

Bethlehem Lutheran Church
Personnel Policy
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BLC PERSONNEL POLICIES

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GENERAL

Authority

Adoption of these personnel policies by Bethlehem Lutheran Church (BLC) is granted by the general authority in the Constitution and Bylaws of BLC. Nothing in these personnel policies shall conflict with BLC's Constitution, Bylaws, or Policy Resolutions.

Purpose

An Employee Handbook has been prepared to explain the personnel policies and procedures for BLC. It is intended only for guidance and is not a contract in any manner. BLC expects full cooperation from all applicants and employees in regard to all BLC policies and procedures.

The Employee Handbook is designed to increase understanding of personnel practices and to help assure equitable treatment of all staff. It is each employee's responsibility to be familiar with the Handbook, and for supervisory personnel to administer these policies in a consistent and impartial manner.

BLC reserves the right to unilaterally change any policy or procedure to a given situation if to do so would best serve the organization's interest.

Amendments

BLC may from time to time adopt amendments, corrections, additions or deletions to these personnel policies. Any such changes shall apply both to persons employed at the time the change is adopted and to persons employed thereafter, unless the BLC Council specifically provides to the contrary. Any policy changes will be posted.

Regulatory Requirements

BLC complies with all applicable law and regulations.

Human Resources (Personnel) Committee

The BLC Council may appoint a Human Resources Committee to support and advise the Council regarding BLC responsibilities as an employer. That Committee may monitor the application of policy, provide expert information and advice regarding human resource policy and practice, and suggest revisions and additions to personnel policies.

RECRUITMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

Inclusivity Statement

BLC is committed to both the spirit and the applicable legal requirements of equal employment opportunity and affirmative action. Consistent with this commitment, the continuing policy of BLC is to afford equal employment opportunity to qualified persons

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in all aspects of the employment relationship, including but not limited to, hiring, compensation, promotion, demotion, selection for training opportunities, layoffs, discharges and retirement.

BLC's goal is to hire well-qualified people to perform the work associated with the organization's purposes and services. BLC values a diverse workplace in which employees of all backgrounds can contribute to BLC's mission and vision and are treated with respect. BLC believes the diversity of its employees is a fundamental strength and expects all personnel to carry out their various job responsibilities in a manner that comports with BLC's guidelines prohibiting workplace discrimination.

EEO Statement

Discrimination based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, disability or political or union affiliation or non-affiliation will not be tolerated by BLC.

Immigration Act

BLC will seek verification of a prospective employee's eligibility for employment as required under U.S. immigration law.

Background Checks

BLC requires a standard criminal background check, also called "Consumer Report," for all employees prior to and as a condition of employment. For employees under the age of eighteen personal references will be required in lieu of the background checks. The background check is performed prior to being hired by BLC and is rechecked as necessary.

Employee Classifications

All employment is at-will, which gives the employee and the employer the right to terminate employment at any time. This means that employment is for no definite or guaranteed duration. Employees have the right to terminate their employment at any time for any reason and BLC also has the right to terminate employment at any time with or without cause. No one at BLC is authorized to make any agreement to the contrary, and nothing stated in any BLC document changes this at-will employment relationship.

There are three classes of employees at BLC:

- Full Time Employees
- Part Time Salaried Employees
- Part Time Hourly Employees

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Full-Time Employees

A full-time employee is an employee who works a regular, ongoing schedule of 40 hours per week.

Part-Time Salaried Employees

A part-time salaried employee is an employee who works a regular, ongoing schedule of less than 40 hours per week.

Part-Time Hourly Employees

A part-time hourly employee is an employee who is paid on an hourly or per service basis.

Offer Letter of Hire

All candidates offered employment by BLC will receive an offer letter which will outline conditions of employment.

Position Description

The duties and responsibilities of each job are stated in a written position description provided to all employees.

Position descriptions will be reviewed on a regular basis and revised as necessary.

Performance Reviews

The work of each employee will be evaluated in writing by the supervisor on a regular basis, but at least once every year.

Progressive Corrective Action

In dealing with performance concerns, BLC will follow a progressive corrective action procedure in order to give a clear and documented approach for both the supervisors and employees.

Personnel Files

BLC maintains an individual Personnel File for each employee that may contain various personnel forms.

