

MONTANA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS



Policy Manual

SECTION 5000: ADMINISTRATION

2022-23

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5000 Administration Handbook

5002 Publication, Purpose and Limitations

- This handbook is for general guidance and is not intended to be a contract. It is designed to provide Catholic school employees 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 Schools- GFB 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.

5004 Nature of Employment

The school and the administrator are contractually obligated to fulfill the terms and conditions of the 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-GFB, this agreement may be modified or terminated and if not so terminated and the School and its ongoing operation are considered safe, the Administrator will be remain obligated to perform his/her duties and responsibilities under this agreement.

5006 Administration

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

5100 Employment

The Catholic school administrator is the academic officer of the school, engaged by the Diocese and financially compensated by the Catholic school, as outlined in his/her employment agreement.

5102 Outside Employment

School Administrators may not engage in any outside employment or other activities that may interfere or conflict with their duties and responsibilities of the school or the interests of the school.

5104 Employment Requirements

5104.1 Catholic Moral Standards

- School administrators will serve as ministers representing the church and teaching the faith.
- 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.
- Administrators are encouraged to concentrate their continued professional education and development in Catholic theology, history, and practice.

5104.2 Federal, State, and Diocesan Prerequisites

- 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 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 Diocese's general insurance liability policy. Notice of declined insurability from the Diocese's insurance company will immediately cause the employee to be considered ineligible for further employment.

5104.3 Health Requirement

Prospective and current employees must assure the Diocese of their ability to perform the essential functions of the position with or without reasonable accommodation.

5104.4 Educator License Requirement

Prior to offering an employment agreement, prospective administrators must provide evidence that they hold or are eligible to hold the appropriate Montana State Educator License with an applicable school administration endorsement. Exceptions can be made for non-OPI accredited schools.

5106 School Administration - Defined

The Catholic school administrator is an academic and/or administrative officer of the school, engaged by the diocese and/or local council / board and financially compensated by the Catholic school system / parish, as outlined in the administrator's letter of employment and corresponding job description.

5108 Employment of Immediate Family

Employment of an Administrator's immediate family member is prohibited if the relative is working in the same location and/or supervised by the Administrator. For purposes of policy, 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.

5110 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. All employees hired after November 6, 1986, will be required, as a condition of employment, to document their eligibility to work.

5112 Employment 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.

5116 Administrative Employment Agreements/Contracts

The Catholic Schools Office/direct supervisor will provide an official employment offer for each school administrator.

- All employment offers are for one academic year.
- The employment offer is issued with no assurance of renewal.
- There is no tenure of any kind in Catholic schools operated within the diocese.
- The Superintendent of Schools/direct supervisor will ordinarily notify an administrator by March if there is no intent to offer continued employment.
- Upon receiving an offer of employment agreement the administrator has ten (10) calendar days to accept or decline the offer.
- Failure by the administrator to inform the Superintendent/direct supervisor within ten (10) calendar days shall constitute a rejection of the employment offer.

5122 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.

5200 Personnel Records

5202 Maintenance of Records

The school will maintain personnel records that include original employment application, professional resume / curriculum vitae, pre-employment material, and all significant documentation concerning employment.

The following documents shall be included in the employee's personnel file:

- A signed copy of the [Handbook Acknowledgment](#) Form
- Records of Social Security, name change, benefits, etc.
- Signed copy of the [Acceptable Use Policy](#).
- 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
- Official copies of all college transcripts.

Employee personnel records must be kept at least 8 years beyond the date of retirement, resignation or termination.

5204 Review of Personnel File

- Administrators may review their personnel files in the presence of another administrator/direct supervisor.
- Administrators and staff personnel files and documents may not be removed from the school.
- Administrators or staff will be provided copies of personnel records upon written and signed request at the employee's expense.

5206 Security and Confidentiality of Employee Information

- The School respects the privacy of its employees and strives to ensure confidentiality with regard to all employee information. The School will not release any employee's information, without a documented written request to release information from the individual employee.

