



Employee Policies & Procedure Handbook

The Diocese of East Tennessee

Adopted: November 2025
Effective: January 1, 2026

Welcome Letter from the Bishop

The Episcopal Diocese of East Tennessee



Dear New Colleague,

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Welcome to the Episcopal Diocese of East Tennessee! We are delighted that you have joined our team, and we look forward to the unique gifts and perspectives you bring to our shared ministry. Your presence strengthens our community and furthers our mission to embody Christ's love in East Tennessee.

Starting a new role can be both exciting and overwhelming. Please know that you are not alone. You are now part of a supportive network of clergy, lay leaders, and staff who are committed to walking alongside one another in faith, service, and growth.

"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters."

— Colossians 3:23 (NIV)

A Brief History of the Diocese

The Episcopal presence in Tennessee began in the early 1800s, with the first diocesan convention held in 1829. As the Church grew across the state, the Diocese of Tennessee was eventually divided into three regions. The Diocese of East Tennessee was officially formed on January 1, 1985, separating from the statewide diocese along the Cumberland Plateau. Bishop William Evan Sanders became the first bishop of the newly formed diocese.

Today, the Diocese of East Tennessee includes 34 counties in East Tennessee and three counties in northern Georgia. St. John's Cathedral in Knoxville, the oldest Episcopal congregation in the region, serves as the diocesan seat. Our community is shaped by the beauty of the mountains, the richness of our history, and a shared commitment to reconciliation and service.

This handbook is designed to help you navigate your new role with clarity and confidence. Inside, you'll find practical resources, policies, and guidance to support your work and well-being. If you have questions or need assistance, our diocesan staff is here to help.

Thank you for answering the call to serve. May your journey with us be filled with purpose, joy, and deep connection.

Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian L. Cole".

The Rt. Rev. Brian L. Cole

Bishop of East Tennessee

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Workplace Values

At the Diocese of East Tennessee (DIOET), our employees—whether clergy or lay, administrative or pastoral—are called to foster right relationships grounded in the values of **personal dignity, justice, accountability, and participation**. These values reflect our shared commitment to the Gospel and to the mission of the Church in the world.

All employees are expected to treat one another with **courtesy, respect, and professionalism**, and to conduct themselves in accordance with DIOET's policies and standards. Through these principles, we seek to uphold the dignity of every individual and contribute to the common good entrusted to us by God.

DIOET is committed to recognizing and addressing the impact of **racial bias and systemic injustice** in our culture. We affirm the work of **racial healing, justice, and reconciliation** as central to our mission. All employees are expected to support this work. Please refer to the Training and Continuing Education policy for more information.

Believing in God's mission to restore all people to unity with God and one another in Christ, DIOET strives to provide a workplace that reflects our values and commitments, including:

- Fair and equitable compensation and benefits
- Clearly written employment policies
- A safe and legally compliant work environment
- A workplace free from harassment, discrimination, and violence
- Transparent performance evaluations based on defined goals and job descriptions
- Opportunities for training, growth, and development

In return, DIOET expects each employee to demonstrate:

- A spirit of collaboration and teamwork
- Commitment to excellence and full engagement in their role
- Adherence to applicable laws, diocesan policies, and shared values
- Integrity, honesty, and truthfulness in all actions
- Participation in a culture of mutual accountability
- Support for the mission of the Diocese and The Episcopal Church

We affirm the teachings of Jesus Christ, whose life, death, resurrection, and ascension bring salvation to the world. We believe that **God loves everyone—no exceptions**.

We embrace The Episcopal Church's legacy of **inclusion**, where people of all genders and sexual orientations serve as bishops, priests, deacons, and lay leaders. Together, clergy and laypeople share in the leadership and governance of the Church.

Purpose and Authority

The purpose of this **Employee Policy Manual** is to provide guidance for the administration of human resources for employees of the Diocese of East Tennessee. This document does not constitute a contract of employment, and all employees are employees at-will, which means the employment arrangement can be ended by the employee or the employer with or without cause.

This manual outlines the **rights and responsibilities** of both employees and management, ensuring consistency, fairness, and clarity in the application of diocesan policies and procedures.

While this manual applies to diocesan employees, individual ministries or affiliated entities may have their own personnel policies tailored to their specific needs and operations.

The **Bishop of East Tennessee** holds ultimate responsibility for the operations of the Diocese and has the authority to oversee and implement personnel policies. The Bishop may delegate this authority to other leaders within the organization as appropriate.

Employee Classifications and Handbook Scope

The staff of the Diocese of East Tennessee (DIOET) includes both **lay and ordained employees**, working together in service to the Church's mission. This Handbook acknowledges that certain policies and practices may differ based on employee classification, such as **clergy vs. lay** or **exempt vs. non-exempt** payroll status. Where distinctions are required by law or diocesan practice, they are clearly noted in separate sections or within the relevant policy.

This Handbook **supersedes all previous versions** of employee handbooks, as well as any prior DIOET policies or practices, whether written or verbal, except when these policies are explicitly cross-referenced herein. DIOET reserves the right to **modify, suspend, or discontinue** any policy or practice at its sole discretion, with or without prior notice, and with the approval of the Bishop and Council when required.