BLC also maintains a Confidential File, separate from the Personnel File, for each employee. Information contained in this file may include, but is not limited to, health related information such as documentation for reimbursement from the Flexible Spending Account and claims made under worker's compensation.

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Employee personnel records (Personnel File and Confidential File) are personal and are kept in a locked file, to be accessed only by persons authorized by the employee's supervisor, Pastor, or President of the Council and are to be used for job related purposes only.

Employees have the right to review their individual Personnel File and/or Confidential File and all documents contained therein, at a time mutually convenient to the employee and the employer. Such review must take place at BLC, and no items may be added to or deleted from the file by the employee. Employees may obtain a copy of any document contained in the file by requesting it, in writing, from their supervisor.

Probationary period

All employees are subject to a probationary period of 90 days from date of hire. During this time BLC or the employee can terminate the employment relationship for any reason.

References

When other employers or potential employers ask BLC for reference information, BLC will only disclose the employee's name and the dates they were employed. Other information may be disclosed on a case by case basis and only with specific written authorization from an employee or former employee, or as required by law.

BENEFITS

Pension

All full time employees are covered by a pension plan.

Medical Coverage

All full time employees are offered medical and dental coverage.

403(b) Plan

Part time salaried employees may participate in a 403(b) retirement plan with the company of their choice.

Social Security

BLC will make contributions for its employees as required of employers under the Social Security Act. Unless the BLC contract with a pastor indicates otherwise, no payment will be made on behalf of ordained ministers who are employees of the church, nor will any reimbursement in lieu thereof be made directly or indirectly to the employee.

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Flexible Spending Account

All full time and part time salaried employees must elect whether or not to participate in the Flexible Benefits Account for reimbursement of non-covered health, dental and dependent care expenses on a pre-tax basis. The election is made each year in December by completing the Flexible Benefits Account form and submitting it to the supervisor.

For pastors, the Flexible Spending Account may be handled by the ELCA Board of Pensions. Supporting documentation for expenses reimbursed under this plan will be kept confidential.

Vacation Leave

Vacation leave will be provided to the Pastor as negotiated in the Call letter of hire and for other staff as specified in their offer letter of hire.

Vacation leave is granted to all full time and part time salaried employees who are not in their initial probationary status. Hourly employees do not receive vacation leave. The amount of vacation leave available to employees is negotiated, and depends in large part on their relevant background and experience.

For beginning employees, guidelines for annual leave are as follows:

Less than three years of service at BLC	Two weeks
Three to five years of service at BLC	Three Weeks
Five years or more of service at BLC	Four Weeks

A week consists of the standard number of hours worked in a given week. For example, if an employee usually works and is compensated for 20 hours per week, one week of vacation leave will consist of 20 hours.

Full time and part time salaried employees, who are required to work on Sundays, are entitled to an equivalent number of Sundays off as the number of week's vacation they are granted each year. For example, an employee required to work on Sundays who has less than three years of service at BLC will be entitled to two Sundays off

Vacation leave accrues as of the beginning of the calendar year, and is prorated to date of hire. This policy can be illustrated by the following example:

- Using the guidelines suggested above, an employee hired on July 1 of year 1 will accrue one week of vacation leave after their probationary period for the first calendar year. (Probationary period ends October 1 of Year 1; therefore the employee

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will be entitled to vacation leave of one week from October 1 – December 31 of year 1.)

- At the beginning of the second calendar year the employee will accrue two weeks of vacation pay.
- At the beginning of the third calendar year the employee will accrue two weeks of vacation pay.
- At the beginning of the fourth calendar year, the employee will accrue two and a half weeks of vacation leave (One week for the period from January 1 – anniversary date, 1 ½ weeks for the period from anniversary date to the end of the calendar year.)

Vacation leave does not carry over from year to year.

Accrued vacation leave is paid to an employee upon resignation or termination.

Sick Leave

Up to two weeks of sick leave is available to all full time and part time salaried employees. Part time hourly employees do not receive sick leave.

A week consists of the standard number of hours worked in a given week. For example, if an employee usually works and is compensated for 20 hours per week, one week of sick leave will consist of 20 hours.

Sick leave accrues as of the beginning of the calendar year and is prorated to date of hire.

Sick leave does not carry over from year to year.

At the discretion of the Council, BLC may allow additional paid or unpaid sick leave.