5208 References/Verification of Employment

- The school administration is responsible for the security and confidentiality of all personnel records. Access to personnel records may only be granted by the school administration.
- The Catholic school respects the privacy of its employees and strives to ensure confidentiality with regard to all employee information and therefore will only verify employment and rehire status from a reference call.

5210 Change of Employee Information

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

5300 Terms of Employment

5302 Employment Status

- All Administrators are employed under the terms and conditions of an annual employment agreement, established for one academic year.
- The offering of Administrative employment with the Catholic School does not grant tenure, either by fact or by implication.

5304 Basic Work Day

- The School will follow the provisions of the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act and any applicable state laws regarding compliance to the Basic Work Day.
- Administrators will be in school no less than thirty (30) minutes before the school day begins and thirty (30) minutes after the school day ends, unless specifically excused by the supervising Administration.
- 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 Diocese/parish.

- 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 Diocese/parish.
- Employees may have concerns related to their own safety as well as the safety of others with whom they share a residence.

5310 Attendance

Administrators are expected to maintain an excellent attendance record and to be present every day during the prescribed work hours. By accepting employment with the 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.

5312 Personal Appearance and Professional Dress

The Catholic school Administrator represents the local Catholic community and the greater Roman Catholic Church in his or her appearance as well as by his or her actions. Therefore, the Administrator's appearance and dress will be professional, appropriate, and set the standard of professional dress expectations for all Catholic school employees.

5314 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.

5316 Charitable Solicitation

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

5317 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.

Please see the Diocese of Great Falls Billings [policy on Advocacy and Political Lobbying](#).

5318 Use of Laptops, Telephones, Copiers, and Other 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.

- Employees will notify the school administration if any equipment, machines, or tools appear to be damaged, defective, or in need of repair

5320 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:
 - o Cooperate fully with all aspects of the school's safety and accident prevention program;
 - o Comply with all rules and regulations regarding safety practices;
 - o Be alert to possible hazards, and report any hazards to the person responsible for the work area.

5322 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 completed 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](#).

5322.1 Safe Environment Protocol

In order to fulfill the expectations of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People and to establish a safe environment for all children, school employees and volunteers will:

- Complete the required Diocesan Safe Environment training session within thirty (30) calendar days of the first day of employment or volunteer opportunity
- Maintain the safe environment educational expectations
- Earn the required certification, as determined by the diocese
- Sign the required Diocesan forms that certifies they have read and understand Diocesan expectations for training, professional development, and certification for initial or continued employment in the school.
- Noncompliance with any portion of this policy is cause for immediate termination.

5322.2 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 and superintendent
 - The Bishop's Office

See [MCA 41](#) for more information.

5322.3 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.

5324 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.

5326 Employee Social Events

Attendance is voluntary at any school-sponsored social event for employees.

5328 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.

5330 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:
 - o Verbal conduct such as epithets, derogatory jokes or comments, slurs or unwanted sexual advances, invitations or comments, or threats
 - o Visual conduct such as derogatory and/or sexually oriented brochures, posters, photography, cartoons, drawings or gestures
 - o Physical conduct such as assault, unwanted touching, blocking normal movements or interfering with work
 - o Retaliation for having reported or threatening to report harassment.

5330.1 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 Administration and/or Superintendent. 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.
- 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.

5332 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.
- Montana Catholic schools comply with the requirements of FERPA and HIPPA as they apply to private schools.

5334 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.

5336 Communications with the Media

The Administration or delegate is the sole media spokesperson for the school.

5338 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.

5340 Computer Technology Use and Access

5340.1 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.

5340.2 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.

5340.3 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.

5342 Technology Related Communication

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

5342.1 Emailing Students

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

5342.2 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.

5342.3 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.

5342.4 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 should use one-on-one video communication sparingly and with administrative supervision.

5342.5 Video Gaming with Students

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

5342.6 Social Media Behavior

Engagement in technology related communication, including blogs and social networking, such as, but not limited to: Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, SnapChat, 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.

5344 Copyright Guidelines

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

5358 Purchase Orders and Purchasing Process

5358.1 Responsibility and Authorization

The Administration or his/her delegate is responsible for all purchases in the name of the school and shall authorize payment for goods and services under the following conditions:

- The proposed payment falls within the school's budget and within the budget limits.
- The proposed payment complies with purchasing policies and regulations.
- The proposed payment is for goods and/or services that have been inspected and certified by the responsible employee as having been received in acceptable condition.

