



Personnel Policy and Guidelines Handbook
Approved by Council on September 10, 2022

Introduction

This handbook has been developed by the Personnel Committee to provide clarity, expectations, and mutual understanding for all those employed directly by the Diocese (the Missioner team), and as a resource to all employees in faith communities in the Episcopal Church in Minnesota (ECMN).

It is important that all employees read, understand, and follow the provisions of this Handbook.

It is obviously not possible to anticipate every situation that may arise in the workplace or to provide information that answers every possible question. In addition, circumstances will undoubtedly require that policies, practices, and benefits described in this Handbook change from time to time. Accordingly, ECMN reserves the right to modify, supplement, rescind, or revise any provisions of this Handbook.

In addition to abiding by the best practices of employment and human resources and employment law, these policies and guidelines also seek to live into our values as followers of Jesus to respect the dignity of every human being and promote fairness and equity. ECMN strives to create a culture in which there is clarity of expectations and where issues can be addressed fairly and promptly, where respect is fostered and where employees are protected.

Disclaimer

This Handbook and the policies contained herein are not a contract of employment or a promise of continued employment between ECMN and the employee. This Handbook represents an explanation of general employment policies and procedures, which are subject to change at any time, by ECMN. This Handbook replaces and supersedes all prior written employment policies, handbooks, and manuals.

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Definitions

Policy

A required rule or regulation that governs all ECMN employees based on law, canons, ethics, or best practices.

Guideline

The adopted practices governing all ECMN employees, which are recommended but not required for faith communities.

ECMN Employee

An individual employed by the Episcopal Church in Minnesota's office of the Bishop.

Exempt Employees - Policy

Those employees who meet the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) definition for exemption from overtime pay. Typically, these roles are responsible for decisions related to matters of significance and a high degree of autonomy (managerial, creative, etc.). Employees in this category are paid a set salary for all work completed and not an hourly basis.

Non-Exempt Employees - Policy

Those employees who do not meet the definitions for an exemption from overtime pay according to the FLSA. Typically, these roles take direction from others to accomplish work (administrative, scheduling, etc.). Employees in this category are paid on an hourly basis and receive time-and-a-half pay for any hours worked over 40 within one work-week.

Part One – Personnel Policies

At-Will Employment

This Handbook does not alter the at-will employment relationship between the Episcopal Church of Minnesota and its employees. As an at-will employee, you are free to terminate your employment at any time for any or no reason, with or without notice, and ECMN, as an at-will employer, is free to terminate the employment relationship at any time for any legal reason or no reason, with or without notice.

Equal Employment Opportunity

It is the policy of ECMN to recruit, hire, assign, train, compensate, evaluate, promote, or terminate employment, and to manage all of the terms, conditions and benefits of employment without regard to race, color, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, national origin, disability, public assistance status, status as a Vietnam-era or special disabled veteran or other protected status under applicable state, local or federal laws. ECMN makes reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with known disabilities unless doing so would result in an undue hardship.

Safe Church Policies and Background Checks

All ECMN employees and regular contractors will abide by the Safe Church Policies and participate in trainings alongside an updated background check every three years in order to update their certification. These policies include specific policies prohibiting sexual harassment and exploitation.

Safe Church Policies and trainings can be found on the ECMN website.

Safe Workplace

ECMN is committed to providing a safe work environment. Behavior by anyone who works at ECMN that is intended to harm or intimidate or has the effect of harming or intimidating another person is unacceptable. Such behavior warrants disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. Type of behavior can include but is not limited to:

1. Repeated hang-up telephone calls at work;
2. Threat of a physical act or verbal abuse;
3. Stalking or following another person in the workplace or to and from their place of employment;
4. Blocking a path for the purpose of intimidation;
5. Any part of physical contact that is intended, or does result in injury; and
6. Bringing any type of weapon into the workplace.

ECMN bans firearms on its property.

Drug And Alcohol-Free Environment

ECMN prohibits the possession, sale, consumption or being under the influence of alcohol

during office hours. Temperate consumption of alcohol at events sponsored by ECMN is not a violation of this policy. The possession, sale or consumption of illegal drugs or any other substance which impairs work performance will not be tolerated and will result in immediate termination.

ECMN requires offering attractive alternatives to alcohol whenever alcohol is served.

Work-Related Injuries

If you suffer from an illness or injury that is related to your work, you may be eligible for Workers' Compensation benefits. Workers' Compensation will pay for medical care and lost wages resulting from job-related illnesses or injuries. If you are injured or become ill through work please inform your supervisor immediately, regardless of how minor the injury or illness might be. Neither ECMN nor our insurance carrier will be liable for the payment of Workers' Compensation benefits for injuries that might occur during employee's voluntary participation in off-duty recreational, social, or athletic activities that we may sponsor.