Unless otherwise stated, the employment relationship between DIOET and its employees (excluding bishops) is considered “**at-will**.” This means that either the employee or DIOET may terminate the employment relationship at any time, for any reason, with or without cause or notice. No supervisor, manager, or employee has the authority to alter this at-will relationship. Only the **Bishop of East Tennessee** may enter into an agreement that modifies this relationship, and such an agreement must be **in writing**, signed by both the Bishop and the employee, and clearly state the intent to create a contract of employment under terms other than at-will.

This Handbook is intended to provide helpful guidance on DIOET's policies, procedures, and expectations. While it outlines general standards, it is **not exhaustive** and should not be interpreted as a guarantee that every policy will be applied uniformly in all situations. DIOET retains the right to interpret and apply these policies as appropriate to each circumstance and/or the application of legal requirements or standards.

Some departments or ministry areas may have **additional guidelines or best practices** relevant to specific roles. Employees are encouraged to consult with their **supervisor, the Canon to the Ordinary, or Human Resources** for clarification on any policy or practice.

Terms Used in This Handbook

- **Bishop:** Refers to the Bishop of East Tennessee, or in their absence, the Bishop's designee. In the event of a vacancy, this refers to the Ecclesiastical Authority.
- **Bishops:** Refers collectively to the Bishop of East Tennessee and any assisting or suffragan bishops.
- **Canons:** Refers to staff members holding a Canon title within the diocesan structure.
- **Diocesan House:** Refers to the primary office of the Diocese of East Tennessee, currently located in Knoxville, TN.

Equal Employment Opportunity

The Diocese of East Tennessee (DIOET) is committed to fostering a work environment where **all individuals are treated with dignity, respect, and fairness**, in accordance with our Christian values and the teachings of Jesus Christ. We recognize and celebrate the diversity of God's people, affirming that our differences, whether visible or invisible, are part of the richness of creation and are blessed by God.

DIOET provides **equal employment opportunities** for all employees and applicants without regard to:

- Race (including traits recognized as historically associated with race)
- Ethnicity
- Color
- Age
- Sex (including pregnancy)
- National origin
- Sexual orientation
- Gender identity or expression
- Physical or mental disability (past or present)
- HIV/AIDS status
- Veteran status
- Marital or familial status
- Genetic information
- [Status as a victim of domestic violence]
- Weight, size, or height
- Any other category protected by applicable federal, state, local law, or Diocesan Safe Church Policy

DIOET also provides equal employment opportunities **without regard to religion**, except in cases where **active membership in The Episcopal Church** is a bona fide requirement for a specific role or position.

This policy applies to all aspects of employment, including:

- Recruitment and hiring
- Training and development
- Compensation and benefits
- Job placement and promotion
- Transfers and leaves of absence
- Layoffs, terminations, and retirement

It also applies, as appropriate, to **non-employment, volunteer service opportunities**, including internships and appointments to diocesan boards, commissions, and committees.

Discrimination or harassment based on any of the categories listed above, or **retaliation** against an individual who reports such behavior, will not be tolerated. Employees who believe they have experienced or witnessed discrimination or harassment are encouraged to report the matter promptly to their supervisor, the Canon to the Ordinary, Human Resources, or intake officer. All reports will be handled seriously and in accordance with diocesan policy.

DIOET is also committed to providing **reasonable accommodations** for qualified individuals with disabilities, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other applicable laws.

This commitment to equal opportunity reflects not only our legal responsibilities but also our **Gospel call to love and serve all people** with compassion, justice, and integrity.

Reasonable Accommodations for Disabilities and Pregnancy/Childbirth

The Diocese of East Tennessee (DIOET) is committed to complying with all applicable laws concerning individuals with **disabilities** and those who are **pregnant, recovering from childbirth, or experiencing related medical conditions**. In keeping with our values, compassion, justice, and inclusion, it is our policy not to discriminate against any employee or applicant based on disability, perceived disability, history of disability, pregnancy, childbirth, or related conditions in employment decisions.

Disability Accommodations

DIOET will provide **reasonable accommodation(s)** for qualified individuals with disabilities, as required and defined by law, who inform Human Resources of their need for accommodation(s).

Accommodation(s) will be made unless doing so would impose an **undue hardship** on the Diocese.

Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Related Conditions

This policy also applies to employees and applicants who request accommodation(s) due to **pregnancy, childbirth, or related conditions**, including but not limited to **lactation**. Reasonable accommodation(s) will be provided unless it results in undue hardship.

Employees or applicants must **inform the Canon to the Ordinary, or Human Resources** of their need for, and suggested, accommodation(s). DIOET will not assume that an individual requires accommodation(s) solely based on pregnancy, nor will it require an individual to accept accommodation(s), if they do not have a known limitation or if the accommodation is not necessary to perform the essential functions of their role.