5358.2 Purchases

All orders in which the school is expected to make payment must be using the school's Purchase Order (PO) system and be pre-approved by the Administrator before an order is made.

- Orders made without prior approval purchase order will result in the employee being held personally liable for the order.

5358.3 Process

- Prior to making an order, employees will obtain and fill out a Purchase Order (PO) Form.
- The employee will present the PO to the appropriate administrator for approval.
- A signed copy of the PO will be presented to the Business / Finance Office.
- For example:
 - o The employee or Business / Finance Office staff will make the purchase, using the information outlined on the PO.
 - o When the shipment arrives, the employee will check the contents to be sure everything ordered was delivered.
 - o The employee will mark the packing slip with the date received and give the packing slip to the Business / Finance Office staff.
 - o The Business / Finance Office staff will pay for the shipment.
 - o The Business / Finance Office will not pay for merchandise until receipt of delivery is made available.

5400 Compensation

5402 Salaries

Salaries for Administrators in Catholic schools are adopted at a local level and socially just.

5406 Pay Day

If an employee is absent on payday and is not receiving payment through direct deposit, the check will be held for his/her return or upon request or mailed to the employee's home address, upon request. It is the employee's responsibility to keep his or her current address on file with the school.

5408 Advance Payment of Salary

Requests for salary advances should not be granted.

5410 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. At the school's discretion, employees with children in the school may have their tuition obligation deducted from their pay.

5412 Voluntary Deductions

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

5414 Garnishments

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

5416 Reimbursement for Work Related Expenses

The School will pay all actual and reasonable school/education-related expenses incurred by Administrators in the performance of their job responsibilities. Before the school provides reimbursement, the administrator will consult with the School Council/Board, direct supervisor, or Superintendent for expenses, including travel and materials expenses incurred in the wake of work-related responsibilities, in advance.

Mileage reimbursement will be calculated at the IRS rate per mile. Use of an employee's personal automobile on business requires 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.

5500 Administration 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 are benefit eligible, pro-rated on their FTE status.
- Employees assigned to less than 0.75 FTE are not benefit eligible.

5501 Leave and Return to Work

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

5502 Holiday Leave

Annually, the following days will be considered paid holidays 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's 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.

5502.1 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.

5504 Personal Leave

- The Diocese provides paid personal leave benefits to all eligible administrators for periods of temporary absence.
- Full-Time Administrators receive twenty-five (25) personal leave days per year to be used each year.
- Administrators who anticipate taking Personal Leave shall inform his/her peers and supervisor at least one day in advance of their anticipated leave date.
- Unused personal days do not accrue annually and are not reimbursed either annually or upon termination.
- Administrators will not take personal leave in the first two or last two weeks of a grading term.

5504.1 Process

Administrators who anticipate taking Personal Leave shall submit a request to their supervisor at least one day in advance of their anticipated leave date. Requests for Personal Days may be denied if the request dates are in the first two or last two weeks of a grading term or if a significant number of employees request leave for the same days.

5506 Sick Leave

- Benefit eligible administrators are provided with 10 paid sick days annually 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 63 days.
 - Employees are not reimbursed for unused days either annually or upon termination.

5506.1 Process

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

5506.2 Sick Leave Verification

- The school 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 school 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.

5508 Child Care

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

5508.1 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.

5508.2 Flextime Scheduling

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

5510 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 School Administration and/or Diocesan Human Resource Director, who will in turn, call the accident in to 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.

5512 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.

5514 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 are not compensable upon termination.

5516 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.

5518 Jury Duty

The diocese encourages employees to fulfill their civic responsibilities by serving jury duty when required. 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.

5520 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:
 - o 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).

5522 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.

5524 Health Insurance

- Benefit eligible administrators shall be afforded access to a comprehensive health insurance plan on the first day of the month following their 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.

5524.1 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.

5524.2 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.

