerging Employee will receive a copy of each completed Informal Observation Form and a copy will be included in the Employee's personnel file.
- Summary Evaluation:
 - All Emerging Employees will have one (1) Summary Evaluation each year.
 - The Summary Evaluation will be reviewed in a conference setting between the Administrator and Employee.
 - A Summary Evaluation will be documented for each Emerging Employee before the end of the school year.

- The Summary Evaluation will be a summative review of an Employee, including but not limited to the Informal Observations.
 - The Employee will receive a copy of the completed Summary Evaluation Form and a copy will be included in the Employee's personnel file.
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4606.1 Proficient Employee (three (3) or more years of employment)

- Informal Observation:
 - All Proficient Employees will have at least one (1) documented Informal Observations each year.
 - The Employee will receive a copy of each completed Informal Observation Form and a copy will be included in the Employee's personnel file.
- Summary Evaluation:
 - All Proficient Employees will have a Summary Evaluation every other year.
 - The Summary Evaluation will be reviewed in a conference setting between the Administrator and Employee.
 - The Summary Evaluation will be documented before June 1, in the year of the Employee's Evaluation.
 - The Summary Evaluation will be a summative review of the Employee, including but not limited to the Informal Observations.
 - The Employee will receive a copy of the completed Summary Evaluation Form and a copy will be included in the Employee's personnel file.

4610 Plan of Improvement

- In the interest of maintaining good morale and effective school personnel management, all Employees will be accorded a Plan of Improvement when necessary.
- If an observation Process indicates an Employee is recognized as having professional difficulties and has failed to meet expectations stated in the school's standards, he/she will be provided assistance to correct the difficulties and/or meet the expectations and time to incorporate the recommended changes.
- With any personnel action, related to the observation and evaluation of an Employee, the Plan of Improvement (POI) Form should be used.
- Before an Administrator issues a formal Plan of Improvement, the Diocesan Superintendent of Schools will be notified.
- The Superintendent will be made aware of any and all steps used in the Plan of Improvement, as well as an updated summary of each conference.
- All steps used in the Plan of Improvement shall be documented in the Employee's personnel file.
- If an Employee fails to improve his/her performance within the time frame allotted, the Employee may be subject to termination or suspension of employment, with or without pay.
- Nothing contained herein shall preclude the Administrator and/or the Diocese from initiating termination proceedings against any Employee who has committed an act that would constitute grounds for revocation or suspension of a professional license or contrary to the teachings and principles of the Catholic Faith.

4612 Professional Expectations for Catholic School Support Staff

- Quality: The employee is accurate, thorough, and neat
- Productivity: The employee's work productivity is effective at a maximized efficiency
- Job Knowledge: The employee possesses the practical / technical knowledge required to effectively perform assigned responsibilities

- Reliability: The employee can be relied upon regarding task completion, follow-up, and anticipation of what needs to be done
- Attendance: The employee is punctual, observes prescribed work hours, and has an acceptable overall attendance record
- Independence: The employee competently performs work with little or no supervision
- Creativity: The extent to which the employee proposes ideas, finds new and better ways of doing things, and improves the work environment.
- Initiative: The extent to which the employee seeks out new assignments and assumes additional duties when necessary or when appropriate
- Adherence to Policy: The extent to which the employee follows protocol, procedures, regulations and policies
- Interpersonal Relationships: The extent to which the employee is willing and demonstrates an ability to cooperate, work, and communicate with fellow employees and outside contacts
- Judgement: The extent to which the employee demonstrates proper judgment and decision making skills
- Catholic Identity: The extent to which the employee demonstrates maturity and consistency with regard to promoting and supporting the mission of the school and the tenets of the Catholic faith

4700 Disciplinary Action and Due Process

4702 Disciplinary Action

The Administrator is responsible for taking disciplinary action to remedy employee problems. These problems include, but are not limited to, work performance problems, attendance, or any employee action that may interfere with the work of the school.