Non-Disclosure and Confidentiality

The protection of confidential information is vital to the interests and success of the Episcopal Church in Minnesota and its faith communities. All ECMN records are confidential and employees must, therefore, treat all matters accordingly. Such confidential information includes, but is not limited to, the following examples:

- Compensation data
- Financial information
- Pending projects and proposals
- Personnel/Payroll records, and
- Conversations between any persons associated with ECMN, our faith communities, or our affiliates or partners.

No ECMN-related information, including (without limitation) documents, notes, files, records, oral information, computer files, or similar materials (except in the ordinary course of performing duties on behalf of ECMN) may be removed from ECMN's premises or disclosed without permission.

Additionally, the contents of ECMN's records or information otherwise obtained in regard to business may not be disclosed to anyone, purposefully or inadvertently through casual conversation, to any unauthorized person inside or outside ECMN. Employees who are unsure about the confidential nature of specific information must ask their supervisor for clarification.

Employees who improperly use or disclose confidential business information will be subject to disciplinary action, including termination of employment and legal action, even if they do not actually benefit from the disclosed information.

Individuals no longer employed by ECMN may be subject to legal action for disclosure of any proprietary information prior to that information becoming public information through appropriate channels.

Outside employment

All employees, lay and clergy, are to discuss outside/other employment with their supervisor to gain clarity around expectations and boundaries, including the use or restriction of computers, office supplies, etc. Outside employment may include multiple employment situations (including contract employment), or significant volunteer commitments (for example, joining a Board).

Part Two – *Personnel Guidelines*

Work Week

The standard full-time work week for both clergy and laity in the Episcopal Church in Minnesota is five days. For office employees, this work week normally falls between 7:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. With their supervisor's approval, employees may choose eight-hour workdays or time blocks within these parameters. Non-office employees may negotiate time blocks that allow healthy schedules for both the employee and the organization.

Non-Exempt Work Beyond the Standard Work Week

From time to time, ECMN and its faith communities hold events which necessitate weekend and/or evening work and, although rare, possible overnight stays. Normally these events are scheduled in advance; consequently, a dialogue between the supervisor and employee will precede any such event in which a non-exempt employee's attendance is expected. The employee will be compensated for all working hours during such events.

Remote Working

Employees may work remotely in consultation with their supervisor.

Flex-time

When anticipated and approved in advance by the supervisor, flexible time off and office/church closures will be allowed, within reason. This flexibility will occur within the same work week for all employees, particularly those who are non-exempt.

Work Life Balance

ECMN encourages clergy and lay employees to make provisions for a healthy work-life balance.

This will look like the establishment, in consultation with a supervisor or the Bishop, of a regular sabbath. Clarity of roles and expectations for employees will be provided and negotiated in such a way that employees are able to establish practices that lead to their own sustained health and well-being in ministry.

For clergy or for lay employees, these practices may include regular practices of prayer and spiritual direction, continuing education, and retreat time.

Clergy are expected to participate in the counsels of the church and to maintain connection with their Bishop and fellow clergy. Faith communities are to support and encourage this aspect of ordained life—for the benefit of both clergy and the faith community.

Clergy and lay staff serving in part-time calls, in collaboration with their vestries and supervisors, may choose to explore models of ministry (some of which are outlined in the part-time Letter of Agreement template) beyond the “every Sunday” model, in which part time clergy and lay are able to take an agreed upon number of Sundays off.

Dress Code and Decorum

Employees of the Episcopal Church in Minnesota are expected to dress appropriately for their particular jobs and be well groomed. Employees are expected to be concerned with good housekeeping and the care and safe use of equipment and facilities.

Media Relations and Sensitive Topics

All media contacts and communications regarding sensitive topics will be routed through the Missioner for Communications and/or the Bishop.

To ensure that members of the media are provided the most appropriate, accurate, and up-to-date information, other Missioners are prohibited from communicating with members of the media unless expressly requested to do so by the Bishop or the Missioner for Communications.

Pregnancy and Nursing Accommodations

ECMN makes every effort to accommodate employees for all health conditions related to pregnancy and childbirth. Following the birth of a child, the organization will provide reasonable break times and privacy to nursing mothers.

Inclement Weather

Employees are trusted to use their own discretion and professional judgment on occasions of inclement weather or adverse driving conditions, in consultation with their supervisor. When determining office closures during adverse weather situations, including extreme cold or other circumstances, it is recommended that the supervisor follow announced local school district closures. If the office is closed, employees may be asked to work from home.