5526 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.
- Employees working 0.75 FTE or greater shall have their life insurance premium paid by the school, pro-rated on their FTE status.
- Employees assigned to less than 0.75 FTE are not eligible for the life insurance benefit.

5528 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.
- Employees working 0.75 FTE or greater shall have their LTD insurance premium paid by the school, pro-rated on their FTE status.
- Employees assigned to less than 0.75 FTE are not eligible for the LTD insurance benefit.

5530 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.

5532 Flexible Reimbursement Plan

The diocese may offer a Flexible Reimbursement Plan (Flex Plan), where employees participating in the diocesan group medical plan can elect to reserve tax-free dollars to pay expenses incurred for medical insurance premiums, dependent care, and out-of-pocket medical care.

5534 Family / School Leave

Benefits-eligible administrators who are 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's) 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.

5536 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/Commission.

5538 Health Insurance Savings Account (HSA)

- The Diocese may provide a HSA for school employees.
- Complete details of the HSA will be available from the Diocesan Human Resource Director.

5540 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/Commission and receives supportive consensus for a Retirement Incentive.
- The Retirement Incentive shall be approved by the Superintendent.

5542 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.

5546 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:
 - o 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.
 - o 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.
 - o 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.

5600 Performance Appraisal / Evaluation

5602 Basic Beliefs

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 promote improvement in education, professional growth, positive behaviors, Catholic principles, and attainment of Catholic School Leadership Roles, Responsibilities, and Criteria.
- The evaluation and observation process must provide recognition for Administrators who are exceeding Catholic Schools Leadership Roles, Responsibilities, and Criteria.
- The evaluation and observation process must provide assistance to Administrators who are failing to meet the Catholic Schools' Leadership Roles, Responsibilities, and Criteria
- 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.
- Link to the [evaluation form for administrators](#)

5604 Accountability

- The purpose of an evaluation and observation process is to assess the Administrator 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 an environment for continual improvement in 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.
- The evaluation and observation process will ensure that all Administrators meet specific standards of performance expectations and that the school will comply with requirements established by the Diocese and State of Montana.
- The Superintendent or his/her delegate will conduct Administration evaluations.

5700 Disciplinary Action and Due Process

5702 Disciplinary Action

- The Superintendent is responsible for taking disciplinary action to remedy Administration problems. These problems include, but are not limited to, work performance, attendance, or any action that may interfere with the mission of the school.
- Disciplinary Action may include:
 - Suspension with pay
 - Suspension without pay
 - Termination

5704 Causes for Disciplinary Action

- Causes for disciplinary action include violation of the terms of the Administrator's employment agreement, failure to meet the expectations as articulated in a Plan of Improvement, and/or violation of the Diocesan policies.
- 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 contractual expectations
 - Violating the terms of the employment agreement or Administration 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

- o Unprofessional conduct in relation to parents, students, other staff, or visitors to the school or school event
- o Breach of professional ethics
- o Inability to work cooperatively with supervisors, peers, or subordinates
- o Violation of employer rules
- o Habitual or excessive tardiness or absence from work or from employee's work area
- o Disclosure of confidential information
- o Failure to meet expectations as outlined in a Plan of Improvement

5706 Criminal / Immoral Activity

Disciplinary action, including leave of absence, suspension with or without pay, or termination may be imposed 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.

5708 Problem Resolution for School Personnel (Due Process)

5708.1 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 question receives a timely response.

5708.2 Basic Principles

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

5708.3 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 occurrence, 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 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.

5800 Termination, Planned Layoff, & Non-Renewal

5802 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 employment agreement is not considered termination of employment.

5802.1 Voluntary Resignation

- Administrators who resign are those who choose to terminate their employment with the school prior to their official completion date as detailed in their employment agreement.
- The employment agreement is binding from the date of signature to the date of completion of the agreement. An Administrator who violates this agreement demonstrates unprofessional conduct and is penalized according to the terms stated in the agreement.
- Notification of such violation, with documentation of the same must be placed in the Administrator's personnel file, and a copy of the same be sent to the Superintendent.
- The administration may notify the State Office of Public Instruction of the violation of the Administrator's failure to complete his/her employment agreement.
- The Superintendent will inform the School Advisory Council/Board of the resignation.
- Administrators who voluntarily resign are encouraged to provide the school with at least two-week's notice that includes the reasons for resignation and the date of termination.
- Administrators who fail to report to work for three consecutive working days without notifying the Superintendent/direct supervisor will be considered as having voluntarily resigned from employment.

