

Diocese of
Mackenzie-Fort Smith
Personnel Policy Manual

October 1, 2015

Diocesan Personnel Policy

Table of Contents

1	INTRODUCTION	2
1.1	Letter from the Bishop.....	2
1.2	Scope and Purpose of the Policy	3
1.3	Principles of Employment	3
	A. Prevention of Workplace Bullying and Harrassment.....	3
2	RECRUITMENT AND EMPLOYMENT	5
2.1	Hiring Policy.....	5
	A. Catholicity Clause.....	5
	B. Confidentiality.....	6
	C. Employment of Relatives	6
2.2	Employment Status Categories	6
2.3	"Ministry Volunteers"	
2.4	Work Schedules	7
	A. Overtime.....	7
	B. Flexible Working Hours	8
2.5	Probationary Period	8
2.6	Performance Review Process.....	8
2.7	Conciliation.....	9
2.8	Retirement.....	9
2.9	Termination	9
3	COMPENSATION	10
3.1	Salary Administration (support staff)	10
	A. <i>Salary On Appointment</i>	10
	B. <i>Salary Increments (in-range progression)</i>	10
4	WORKPLACE	11
4.1	Spiritual Focus of the Workplace	11
4.2	Building Security, Safety, and Basic Comfort	11
4.3	Personal Appearance.....	12
4.4	Job Related Expense Reimbursement.....	12
5	BENEFITS	13
5.1	Benefit Plan	13
5.2	Holidays	13
5.3	Vacation	13
5.4	Sick Leave.....	14
5.5	Family Responsibility Leave.....	14
5.6	Jury Duty Leave.....	15
5.7	Pregnancy/Parental Leaves.....	15
5.8	Compassionate Care Leave	15
5.9	Bereavement Leave.....	15
5.10	Other Leaves of Absence Without Pay.....	16

Diocesan Personnel Policy

INTRODUCTION

1.1 LETTER FROM THE BISHOP



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October 1, 2015

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

*By this letter I promulgate the **Personnel Policy of the Diocese of Mackenzie-Fort Smith**, and present it to you for implementation. The policies of this manual supersede all previous policies, including those contained within previous 'terms of agreement' contracts, written or spoken. It is my hope that these policies will help to clarify the rights, obligations and responsibilities of the Diocese as an employer and you as an employee in Church service.*

To assist in making our workplace well-functioning and harmonious, it is important that there be policies and practices in place that are clear, consistent, and just. It is my hope that these policies will foster even greater unity and respect.

I am privileged and blessed to work with you in serving the People of God of our Diocesan community, and helping to proclaim by word, work, and like the Gospel message. Please accept my prayers and support as we serve together the Mission of Christ and the Church.

With personal best regards and the assurance of my prayers, I remain,

Sincerely in Christ,

*Most Reverend Mark Hagemoen
Bishop of Mackenzie-Fort Smith*

Diocesan Personnel Policy

1.2 SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

These policies apply in full to all personnel working within the Diocese of Mackenzie-Fort Smith, including the Diocesan curia, parishes, and church communities.

Throughout these policies the terms “employer” and “Diocese” are used interchangeably. The terms are equal in meaning and include all the employers listed in the above paragraph.

Each employee will be referred to these policies on-line prior to the start of employment. The employee is expected to read the policies in full and apply them during the term of employment.

1.3 PRINCIPLES OF EMPLOYMENT

As the Church, we highly respect the value and dignity of all individuals. As an employer, the Diocese ensures that its personnel policies and working atmosphere uphold the value and dignity of the person to the highest degree.

Organizational practices and norms will include many styles and approaches in pursuit of our Diocesan mission. The Diocese focuses on its ability to build a work environment where the inclusion of many kinds of people leads to excellence in ministry, service, and organizational climate.

A. PREVENTION OF WORKPLACE BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

Implicit in upholding the value and dignity of the person is a commitment to a working environment free of bullying and harassment of any type.

SCOPE AND PURPOSE:

The Diocese of Mackenzie-Fort Smith (Diocese) is dedicated to ensuring that employees are able to complete their duties in a safe environment, without fear of bullying or harassment. As such, the Diocese is dedicated to preventing any instance of bullying or harassment and will not tolerate such behaviour in the workplace. All employees of the Diocese share in the responsibility to ensure that our workplace is a safe and welcoming environment, furthermore one which is characteristic of ‘Christian community.’ Employees are responsible for reporting any instances of bullying or harassment, whether they were the target or they were the witness to the incident. In all cases, where a complaint of bullying or harassment is made in good faith, the reporting employee will not be disciplined or retaliated against in any way.