Requesting Reasonable Accommodations

Employees or applicants who believe they need reasonable accommodation(s) due to disability, pregnancy, childbirth, or a related medical condition should contact **the Canon to the Ordinary, or Human Resources**. DIOET will engage in an **interactive process** with our employees and applicants on their work responsibilities to:

- Understand the nature and duration of the limitation or condition
- Identify the essential functions of the job
- Explore potential accommodation that may be appropriate

DIOET may request documentation from a **health care provider** to support the accommodation request and may seek permission to contact the provider for clarification if needed. Supervisors may also be consulted to assess job requirements and accommodations.

Employees are expected to participate in a **timely, good-faith exchange** of this information and cooperation to help determine effective accommodation(s).

If multiple accommodations are feasible and effective, DIOET reserves the right to choose which accommodation will be provided.

Leave as an Accommodation

In some cases, a temporary **leave of absence** may be considered a reasonable accommodation. If granted, such leave may run concurrently with applicable federal or state leave laws and DIOET's internal leave policies under which an employee and the Diocese is covered. Reasonable leave related to **pregnancy and childbirth** will be provided in accordance with applicable laws covering the employment relationship. Please refer to the **Pregnancy Disability Leave** section in the *Time Off and Leaves of Absence* portion of this Handbook for more details.

Policy Against Harassment and Unlawful Discrimination

The Diocese of East Tennessee (DIOET) is committed to maintaining a zero-tolerance policy in the workplace where **all individuals are treated with dignity, respect, and fairness**. Every person has the right to work in an environment free from **unlawful discrimination, harassment, and retaliation**. In accordance with General Convention Resolution 2006-A156 and Diocesan Safe Church Policy, volunteers are afforded the same rights and protection as paid employees to work in a harassment and discrimination-free environment. Volunteers should follow the same reporting procedure as employees, as listed in this document.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is a form of **unlawful discrimination** and is prohibited under federal, state, and local laws. It may occur between individuals of any gender identity or sexual orientation and includes any **unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature** when:

- Submission to such conduct is made a condition of employment
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as a basis for employment decisions
- The conduct interferes with work performance or creates a hostile, intimidating, or offensive work environment

Sexual harassment may be **verbal, visual, physical, or electronic**. Examples include:

- Repeated jokes, innuendos, or comments of a sexual nature
- Inappropriate emails or messages with sexual content
- Derogatory images, gestures, or suggestive materials
- Unwanted physical contact or romantic advances

Other Forms of Harassment and Discrimination

Harassment or discrimination based on any **protected characteristic** is strictly prohibited. This includes race, color, age, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, disability, marital status, veteran status, genetic information, and other categories protected by law.

Harassing behavior may include:

- Slurs, epithets, or negative stereotypes
- Threatening or intimidating actions
- Offensive jokes or materials
- Hostile or exclusionary conduct based on protected status

Reporting Harassment, Discrimination, or Retaliation

If you experience or witness harassment, discrimination, or retaliation, you are encouraged to speak directly with the individual involved, **if you feel safe doing so**. If the behavior continues or if you do not wish to communicate directly with the offending person, or if such communication has been ineffective, report the incident to any of the following persons:

- **Bishop**
- **Canon to the Ordinary**
- **Intake Officer**
- **Or by submission of a Confidential Notice of Concern**

Individuals who wish to file a complaint are encouraged, but are not required, to submit the complaint in writing and to include a description of the incident(s), as well as the date(s), time(s), place(s), any witnesses, and the name(s) of anyone that you told about your experience(s). If you cannot remember exact dates, times, or locations, please provide approximations. If needed, guidance can be obtained from Human Resources, Safe Church training and resources, or the Diocesan Safe Church Administrator.

Supervisors who become aware of potential harassment or discrimination must report it promptly.

All reports will be **taken seriously and investigated thoroughly**. DIOET will maintain confidentiality to the extent possible and share information only with those necessary to resolve the issue. Report back to the Complainant.

Consequences

Any violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Ordained employees may also be subject to **Ecclesiastical Discipline** under Title IV of the Canons of The Episcopal Church. Volunteers, contractors, or vendors who violate this policy will be subject to appropriate action, including reporting of offensive conduct, removal from diocesan property or events.

Retaliation Is Prohibited

DIOET strictly prohibits **retaliation** against anyone who reports harassment or discrimination in good faith or participates in an investigation. Retaliatory behavior will result in disciplinary action.

Conclusion

This policy is not intended to regulate consensual social relationships. However, it is DIOET's responsibility to ensure a workplace free from **unwelcome harassment, offensive conduct constituting harassment, and unlawful discrimination**. We rely on the cooperation and commitment of every employee to uphold this standard.

Safe and Secure Workplace

The Diocese of East Tennessee (DIOET) is committed to providing **a safe, respectful, and violence-free environment** for all employees, clergy, volunteers, parishioners, and visitors. We believe that every individual deserves to work and worship in a space where they feel protected, valued, and supported.