Disciplinary Action may include:

- Suspension with pay
- Suspension without pay
- Termination

4704 Causes for Disciplinary Action

- Causes for disciplinary action include, violation of the terms of the support staff letter of employment or failure to meet the expectations of employment as established by the school.
- Examples of acts that may lead to disciplinary action are listed below. This list is not an exhaustive list of types of conduct that may result in disciplinary actions up to and including termination.
 - Inability to fulfill work-related expectations
 - Violating the terms of the Support Staff Handbook
 - Personal conduct or lifestyle at variance with or contrary to the policies of the Diocese, its parishes and schools, or the moral and religious teachings of the Roman Catholic Church
 - Insubordination

- Violation of local, state, or federal law
- Dishonesty
- Falsification of records, information on employment application, or references
- Working under the influence of intoxicants or illegal drugs, including legal drugs that are used in an unauthorized manner or by an unauthorized person
- Unlawful harassment, hazing, or intimidation of students, parents, or employees
- Unsatisfactory job performance
- Unprofessional conduct in relation to parents, students, other staff, or visitors to the school or school event
- Breach of professional ethics
- Inability to work cooperatively with supervisors, peers, or subordinates
- Violation of employer rules
- Habitual or excessive tardiness or absence from work or from employee's work area
- Disclosure of confidential information
- Failure to meet expectations as outlined in a Plan of Improvement
- The School may, in its sole discretion, utilize whatever form of discipline is deemed appropriate under the circumstances, up to, and including, termination of employment for employee violations of these conduct guidelines.

4706 Criminal / Immoral Activity

The Administrator may impose disciplinary action, including leave of absence, suspension with or without pay, or termination for an employee against whom formal charges have been filed for the commission of a crime, committing immoral acts, or having been arrested or accused of same, pending outcome of investigation or adjudication of innocence or guilt.

4708 Problem Resolution for School Personnel (Due Process)

4708.1 Purpose

The Diocese is committed to providing the best possible working conditions for its employees. Part of this commitment is encouraging an open and frank atmosphere in which any problem, complaint, suggestion, or questions receives a timely response from the administrator.

4708.2 Basic Principles

The Diocese strives to ensure fair and honest treatment of all employees. Administration, faculty, support staff, and volunteers are expected to treat each other with mutual respect. All employees are encouraged to offer positive and constructive criticism.

4708.3 Application

- If an employee disagrees with established rules of conduct, policies, or practices, he/she can express the concern through the problem resolution procedure. No employee will be penalized, formally or informally, for voicing complaints with the school in a reasonable, business-like manner, or for using the problem resolution procedure.
- If a situation occurs when employees believe that a condition of employment or a decision affecting them is unjust or inequitable, they are encouraged to make sure of the following steps. The employee may discontinue the procedure at any step.

- It is expected that each step below will be completed in ten (10) working days, unless otherwise noted by the employee or administration.
 1. Within ten (10) working days of the incident, the employee will present the problem to the Local School Administration.
 2. The Administration will listen to the employee, seek a resolution, and formally respond (in writing) to the employee.
 3. If, in the opinion of the employee, the Administration's initial resolution is unsatisfactory, the employee may request a re-evaluation of the resolution by formally requesting (in writing) a re-evaluation.
 4. The Administration will formally respond to the employee and submit a copy of this response to the Superintendent.
 5. If, in the opinion of the employee, the Administration's re-evaluation of the matter is unsatisfactory, he/she may formally present the matter to the Superintendent.
 6. After receipt of the written documentation from the employee and Administration, the Superintendent will render a decision, stating findings of fact, and present his/her decision, in writing, to the employee and Local School Administration.

The Superintendent's decision is final, except as stipulated by canon or state law.

4800 Termination and Planned Layoff

4802 Termination

Termination is the end of employment, which may be the result of an employee dismissal. Termination will be treated in a confidential, professional manner by all concerned. Terminated employees are not granted severance pay but will be paid for any earned pay and accrued vacation within fifteen (15) days of termination or the next payday, whichever one is closest to the termination day. No payment will be made for any accrued but unused sick leave. Non-renewal of an annual contract is not considered termination of employment.

4802.1 Voluntary Resignation During a Contract/Work Agreement

- Employees who resign are those who choose to terminate their employment with the school.
- The Administrator will inform the Council/Board of the resignation.
- Employees who voluntarily resign are encouraged to provide the school with at least two weeks' notice which includes the reasons for resignation and the date of termination.
- After receipt of the resignation, the school reserves the right to terminate employment immediately subject to payout of the two weeks' notice and items above.
- Employees who fail to report to work for three consecutive working days without notifying the Administrator will be considered as having voluntarily resigned from employment.

4802.2 Voluntary Resignation at the End of a Contract/Work Agreement

If an employee decides not to pursue another contract/work agreement, the school will request a letter of resignation recording that decision.

4802.3 Dismissal: Terminating by the School

- Any Support Staff employee may be terminated at any time, with cause, at the sole and absolute discretion of the school administration.

- The final paycheck will be issued within 15 days of termination.