Diocesan Personnel Policy

This Policy complies with the Workers Compensation Act, Occupational Health and Safety Regulation of the Northwest Territories.

APPLICATION:

This policy applies to all employees and 'religious workers' (clergy, religious, lay), interns, students, and contractors working on behalf of the Diocese.

BULLYING AND HARASSMENT:

- i. is defined as a course of vexatious comment or conduct that is known, or ought reasonably to be known, to be humiliating or intimidating to an employee.
- ii. excludes:
 - expressing differences of opinion;
 - offering constructive feedback, guidance, or work-related advice about workplace behavior;
 - any reasonable action taken by an employer or supervisor relating to the management and direction of employees or the place of employment. (e.g. managing an employee's performance, taking reasonable disciplinary actions, assigning work, implementation of disciplinary actions).

OBLIGATIONS:

Employees must:

- refrain from bullying and harassment of other employees;
- report bullying and harassment when observed or experienced;
- Comply with the Diocese's policies and procedures on the prevention of bullying and harassment.

REPORTING PROCESS:

The reporting process for any claims of workplace bullying and harassment is outlined in the *Workplace Bullying and Harassment Reporting Procedures* document.

Any questions by employees of the Diocese regarding this policy should be addressed to the Bishop's Delegate for Human Resources.

Diocesan Personnel Policy

2 **Recruitment and Employment**

2.1 **HIRING POLICY**

Before the start of any search process for a new position, a job description must be approved by the Bishop (for management/professional employees) or the responsible vicar/ delegate (for support staff).

The job classifications and salary range for the position will be determined before recruitment begins.

The hiring procedure includes recruitment, interviewing, and reference checks of all applicants considered for the opening, including a reference form from pastors when appropriate (cf. Section 2.1A, Catholicity Clause).

No permanent employee, or temporary employee with a contract or intended term of work of greater than three (3) months' duration is to be employed without the signed authorization of the Bishop.

After the hiring of a candidate is approved, the candidate is notified in writing, indicating the starting salary, name of supervisor, and starting date. The candidate must also be provided with a copy of the job description for the position for which they are hired.

Please refer to "Detailed guidelines on hiring procedure."

A. **CATHOLICITY CLAUSE**

- i Job applicants identified as Catholic will be required to provide a reference form signed by their pastor, stating that the applicant practices the Catholic faith. The reference form is strictly confidential, to be reviewed solely by the employer. If the applicant is married, a copy of the church marriage certificate will also be provided.
- ii If identified as a Catholic, the employee will exhibit at all times a conduct and a way of life that are consistent with Catholic denominational standards.
- iii If identified as a non-Catholic, the employee will demonstrate at all times to the satisfaction of the employer a respectful and sympathetic sensitivity to the Catholic beliefs and practices of the employer.
- iv A breach of paragraphs ii) or iii) above shall constitute just cause for dismissal.

Diocesan Personnel Policy

- v The determination of what are Catholic denominational standards shall be the sole right and prerogative of the employer.

B. CONFIDENTIALITY

The principle of confidentiality is foundational to the maintenance of professional conduct and ethics. Employees are not to disclose confidential matters that come to their attention as a result of employment with the diocese. Unauthorized disclosure may be cause for disciplinary action including dismissal. The obligation to maintain confidentiality continues beyond the term of employment.

C. EMPLOYMENT OF RELATIVES

In order to retain the objectivity that is essential to effective decision-making, relatives are not to hire or supervise one another or check, review and/or process work of one another. Supervisors may further restrict the employment of relatives where close proximity might disrupt optimal performance of functions.

A relative, for this purpose, is defined as spouse, father, mother, child, grandparent, grandchild, in-law, sibling, niece, nephew, aunt, uncle, or cousin.

The purpose of this policy is to prevent situations in which a supervisor's family responsibilities may create a conflict of interest with his or her job duties.

2.2 EMPLOYMENT STATUS CATEGORIES

Full-time: Employees appointed permanently to a position regularly scheduled to work a standard workweek.

Part-time: Employees appointed permanently to a position regularly scheduled for less than a standard workweek.

Term: Employees who, although they may work full-time, have been hired for a defined or limited period.

Casual¹: Hourly-paid employees who do not have a regularly scheduled workweek and/or have agreed to work on an "on-call/as needed" basis.

Support: Support staff performs duties of a technical, manual, secretarial or clerical nature. Working supervisors who perform such duties a majority of their workweek may also be classified as support staff.