To uphold this commitment, DIOET:

- **Maintains clear policies** prohibiting harassment, discrimination, bullying, and any form of violence or intimidation.
- **Implements regular training** and educational programs to promote awareness, prevention, and response strategies related to workplace safety and respectful conduct.
- **Encourages open communication** and provides multiple channels for reporting concerns confidentially and without fear of retaliation.
- **Conducts thorough investigations** of all reported incidents and takes appropriate corrective action to ensure accountability and resolution.
- **Collaborates with local authorities and experts** when necessary to enhance safety protocols and emergency preparedness.
- **Promotes a culture of mutual respect**, compassion, and inclusion, reflecting the values of our faith and community.

By fostering a safe and secure workplace, DIOET affirms its dedication to the well-being of all who serve and seek spiritual growth within our diocesan community.

Violence-Free Workplace

Violence, threats, or threatening behavior, whether directed at others or oneself, **will not be tolerated**. This applies to conduct occurring at Diocesan House, during work-related events, or outside the workplace if it affects diocesan personnel.

Prohibited behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- Threats or verbal abuse
- Stalking or intimidation – physical or electronic
- Physical altercations or aggressive contact
- Possession or use of weapons
- Jokes or comments about violence or self-harm

If you witness or experience any threatening behavior, report it immediately to **Human Resources**, the **Canon to the Ordinary**, or the **Bishop**. In emergencies, call **9-1-1** or local law enforcement and seek safety.

All reports will be handled **confidentially and respectfully**, and retaliation against anyone making a good faith report is strictly prohibited.

Restraining Orders and Domestic Violence

If you have obtained a protective or restraining order that includes Diocesan House or any Diocesan property, please provide a copy to Human Resources or the Canon to the Ordinary, so that appropriate steps can be taken to ensure your safety and the safety of others.

If you are concerned about a potential threat from outside the workplace, inform Human Resources or the Canon to the Ordinary so that a confidential safety plan can be created and tailored to your specific needs. This may include adjustments to your work schedule, security measures, or coordination with local law enforcement.

The Diocese of East Tennessee (DIOET) understands the sensitivity of these situations and will make every effort to protect your privacy and safety. All information shared will be handled with discretion and only shared with those necessary for the implementation of protective measures.

Your well-being is a priority, and DIOET is committed to fostering a workplace where everyone feels secure, supported, and respected.

Weapon-Free Workplace

To ensure the safety of all, DIOET prohibits the possession or use of weapons, including firearms, knives, explosives, or any other dangerous instruments on diocesan property or at diocesan events. This policy applies to all employees and volunteers, regardless of whether they hold a permit to carry a weapon, except for law enforcement officers acting in their official capacity.

This prohibition extends to [Diocesan property/events] includes:

- **Diocesan offices and buildings**, including Diocesan House
- **Churches, schools, and affiliated institutions**
- **Parking lots and outdoor spaces** on diocesan property
- **Events, retreats, and gatherings** sponsored by the Diocese

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, removal from diocesan property, or notification of law enforcement, depending on the circumstances.

DIOET is committed to maintaining a peaceful and secure environment and space where all individuals can worship, work, and gather without fear. If you have concerns about safety or have observed behavior that may violate this policy, please report it immediately to Human Resources or the Canon to the Ordinary.

Drug-and-Alcohol-Free Environment

The Diocese of East Tennessee (DIOET) is committed to maintaining a **safe, healthy, and productive workplace**. Employees are expected to report to work **fit for duty** and free from the influence of drugs, cannabis, or alcohol.

The **use, possession, sale, or distribution** of controlled substances, cannabis products, or alcohol during work hours or while conducting diocesan business is strictly prohibited. This includes remote work locations.

Exceptions include:

- **Sacramental wine** used in small amounts during Holy Eucharist or similar worship services
- **Moderate alcohol consumption** at diocesan events held after hours, in accordance with Diocesan Alcohol Policies. Participation is optional, and non-alcoholic beverages will always be available.

Employees must not work or be present at diocesan facilities while **impaired** by any substance that could affect performance or safety. Prescription and over-the-counter medications may be used as directed, but if they could impair job performance or pose a safety risk, employees must notify their supervisor, Human Resources or Canon to the Ordinary.

Violations of this policy may result in **disciplinary action**, up to and including termination.

If there is **reasonable suspicion** that an employee is under the influence of drugs or alcohol in violation of this Policy, DIOET may require a **drug or alcohol test**. Refusal to comply with such requests, or a positive result may lead to disciplinary action.

Employees struggling with substance use are encouraged to seek help through the **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)** or other support services. Participation in a recovery program does not exempt employees from compliance with this policy.

Smoke-Free Workplace

DIOET maintains a **smoke-free environment** in all indoor areas of Diocesan House and other diocesan facilities. This includes the use of **tobacco, nicotine products, and vaping devices**.

Smoking is permitted **only outdoors**, at a respectable distance from entrances and walkways. Please dispose of smoking materials properly.

Emergency Procedures

Emergency Action Plan

DIOET maintains an **Emergency Action Plan** to guide staff during emergencies. This plan is updated as needed and shared with employees upon hire. It is available in the diocesan shared folder.

Emergency Closings and Delayed Openings

In the event of severe weather, power outages, or other emergencies, DIOET may close or delay opening Diocesan House. Employees will be notified via **text message**. Please ensure your contact information is up to date with the **Canon for Finance & Administration**.