Flexitime

Flexitime may be granted to employees by their supervisor on a case by case basis in certain circumstances and depending on business needs.

Other Leave

- Compassionate/Bereavement Leave
- Family and Medical Leave

For any of the leave listed in the bullets above, employees may take leave in the following order: Sick Leave, Vacation Leave, and Leave without Pay for a period up to 60 days.

Any other leave issue which may arise will be determined on a case by case basis.

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Leave without Pay

Leave without pay may be granted for a period up to 60 days. The approval of leave without pay will be determined by the Council on a case by case basis.

Absence Due to Weather or Travel Conditions

If the BLC office is closed, employees will not be charged leave. If the office is open employees may use leave.

Housing Allowance

BLC designates a portion of the salary paid to all called and ordained employees as a housing allowance. For IRS purposes, pastors have to designate their housing allowance in December each year for the coming year, and this designation needs to be endorsed by the Council and recorded in Council minutes.

Expense Accounts

An expense account is provided to employees, as determined by the Council, to cover ministry-related expenses. The amount of the expense account for each year is stated in the annual budget.

BLC also maintains a designated fund entitled “Pastor’s Discretionary Fund” which allows the Pastor to use the funds for any unexpected pastoral/ministry related need that cannot be accounted for by other funds. The Director of Finances must approve any individual expenditure from this fund in excess of \$250.

Holidays

BLC observes the following holidays:

- New Year’s Day
- Martin Luther King’s Birthday
- President’s Day
- Easter Monday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Columbus Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Day
- Day after Christmas

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Full time and part time salaried employees are eligible to receive holiday pay.

If the holiday falls on a Saturday, the office will normally be closed on the preceding day. If the holiday falls on a Sunday, the office will normally be closed on the following day.

When Christmas falls on a Sunday, certain employees are still expected to work. In this situation, these employees will be granted an additional day off to compensate them for working Christmas Day.

Disability Insurance

All full time employees are provided disability, survivor and other coverage.

Continuing Education

All full time and part time salaried employees are entitled to up to two weeks of continuing education per year. Continuing education time does not carryover from year to year and all continuing education will need approval by the employee's supervisor. BLC will provide reimbursement for costs incurred up to the limit approved in the annual budget.

A week consists of the standard number of hours worked in a given week. For example, if an employee usually works and is compensated for 20 hours per week, one week of continuing education will consist of 20 hours.

CONDUCT IN THE WORKPLACE

Drugs and Alcohol

Employees are prohibited to unlawfully possess, manufacture, sell, use or otherwise distribute any controlled substance on BLC property or in any location while on BLC business.

Employees are prohibited from reporting to work or performing their duties as an employee of BLC if impaired by alcohol, illegal substance, or under the influence of any controlled substance other than a medication for which the employee has a lawful prescription.

HEALTH, SAFETY, AND RISK MANAGEMENT

On-the-Job Injuries

Any job-related accident, injury, or illness received at work, no matter how slight it may seem, should be reported immediately to one's supervisor.

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All employees are required to complete a written Incident Report and submit this to their Supervisor immediately following the accident/incident.

Worker's Compensation

BLC provides Worker's Compensation Insurance coverage to all employees.

SEPARATION FROM EMPLOYMENT

Involuntary Termination of Employee

Involuntary termination at BLC most frequently occurs for one of the following reasons:

- Unacceptable or inadequate job performance.
- Unacceptable conduct, including professional misconduct, insubordination, violation of BLC policies or its required standards regarding conduct in the workplace, theft, dishonesty, or other misconduct or behavior that BLC considers detrimental to BLC.

Resignation

BLC requests that an employee resigning from service provide as much written notice as possible, but no less than ten working days prior to the last day of work.

Other

All keys, property, and equipment provided by BLC must be turned in upon termination of employment.

GRIEVANCE AND APPEAL PROCEDURES

BLC strives to provide fair and equitable consideration of all employee grievances and appeals. BLC has a grievance procedure in place and employees are free to participate in these procedures without restraint, interference, coercion, discrimination, or reprisal.

HARRASSMENT POLICY

Harassment of any kind will not be tolerated by BLC.

Victimization or retaliation against an employee for filing a complaint or for assisting in an investigation will not be tolerated by BLC.