5802.2 Dismissal: Terminating the Employment Agreement

When an Administrator violates the conditions and/or terms of his/her employment agreement, the policies of the Diocese and/or Catholic schools, or otherwise fails to perform the designated responsibilities; the Superintendent (or Pastor when applicable) may present him/her with a formal termination notice.

The termination notices will provide evidence where the Administrator has violated the conditions of employment, the conditions and/or terms of his/her employment agreement, policies of the Diocese and/or Catholic school, or otherwise failed to perform the designated responsibilities or meet professional expectations and will be dismissed.

- The termination will be effective upon receipt of termination notice.
- Upon termination, all personal effects shall be immediately removed from the school.

Preferentially, the terminated employee will leave the premises with his/her personal effects. Should the terminated employee need to return to the premises to pick up his/her personal belongings, the Superintendent (or Pastor when applicable) will accompany the terminated employee at all times.

5804 Lay-Off (Reduction in Force / Reorganization)

- When a reduction in force is necessary or when positions are eliminated due to reorganization, the Superintendent (or Pastor when applicable) will identify the administrative positions to be eliminated, sustain an FTE reduction, and/or receive an FTE (full-time equivalency) reduction.
- Reasons for an administration Reduction in Force may include but are not limited to:
 - Student enrollment or projected student enrollment
 - State of the school's finances or projected finances
- During the course of a reduction in force and/or reorganization, the Superintendent (or Pastor when applicable) in consultation with the Advisory Council/Board, shall retain and assign administrators as deemed necessary and for the benefit of the School and its ability to fulfill its mission.
 - The Catholic school does not acknowledge seniority, either by fact or by implication, as reason for employment retention or lay-off.
- The Superintendent (or Pastor when applicable) will provide two (2) weeks' notice to the Administrator or provide two (2) week's severance pay in lieu of notice.

5805 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

5806 Employment agreement Non-Renewal

- The Catholic School Administration Employment Agreement applies for one year (July 1st to June 30th). Prior to March or upon the completion of the school year, the Superintendent/direct supervisor may or may not provide the Administrator with an Administration Employment Agreement for the subsequent year.
- Under no circumstances does successful completion of a school year and/or fulfillment of an Administration Employment Agreement establish cause or reason for an Administration Employment Agreement renewal.
- The offering of an Administrative Employment Agreement or employment with the Catholic School does not grant tenure, either by fact or by implication.
- Non-renewal of an employment agreement may not be appealed.

5808 Termination, Lay-Off, and Non-Renewal Authority

Termination, Lay-Off, and Non-Renewal authority rests with the Superintendent/direct supervisor of the school in consultation with the Advisory Council/Board, and Diocesan Director of Human Resources.

5810 Appeal of Termination or Lay-Off

- The Administrator, 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 Administrator agrees that such problem resolution procedures shall be the exclusive forum for any dispute arising out of termination.
- The provisions above regarding 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. Such terms and conditions may only be modified or changed in writing by the Roman Catholic Bishop of the Diocese.

5812 Reinstatement of Employment

- Administrators 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 Superintendent/direct supervisor may choose to reinstate an employee with his/her original anniversary date based on the circumstances involved in the termination.

5814 Disposition of Benefits upon Termination

5814.1 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.

5814.2 For Employees Subject to Lay Off / Reduction in Force and Non-Renewal of their Employment Agreement

- All employee benefits are automatically canceled on the date that the former employee's final pay check is issued.
- If the school completes its financial responsibilities for teaching contracts in August, the former employee benefits shall remain in effect through August 31.
- 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.

5816 Final Paycheck & School Property

- The final paycheck of a resigning employee who has given notice of at least five (5) 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 five (5) 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/her possession prior to receiving his/her final paycheck.