Scent

Supervisors shall be sensitive to needs of employees and congregants and when warranted, have a discussion with a person who is using scent that is adversely affecting another who has complained.

Review and Support

ECMN seeks to foster a work environment where employees have clear expectations and the support and feedback they need in order to be successful. Each employee will have a chance yearly to participate in a mutual ministry review. At this review, the Bishop and direct supervisor will meet individually with each employee to review the goals and work of the past year, provide feedback on performance and provide any direction needed. The direct supervisor then provides day to day support for each missionary.

Separation from Employment

Employees planning to voluntarily terminate their employment are requested to give appropriate, written notice, whenever possible. It is recommended that non-exempt employees give at least two weeks' notice, and exempt employees give at least four weeks' notice.

Accrued but not used vacation/personal time may be reimbursed at the employer's discretion.

Employees may be separated from employment voluntarily by resignation or retirement, or involuntarily for reasons included but not limited to job performance issues, lack of work, or misconduct. Conduct deemed by the Bishop to be sufficiently severe may result in immediate discharge.

Voluntary separation interviews are conducted with terminating ECMN employees during the final weeks of employment by the direct supervisor and by the Bishop.

Return of Property at the time an employee leaves employment of ECMN, the immediate supervisor will collect all ECMN property such as credit card, keys, cell phones, tablets, laptops, passwords to all devices, etc.

Involuntary Resignation

When ECMN initiates a termination, the termination is considered involuntary. Involuntary terminations may occur for a variety of reasons including with cause (e.g. employee misconduct) or without cause (e.g., as part of a layoff).

Performance Improvement Process

Outlined below is a process meant to help improve and prevent a recurrence of undesirable employee behavior and performance issues.

ECMN reserves the right to combine or skip steps depending on the nature of each situation. Nothing in this policy provides any contractual rights regarding employee discipline or counseling, nor should anything in this policy be read or construed as modifying or altering the employment-at-will relationships between ECMN and its employees.

Coaching

The employee is made aware of the issue by the Bishop or direct supervisor, and has a chance to discuss the nature of the issue, expectations, and steps that must be taken in order to improve performance or resolve the issue.

Documented Coaching

The employee will meet with the Bishop or direct supervisor to review performance, outline consequences for the employee of their continued failure to meet performance or conduct expectations.

A formal performance improvement plan requiring the employee's immediate and sustained corrective action will be issued following the meeting. The written warning may also include a statement indicating that the employee may be subject to additional employment action, up to and including termination, if immediate and sustained corrective action is not taken.

Suspension and/or Final Warning

If conduct is deemed harmful, an employee may be removed from the workplace. Determination for whether an employee may be absolved of wrongdoing and reinstated will be made by the Bishop and direct supervisor in consultation with the Chair of the Personnel Committee and Chancellor.

An employee may not be compensated while suspended.

Recommendation for Termination of an Employee

The Bishop and direct supervisor may determine that an employee needs to be terminated. This decision must be approved by the Bishop.

Raising a Concern

Employees may raise concerns and report violations of policies without fear of reprisal.

If an employee wishes to report a violation of any of the policies herein, they may do so by submitting a formal complaint in writing to the direct supervisor, Bishop, and the Chancellor.

Investigations into complaints will be carried out by the direct supervisor, in coordination with the Chair of the Personnel Committee and the ECMN Chancellor and Vice-Chancellors.

If an employee wishes to report a clear and explicit violation by the Bishop, refer to the Title IV policy from the Episcopal Church Canons by contacting the Office for Pastoral Development.

Peer to Peer Resolution

Employee seeks to resolve the problem by going directly to the staff member involved in the alleged problem. Through conversation, both employees share the intent and impact of their actions in an

effort to come to a common understanding

Mediated Resolution

If no solution is reached, or if the employee does not feel comfortable with directly addressing their peer, they may bring the issue to the direct supervisor, who may seek to resolve the matter through information intervention, or by following a more formal, investigative process.

Formal Investigation

A more formal process is launched by the direct supervisor to investigate an issue deemed significant enough to warrant a formal process, or when an issue is not able to be resolved in the above steps. The formal process involves the Chair of the Personnel Committee, the ECMN Chancellor, and other outside individuals or consultants to obtain relevant information and seek a resolution to the issue. The resolution or recommendation from the group doing the investigation will be submitted to the Bishop, who will make a final determination for how to resolve the matter.

Both the employee raising the issue and other parties that are involved will be notified of the results of the process and any next steps the Bishop has determined to take on the matter.