DIOET generally follows **Episcopal School of Knoxville** for weather-related closures and delays, but confirmation will always be sent by text.

If a closure is **anticipated**, employees may be asked to work from home. Please bring home your laptop and necessary materials in advance. If you are unable to work due to illness or caregiving responsibilities, use **PTO or sick time** as appropriate.

If a closure is **unplanned**, non-exempt employees will be paid for their regular hours that day. This time will not count toward overtime.

If Diocesan House opens late, employees should report to work as soon as **safely** possible or coordinate with their supervisor to work remotely. Any schedule changes should be noted on the diocesan shared calendar.

Longer-Term Emergencies (Including Public Health Emergencies)

While we hope to avoid extended disruptions like the COVID-19 pandemic, the Diocese of East Tennessee (DIOET) recognizes that **longer-term emergencies**, such as public health crises, natural disasters, or other significant events, may require changes to normal operations.

In such circumstances, the **Bishop**, in consultation with **Bishop & Council**, may issue **temporary policies or guidelines** to ensure the safety and continuity of diocesan work. These may be informed by **local, state, or federal guidance** and are binding for all employees while in effect.

Examples of Temporary Policies May Include:

- **Remote work requirements or flexible scheduling**
- **Modified office hours or building access restrictions**

- **Health and safety protocols**, such as mask-wearing, social distancing, or vaccination requirements
- **Changes to PTO or sick leave usage**
- **Temporary suspension or adjustment of in-person meetings, travel, or events**
- **Technology use guidelines for virtual meetings and collaboration**
- **Emergency communication procedures**

All employees are expected to **comply with these temporary policies** and remain flexible and responsive to evolving circumstances. Updates will be communicated clearly and promptly.

Hours of Work, Compensation, and Timekeeping

Employees of the Diocese of East Tennessee (DIOET) are classified according to their work schedule and job duties and payroll.

Regular full-time employees are typically scheduled to work at least 37.5 hours per week, while regular part-time employees work fewer than 37.5 hours, usually at least 20 hours per week.

Temporary employees are hired for short-term or project-based assignments, generally lasting fewer than three months per year. Temporary employees are not eligible for paid time off or benefits, except those required by law, and are expected to follow the policies outlined in this Handbook.

Each employee's classification, whether full-time, part-time, or temporary, and their expected weekly hours will be specified in their Letter of Employment. Additionally, employees are designated as either exempt or non-exempt under federal and state wage and hour laws. Non-exempt employees are eligible for overtime pay for hours worked beyond 40 in a workweek and must maintain accurate daily records of time worked, including meal breaks. For full-time non-exempt employees, the standard work week is 37.5 hours, excluding lunch breaks. Part-time non-exempt hours are determined at the time of hire.

Exempt employees are **not** eligible for overtime pay and are compensated on an exempt salary basis for fulfilling their overall responsibilities rather than for a specific number of hours worked. Full-time exempt employees typically work an average of **40 to 45** hours per week, while exempt Canons may work **40 to 50** hours per week. Part-time exempt employees have their hours calculated on a pro-rate basis, as a percentage of full-time hours.

It is important to note that benefit plans may define full-time or part-time status differently. In such cases, the terms of the benefit plan will determine eligibility for coverage and participation.

Work Week

The regular operating hours for the Diocese of East Tennessee (DIOET) are **Monday through Friday, 8:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.** The diocesan office may be **closed to the public** on **holidays**, during **weather-related emergencies**, or at the discretion of the **Bishop of the Diocese**.

For payroll and timekeeping purposes, the **workweek begins at 12:01 A.M. on Sunday and ends at midnight on Saturday**.

In-Office, Remote, Hybrid, and Flextime Work Arrangements

The Diocese of East Tennessee (DIOET) supports flexible work arrangements that help employees balance professional responsibilities with personal and family needs. Eligible employees may work in-office, in a **hybrid arrangement** (a mix of in-office and remote work), or in **rare cases**, fully remote, provided these arrangements do not compromise performance, productivity, or collaboration as determined by the supervisors.

Flextime may also be available, allowing adjustments to start and end times or meal breaks. To qualify, employees must meet performance expectations, maintain a reliable attendance record, and have job responsibilities that support flexible scheduling without disrupting service delivery.

Definitions:

- **In-office:** Working on-site at Diocesan House.
- **Hybrid:** Working on-site a minimum number of days per week, with remaining days at a designated off-site location.
- **Fully remote:** Working off-site every day on a regular basis.
- **Flextime:** Adjusted daily schedule (start/end times or meal breaks).

These arrangements do not change an employee's job duties or employment terms and conditions unless formally agreed upon in writing by the supervisor and the Bishop or their designee. All diocesan policies, including those related to attendance, timekeeping, confidentiality, and conduct will apply equally to remote work.

DIOET may modify, suspend, or end any flexible work arrangement at its discretion. This policy does not apply to formal **leaves of absence** or **workplace accommodations** under applicable laws or diocesan policies. Employees seeking such accommodation should contact the Canon to the Ordinary or Human Resources.