4804 Lay-Off (Reduction in Force)

- When a reduction in force is necessary or when positions are eliminated, the school administration will use his/her discretion to identify positions to be eliminated or reduced and/or employees to be laid-off or receive an FTE (full-time equivalency) reduction.
- Reasons for a Reduction in Force may include but are not limited to:
 - Work requirements
 - Experience and skills
 - Experience and/or education
 - Student enrollment or projected student enrollment
 - School finances or projected finances
 - Potential for reassignment within the organization
 - Length of service
- The school administration will provide two (2) weeks' notice to the Employee or provide two (2) week's severance pay in lieu of notice.

4805 Furlough

- In the event of an emergency which results in the temporary closing of school operations, employees may be placed on furlough at the election of the school
- This maintains "job attachment" with the school and does not necessitate a termination
- Benefits status as of the date of the furlough will remain in place, including sick/vacation/personal days
- There is no severance or notification period required. The furloughed employee is encouraged to apply for unemployment benefits. If so, the school will attempt to coordinate with the employee so there is no interruption of pay between the end of a regular pay period and unemployment insurance payments
- When school resumes, employee will be immediately returned to active status

4806 Planned Layoff: Periodic Cessation of a Position

- Certain school positions may be designed with periods of planned annual layoff due to the school's decision to temporarily discontinue a position while school is not in session (e.g., the kitchen staff has a planned layoff during the summer).
- These planned annual layoffs will be included and described in the employee's job description and the specific dates for each planned layoff should be given in writing to the employee at least one month before the commencement of the layoff.
- The School shall extend health insurance benefits to regular employees on a planned layoff. During the layoff period, the employee's health insurance premium payment for dependent coverage must be received by the school on the 20th of each month to continue dependent coverage for the following month. Failure to pay the dependent premium cost will result in the cessation of dependent health coverage at the end of the month. Employees who will be on planned layoff in the future may elect to withhold the upcoming dependent premium costs from their payroll.

4808 Termination, Lay-Off, and Non-Renewal Authority

- Termination, Lay-Off, and Non-Renewal authority rests with the school administration in consultation with the Superintendent of Schools and Diocesan Director of Human Resources.

4810 Appeal of Termination or Lay-Off

- The Employee, by his/her acceptance of employment by the school agrees that, in the event of such disputes, he/she and the school agree to submit the matter to the employee problem resolution procedures. The Employee agrees that Policy 4708: Problem Resolution for School Personnel (Due Process) shall be the exclusive forum for any dispute arising out of termination.
- The provisions above regarding the problem resolution procedures in the event of termination represent the final, express and complete agreement between the school and its employees regarding the terms and conditions of employment.

4812 Reinstatement of Employment

- Employees who are terminated by the school and then reemployed by the school or any other school in the diocese will lose their original anniversary date and be assigned a new date corresponding to their first day on the job after re-employment.
- The school administration, at his/her discretion, may choose to reinstate an employee with his/her original anniversary date based on the circumstances involved in the termination.

4814 Disposition of Benefits upon Termination

4814.1 For Employees Subject to Voluntary Resignation or Dismissal

- All employee benefits are automatically canceled on the employee's effective date of termination of employment. Disposition of benefit plans for employees terminated are as follows:
- Employees Retirement Income Plan: Any employee separating from the diocese will be referred to Diocesan Director of Human Resources for counseling regarding available retirement and vesting privileges, if appropriate.
- Life Insurance: Group life insurance coverage ends on the last day worked.
- Medical Insurance: Health care benefits for the employee and, if applicable, the employee's dependents, terminate on the last day of the month of the employee's termination.

4814.2 For Employees Subject to Lay Off (Reduction in Force) / Planned Lay Off

All employee benefits are automatically canceled on the date that the former employee's final pay check is issued. Disposition of benefit plans for employees terminated are as follows:

- Employees Retirement Income Plan: Any employee separating from the diocese will be referred to Diocesan Director of Human Resources for counseling regarding available retirement and vesting privileges, if appropriate.
- Life Insurance: Group life insurance coverage terminates with the distribution of the final paycheck.
- Medical Insurance: Health care benefits for the employee and, if applicable, the employee's dependents, terminate on the last day of the month of the employee's final paycheck.

4816 Final Paycheck & School Property

- The final paycheck of a resigning employee who has given notice of at least three working days will be available to the employee on his/her last day of work. When an employee resigns from employment without notice or notice is less than three working days, the final paycheck will be available to the employee on the next regular payday.
- The employee will surrender all keys and any other School property in his or her possession prior to receiving his/her final paycheck.