¹ Hiring Policy 2.1 does not apply.

Diocesan Personnel Policy

Professional: It is understood that the nature of their jobs may call for more than a standard workweek, including evening or weekend work. If they work a considerable amount of hours over the standard workweek, they may arrange with their supervisor to take some time off at a later date (see section 2.4 B, Flexible Working Hours).

Management: Persons who are responsible for a departmental budget *and* supervise employees, or in some cases designated volunteers.

2.3 MINISTRY VOLUNTEERS

“Ministry Volunteers” are persons who, by agreement with the Diocese, dedicate themselves to fulfilling ministry roles for the Diocese. They are generally paid a stipend and provided basic room and board. Persons in this category will generally be assigned a role description similar to that of employees.²

2.4 WORK SCHEDULES

The Diocesan offices operate on a standard workweek from 8:30 am to 5:00 pm Monday through Friday. Two rest periods of 15 minutes each are considered paid time at work; these may be combined to permit an extra half-hour at lunch (which is otherwise defined as a half-hour unpaid break). Exceptions to the standard workweek may be made at the discretion of the Bishop. The timing of lunch and rest breaks are determined by the supervisor in consultation with the employee.

The paid breaks are not required by law; if missed, employees cannot accumulate time and use it to shorten the workday.

A. OVERTIME

There is no pay for overtime whether the employees are support or professional/management staff.

Support staff are eligible for time off with pay in lieu of overtime. In order to claim overtime, written approval from their supervisor must be obtained prior to working the overtime. All professional/management staff are exempt and do not qualify for overtime; however, if they work a considerable amount of hours over the standard workweek, they may arrange with their supervisor to take time off at a later date (section 2.3B, Flexible Working Hours, refers).

² Hiring Policy 2.1 does not apply.

Diocesan Personnel Policy

B. FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS

For certain roles and/or offices to operate more effectively with programs offered at hours convenient for clients, professional and support staff may need to adjust their normal hours of work outside the regular Diocesan hours of operation and adopt flexible working hours.

The department head must approve the use of flexible hours before being worked. An employee will be entitled to time off in lieu of pay for authorized flex time, and it can be given at a mutually agreed upon time. A maximum of 20 hours flextime may be accumulated and carried forward, unless otherwise authorized by the department head. Ideally, flextime should not be carried forward more than three months, and should be used up at the end of the calendar year.

2.5 PROBATIONARY PERIOD

The first six (6) months of employment are considered probationary. The probationary period gives new employees the opportunity to become acquainted with their jobs and gives the employer the opportunity to evaluate the new employee performance.

A written performance review with the employee's direct supervisor will be made at least two weeks prior to the completion of the probationary period to assess whether all the expectations of the position have been met.

An employee does not have access to the conciliation procedure for the purpose of appealing a probationary release.

In some cases, employees may be hired on a probation term of longer than six (6) months if this is clearly stated in the letter of appointment or contract.

2.6 PERFORMANCE REVIEW PROCESS

The performance review process is designed to give managers and staff the opportunity to evaluate performance, develop skills, and set appropriate work goals aligned to the Diocese's overall strategic plans.

All permanent staff shall participate in a formal performance review with their direct supervisor at least once a year.

Casual or term employees will have their performance review times stipulated in their letter of employment.

Diocesan Personnel Policy

2.7 CONCILIATION

Employees have the right to present any matter of concern or dissatisfaction regarding their employment to the employer and have it considered on its merits. Presentation in good faith of a complaint will not result in any retaliatory action against the employee. At any time during the conciliation process, any parties involved may call upon the service of the Delegate for Human Resources to act as a non-partisan participant. Fair and prompt consideration and adjustment of the misunderstanding shall be as follows:

Step 1: Any concern will be discussed between the employee and his/her immediate supervisor. A disposition shall be rendered to the grievance within five (5) days. It is expected that most problems can be resolved within normal supervisory sessions.

Step 2: Failing resolution at Step 1, the employee will submit his/her concern in writing within five (7) days to the person next in authority, up to and including the Chair of the Human Resources Committee, and/or the Vicar General and a disposition will be rendered within ten (15) working days.

Step 3: Failing resolution at Step 2, the employee may make a written submission to the Bishop, who at his discretion will either review the matter personally or name a conciliation panel to adjudicate it.

2.8 RETIREMENT

For information on our retirement benefits, please contact our Finance Officer.

2.9 TERMINATION

Termination of employment shall be carried out according to the Employment Standards Act.