Work Arrangement Options and Procedures (Aligned with DIOET Operating Hours)

Hybrid In-Office/Remote Work

Regular full-time employees are expected to work in-office at least three days per week, specifically on **Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays**. Remote work on **Mondays and/or Fridays** may be arranged with the approval of the employee's direct supervisor, Canon to the Ordinary, or with the Bishop. Approval depends on factors such as the nature of the role, individual performance, and the needs of the team and DIOET.

Even if remote work is approved, employees may be required to report to the office on a normally remote day to attend meetings, events, or complete tasks as directed by their supervisor or leadership.

Employees who regularly work **weekends (Saturday or Sunday)** may take either **Monday or Friday** as a compensatory day off and may work remotely on another day, subject to or approval.

Employees whose roles primarily involve **off-site responsibilities**, including evening or weekend work, may be eligible for a higher percentage of remote work. These arrangements must be approved by both the employee's supervisor and the Canon to the Ordinary. Such employees are expected to work **in-office on Wednesdays** for a full day.

Full-Time Remote Work

In exceptional cases, full-time remote work may be approved by both the employee's supervisor and the Bishop Diocesan. These employees must attend **weekly Wednesday staff meetings via Zoom or similar platforms** and are expected to work **in-office at least one Wednesday per month**. More frequent visits are welcome.

Employees currently approved for **out-of-state remote work**, whether temporary or long-term, may continue under their existing arrangement. Any plans to relocate to another state must be communicated promptly to either the supervisor, Human Resources, Canon to the Ordinary or the Bishop, even if the employee is already remote.

Flextime

DIOET's general operating hours are **Monday through Friday, 8:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.**

Full-time, non-exempt employees are generally expected to work during these hours, with an **unpaid meal break of 30 to 60 minutes**. However, flextime allows employees to adjust their start/end times and meal breaks, provided they work during **core hours of 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.** and maintain a **7.5-hour workday**.

Example: An employee who needs to start later due to family obligations may propose a schedule such as:

- **8:45 A.M. to 4:45 P.M.** with a 30-minute lunch break, or

- **8:45 A.M. to 5:15 P.M.** with a one-hour lunch break.

Part-time non-exempt employees should follow the schedule outlined in their **Letter of Employment** but may discuss summer adjustments with their supervisor or Canon to the Ordinary. Any changes must be approved.

Exempt employees may also flex their hours, especially when evening or weekend duties are involved. They should aim to work during core hours unless their responsibilities require otherwise.

Approved schedules must be documented using a form provided by the Canon for Finance & Administration. Any changes must be agreed upon and recorded.

Flextime is intended for setting a **consistent weekly schedule**, not for daily changes. Exceptions should be approved by the supervisor or the Canon to the Ordinary and communicated to designated personnel.

Summer Flextime Schedules

Full-time non-exempt employees should work **37 hours per week** during this period but will be paid for their regular **37.5-hour work week**.

Employees may adjust their hours to leave early on Fridays. For example:

- **8.5 hours Monday–Thursday**, and **3.0 hours Friday**, or
- A different schedule that includes working longer on Fridays after public closure.

All summer schedules must be discussed and approved by supervisors or Canon to the Ordinary **before Memorial Day**.

Meal, Rest, and Spiritual Breaks

Meal Breaks

Non-exempt employees working **7.5 consecutive hours or more per day** are entitled to a **one-hour, unpaid, duty-free meal break**. Employees working 6 consecutive hours or more are entitled to a break of **at least 30 minutes**. Meal break arrangements for **part-time, non-exempt employees** will follow the terms outlined in their **Letter of Employment**.

Rest Breaks for Exempt Employees

Exempt employees are encouraged to take regular breaks for meals or rest during the workday to support overall well-being and productivity.

Spiritual Breaks

All DIOET employees are welcome to participate in **weekly worship services** and other worship or prayer gatherings held at the office. Participation is **voluntary** but encouraged and considered **paid work time**.

Breastfeeding

DIOET supports a workplace environment that accommodates breastfeeding. Employees may **breastfeed or express milk during work hours** at their discretion. A **reasonable location (secure) and amount of time** will be provided daily, including during breaks and meal breaks. Private secure accommodation will be made available for expressing milk.

Attendance

Consistent attendance is a fundamental job requirement for all positions at DIOET. **Unscheduled absences or tardiness** can impact team performance and operations. Employees are expected to adhere to their approved work schedules. **Late arrivals, early departures, or extended breaks** without prior approval may affect performance evaluations and could result in disciplinary action.

If an employee anticipates being **more than 30 minutes late** to work or a scheduled meeting, they must notify their **immediate supervisor or designated personnel** as soon as reasonably under the circumstances.

Time Records

Non-exempt employees must accurately record their **daily work hours and work week**, including start and end times, meal breaks, and any non-work periods exceeding 20 minutes. Time off for any reason, such as **sick leave, PTO, jury duty, bereavement, or other leave**, must also be logged in DIOET's payroll system.

The Canon to the Ordinary is responsible for **reviewing and approving time records** at the end of each pay period. Working without recording time ("**off-the-clock**") or falsifying time records is strictly prohibited and may lead to disciplinary action, including termination.

Exempt employees are not required to submit daily time sheets but must **request in advance and record time off** (including partial days) for payroll auditing. They should also **notify their supervisor** or the **Canon to the Ordinary** and **note absences on the shared calendar**.

Overtime

Overtime applies to **non-exempt employees** who work **more than 40 hours in a workweek**. Overtime must be **pre-approved in writing** (email is acceptable) by the employee's supervisor or an authorized approver. Unauthorized overtime should not be worked and may result in disciplinary action.

Overtime is compensated at **1.5 times the regular hourly rate** for hours worked beyond 40 in a week. **Paid time off, holidays, and sick leave** do not count toward the 40-hour threshold for overtime eligibility.

Supervisors are expected to manage workloads to minimize the need for overtime. While occasional overtime may be necessary, it should remain an exception.

If a non-exempt employee works **outside regular hours** (e.g., evenings or weekends for DIOET events), they may take **equivalent unpaid time off** during the same work week to avoid exceeding 40 hours. For example, working two extra hours on Tuesday evening could be offset by arriving two hours later Wednesday or leaving early on Friday, with supervisor's approval. All schedule adjustments must be **approved in advance by the supervisor**. If rescheduling is not reasonable, the employee will be paid overtime for hours worked exceeding 40.

Pay for Outside Conferences and Meetings (Including Travel Time)

Non-exempt employees attending off-site events (e.g., conventions, conferences) must obtain prior written approval for any resulting schedule variations. DIOET compensates for all hours worked beyond regular hours and travel time outside regular shift. Employees may offset extra hours with equivalent unpaid time off during the same workweek, subject to the Overtime policy.

For same-day out-of-state travel, employees are paid for all work and travel time (excluding meal breaks) beyond their regular commute. For overnight travel, only travel time during normal work hours is compensable, even if it occurs on weekends or holidays. Travel outside regular hours as a passenger is not compensable.

Pay and Deductions

The DIOET workweek runs Sunday 12:01 A.M. to Saturday midnight. Employees are paid bi-monthly, with payday on the 15th and the last business day of the month via direct deposit.

Final paychecks are issued on the next scheduled payday for voluntary terminations or layoffs, and by the next business day for involuntary terminations.

Deductions from Pay

Mandatory deductions include federal and state income taxes (as designated on the employee's W-4), FICA for lay employees, and Social Security allowances for ordained employees. Additional deductions may be made for:

- Court-ordered garnishments (e.g., child support, tax levies)
- Employee-elected benefits (e.g., health, dental, vision insurance)
- Employee retirement plan contributions
- Voluntary charitable contributions

- Other authorized payroll deductions (e.g., parking, wellness programs if applicable)

Final pay may be adjusted for unaccrued PTO used prior to termination, and any outstanding financial obligations to the Diocese may also be deducted from final wages, in compliance with applicable law.

Exempt Employees

Exempt employees are paid a full salary for each week in which any work is performed. Partial weeks at hire or termination are prorated based on the number of days worked. Deductions from exempt employee pay may be made only under circumstances permitted by law, including:

1. Full-day absences without available PTO.
2. Full-day absences due to illness or injury after all applicable leave is exhausted.
3. Disciplinary suspensions for violations of workplace conduct or safety policies.
4. Full weeks of no work performed, not covered by paid leave.

Non-Exempt Employees

Non-exempt employees are paid based on actual hours worked and are eligible for overtime pay in accordance with federal and applicable state wage laws. Deductions may be made for:

- Time not worked due to unpaid leave of absence
- Partial-day absences if PTO is unavailable
- Any authorized or legally required deductions

If you have questions about your paycheck, deductions, or how your compensation is calculated, please contact the Canon for Finance & Administration or Human Resources for clarification. Transparency and accuracy in payroll are important to us, and we are committed to resolving any concerns promptly.

Correction of Overpayments and Improper Deductions

DIOET may recover overpayments by adjusting future paychecks in a manner that complies with applicable wage and labor laws. Employees will be notified in advance of any such adjustments and given an opportunity to review the details. Employee's signature verifying receipt of this handbook provision constitutes verification and consent to such right to adjust recovery of such overpayments, upon notice.

Employees are encouraged to review their pay stubs regularly and report any discrepancies, such as overpayments, missing hours, or improper deductions, to the Canon or the Ordinary or the Canon of Finance & Administration promptly and within the next pay period following the discrepancy as soon as possible. Timely reporting helps ensure prompt resolution.

If an improper deduction is verified, reimbursement will be issued promptly, typically within the next payroll cycle. DIOET is committed to transparency and fairness in all payroll matters.

No retaliation will occur for good faith reports of payroll errors or concerns. Employees who raise questions or report discrepancies are protected under diocesan policy and applicable labor laws.

To support accuracy and accountability, DIOET maintains detailed payroll records and conducts

periodic audits. If you have questions about your pay, deductions, or adjustments, please reach out to the Canon of Finance & Administration for assistance.