The services of a newly hired employee during the initial three-month probationary period, whether full-time, casual, or part-time, may be terminated by the employee or the employer. Neither written notice of termination of employment nor payment of money in lieu of notice is required. A probationary employee does not have access to the conciliation procedure for the purpose of appealing a probationary release.

The Diocese requests that voluntary terminations (or resignations) be submitted in writing to the appropriate supervisor at least two (2) weeks before the termination date.

Exit interviews are encouraged with resigning employees to learn their views of the organization and possibly identify areas of improvement for the Diocese.

Diocesan Personnel Policy

3

Compensation

3.1 SALARY ADMINISTRATION (SUPPORT STAFF)

A. SALARY ON APPOINTMENT

Salary on appointment will be offered with approval of the Bishop, in consultation with the immediate Supervisor.

B. SALARY CHANGE THROUGHOUT EMPLOYMENT

Any salary adjust will be offered with approval of the Bishop, in consultation with the immediate Supervisor. Salary adjustments will take into account the cost of living, as determined for the region by the Consumer Price Index (CPI)

Diocesan Personnel Policy

4

Workplace

4.1 SPIRITUAL FOCUS OF THE WORKPLACE

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* tells us that human work “...can be a means of sanctification and a way of animating earthly realities with the Spirit of Christ” (no. 2427). Working for the Diocese has yet another dimension. Each Diocesan employee is an essential part of the ministry of the Church.

In keeping with these truths, the Diocese strives to foster a climate in which every employee considers himself or herself a valued member of a Christian community and to build a model of the community which is the Body of Christ.

At the same time, Diocesan offices share much in common with other workplaces, and there is a need for professional expertise, good human relations, and dedicated effort.

The Diocese invites its staff to be men and women of prayer. Besides occasional retreat days, the entire staff is invited to gather for Mass with the Bishop, as is possible.

Daily Mass is often celebrated in the building for the convenience of employees on their lunch break. Attending daily Mass is not paid time at work.

4.2 BUILDING SECURITY, SAFETY, AND BASIC COMFORT

All employees of the Diocese share a responsibility in the on-going security in the building by ensuring that areas are properly secured. Employees should not lend out building keys or prop open any of the main access doors after hours. Nor should they pass on building alarm codes without formal authorization (in-writing). The lending and/or duplication of keys without permission may result in dismissal.

Generally, employees should ensure a safe, clean, and comfortable environment. Given the sensitivity of some employees to perfumes and pet dander, strong perfumes and the presence of pets in the building are to be avoided. (Exceptions may be made to individuals who need animal-assisted support, such as ‘seeing-eye dogs.’)

Any concerns regarding building safety and security should be reported to a member of the Health and Safety Committee. The committee minutes are available upon request for employee reference purposes.

Diocesan Personnel Policy

4.3 PERSONAL APPEARANCE

Christian modesty and standard business codes should guide employee dress and grooming. Any complaints regarding an employee's manner of appearance should be directed to the Delegate for Human Resources.

4.4 JOB RELATED EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT

The Diocese emphasizes that expenses must be approved by the department head and fall within the approved budget.

Detailed guidelines for reimbursement of meals, mileage, and travel are updated as required. A copy of current expense guidelines may be obtained from the Finance Office.

Diocesan Personnel Policy

5

Benefits

5.1 DIOCESAN BENEFIT PLAN

All employees of the Diocese of Mackenzie-Fort Smith and personnel employed under the umbrella of the Diocese of Mackenzie-Fort Smith at the parish / mission level are administered through the same benefit plan.

For detailed information regarding our benefits and pension plan, please access the appropriate link on our intranet. For eligibility, enrollment or other inquiries, please see Gilles Paquin in the Finance Office Accounting or, _____, the Delegate for Human Resources.

5.2 HOLIDAYS

The following are statutory paid holidays in NWT and are administered according to the Employment Standards Act:

- New Year's Day
- Good Friday
- Victoria Day
- National Aboriginal Day
- Canada Day
- Labour Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Remembrance Day
- Christmas Day

The Diocese also gives the following additional paid holidays as days of rest:

- Easter Monday
- Boxing Day

When any of the aforementioned holidays falls on Saturday, Sunday, during an employee's vacation day or day off, the employee shall be entitled to an additional day off.

Only the Bishop has the authority to grant additional paid holidays as days of rest.

5.3 VACATION

Annual vacation is earned from the date of appointment. For the purpose of calculating annual vacation, the cut-off date shall be the calendar year end. The first holiday period will be prorated from the date of appointment to the year-end.

Diocesan Personnel Policy

Annual vacation must be taken within the calendar year and may not be “carried forward” from one year to the next, except under unusual circumstances and with the advance written approval of the Bishop upon recommendation of the department head.

All staff must fill out an Application for Leave Form and obtain the supervisor’s signature prior to taking vacation.

Support: An annual vacation of ten (10) working days is given during the first two years, twenty (20) working days thereafter.

Professional and Management: Professional staff are eligible for fifteen (15) working days of vacation during the first year of employment and twenty (20) working days thereafter.

5.4 **SICK LEAVE**

The Diocese aims to be a caring and understanding employer. When a full-time staff member is sick and unable to work, the day is treated as a paid day of leave. We do not specify the number of paid sick days available to employees; however, absenteeism is monitored and limits may be set if there is an abuse of this privilege.

Full-time employees are eligible for paid sick leave after three (3) months of employment.

Permanent part-time employees are not eligible for paid sick leave benefits; however, with the approval of their supervisor, an employee may make alternate arrangements to make up the time missed.

The short term disability (STD) waiting period is paid for employees who are eligible to apply for STD benefits through Great West Life.

For sick leaves of three (3) or more days, an Application for Leave form must be filled, and the supervisor may request a medical certificate. For extended sick leaves (i.e. 2 weeks or more), please refer to our short-term disability policy included in the Diocesan benefits package.

5.5 **FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY LEAVE**

The Employment Standards Act entitles employees to a maximum of five (5) days of unpaid leave each year to meet responsibilities related to:

- a) The care, health, or education of a child in the employee’s care, or
- b) The care or health of any other member of the employee’s immediate family.

Diocesan Personnel Policy

The Diocese grants that the first three (3) of the five (5) allowable days of family responsibility leave are considered paid days of leave.

Leave requests must be made in writing, must include the date and reasons for requested leave, and must be signed and dated by both the supervisor and the employee. (See Application for Leave form on our intranet).

5.6 JURY DUTY LEAVE

The Diocese encourages its employees to cooperate in performing their civic responsibilities by serving as jurors. Employees will be paid their regular salaries while serving on jury duty up to a maximum of four (4) calendar weeks from the start date of the jury duty. Employees on jury duty will reimburse the Diocese to the extent of the jury pay they receive during those days.

When appearing in court for less than a four-hour duration, employees are expected to return to work.

5.7 PREGNANCY/PARENTAL LEAVES

Pregnancy and parental leave entitlements and duration of benefits will be in accordance with the Employment Standards Act.

5.8 COMPASSIONATE CARE LEAVE

Employees are entitled under the Employment Standards Act to take unpaid compassionate care leave to provide care and support to a family member in situations where the family member is gravely ill with a significant risk of death within 26 weeks. Entitlements and duration of benefits will be in accordance with the Act.

5.9 BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

The Employment Standards Act entitles employees up to three (3) days of unpaid leave on the death of a member of the immediate family. The Diocese recognizes that the bereavement process is always difficult and wishes to support the grieving family as best possible. Therefore, the Diocese grants up to ten (10) days of paid leave upon the death of a spouse and/or child. (The exact amount of days of leave must be discussed with the department head). For any other members of the immediate family, three (3) days of paid leave will be granted, and if any travel time beyond the Diocese is required, an extra two (2) days of paid leave may be granted.

Diocesan Personnel Policy

Immediate family means: spouse, parent, child, guardian, sibling, grandchild, grandparent, parent-in-law or sibling-in-law.

If there is a need for additional time off for bereavement, the matter must be discussed with the appropriate signing authority and approved in writing. Please refer to section 5.10 on “Other Leaves of Absence Without Pay”.

Employees who wish to attend a friend’s or associate’s funeral may do so given that they have obtained their supervisor’s permission and arrangements have been made to make up the time away from the office.

5.10 OTHER LEAVES OF ABSENCE WITHOUT PAY

An employee may make a written request to their supervisor for a leave without pay. The request must be for a compelling personal reason and acceptable to and approved in writing by the department head and/or responsible supervisor.

Benefit plan coverage by the Diocese will cease at the end of the employee’s last month worked. An employee may request permission to have standard benefits (extended health and dental) continued under the Diocese for the duration of the leave of absence, provided that the employee covers the full cost of the premiums due. Please refer to our benefit plan for further details. In order to apply for an extended leave of absence, the employee must have completed one year of employment with the Diocese.

In certain cases, it may be of mutual benefit for both the employer and the employee that the two parties for the duration or partial duration of the leave share the premiums (extended health and dental). Any special terms to a leave of absence must be in writing and approved by the appropriate authority.