Workplace Guidelines

Personnel and Medical Files

Employee Personnel and Medical Files

The Diocese of East Tennessee (DIOET) maintains a comprehensive employee file for each staff member. These files include both **personnel records** and separately, where applicable, **medical records** related to employment leaves. All files are maintained securely and treated as confidential.

Personnel files typically include:

- Employment applications and resumes
- Offer letters and employment agreements
- Performance evaluations and disciplinary records
- Attendance and leave documentation
- Training certifications and acknowledgments

Medical files, separately, may include:

- Medical certifications for absences
- Accommodation requests
- Any other employment-related medical documentation

Medical information is stored in accordance with applicable privacy laws and is maintained separately within the employee file system to ensure confidentiality. Access to medical records is restricted to authorized personnel with a legitimate need to know.

Employee Responsibilities

Employees are responsible for notifying Human Resources in writing (email is acceptable) of any changes to:

- Contact information (address, phone number)
- Marital status or emergency contacts
- Number of dependents
- Beneficiary designations for group life insurance or retirement plans

Employees should also ensure that their pay and benefits accounts are updated accordingly.

Access and Confidentiality

Employee files are the property of DIOET and are kept confidential. Information from these files

may be shared only:

- With diocesan staff who have a legitimate business need (e.g., supervisors reviewing performance or attendance)
- Upon written authorization from the employee
- As required or permitted by law

Current employees may request to review their personnel file by submitting a written request to the Canon for Finance & Administration or Human Resources. Copies may be made during the review. Medical files may be reviewed by a designated medical professional upon request.

Former employees may request to review and copy their personnel file within **one year** of termination, provided the file exists. Reviews will occur during regular business hours at a mutually agreed location, or DIOET may provide a copy of the file upon request.

All reviews will be conducted in the presence of the Canon for Finance & Administration or Human Resources or their designee. Employees and former employees may not remove, alter, or destroy documents in their files, nor may they remove the files from diocesan property. If an individual believes a document should be corrected or removed, they should submit a written request to the Canon to the Ordinary or Human Resources for review.

Background Checks

All employees of the Diocese of East Tennessee (DIOET) are required to complete a background screening prior to beginning employment. Background checks and Church recertification will be conducted according to the requirements of the Diocesan Safe Church Policy.

Background screenings may include:

- Public records checks conducted by a diocesan-designated provider
- Reference and interview checks
- Additional components as deemed necessary based on the role or responsibilities

These checks are essential to maintaining a safe and trustworthy environment for all who serve and worship within the Diocese.

Training and Continuing Education

Safe Church Training

All DIOET employees must complete **Comprehensive Safe Church Training** within three months of their start date or provide a current certificate of completion that meets the requirements of DIOET. Recertification is required every three years thereafter.

Multicultural Competency & Antiracism Training

All employees are required to complete **multicultural competency and/or diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) training**. New employees must complete this training within three months

of hire. Ongoing participation in such training is expected at least once every three years.

DIOET may organize internal training sessions or require participation in approved external workshops to meet this requirement.

Supervisor Training

Employees appointed to supervisory roles must complete **Supervisor Training** within 60 days of their appointment. Training may include:

- Review of Diocesan Policies and this Handbook
- Conflict resolution and communication skills
- Goal setting and performance evaluation
- General supervision and leadership practices

Training may be delivered through one-on-one sessions with Human Resources or the Canon to the Ordinary, recorded modules, supervisor meetings, or approved external programs.

Sexual Harassment Prevention Training

All employees must complete **Sexual Harassment Prevention Training** within three months of hire. DIOET may utilize online or in-person training programs that meet state and federal requirements. Employees are also expected to as part of Safe Church Certification if required by law or diocesan policy.

Continuing Education

As part of the annual review process and ongoing supervisory meetings, employees of the Diocese of East Tennessee (DIOET) are encouraged to identify areas for continuing education and professional development. This may include training to enhance current job performance or coursework that supports broader vocational growth, such as pursuing a degree or certification relevant to diocesan work.

Employees must request approval from their immediate supervisor or the Canon to the Ordinary before registering for any webinar, conference, course, or training program that incurs a financial cost. Supervisors or the Canon to the Ordinary will evaluate requests based on several factors, including:

- Relevance to the employee's role and responsibilities
- Duration and timing of the program
- Budgetary constraints and availability of diocesan funds
- Travel costs and logistics
- Impact of the employees' absence on departmental operations

Travel arrangements must be approved **before** any bookings are made (e.g., flights, hotels).

Reimbursement for training or related expenses is contingent upon prior supervisory approval.

For **exempt employees**, funding for continuing education is allocated through the diocesan budget approved at Convention. Access to these funds depends on prior approval and budget availability.

Upon completion of a training or educational program, employees should notify their supervisor or Canon and may be asked to share materials or present key learnings to colleagues. If an employee does not complete the approved training or fails to provide documentation of completion, they may be required to reimburse DIOET for the associated costs.

Retreat Time

All full-time exempt employees may use up to **five workdays per calendar year** for spiritual renewal. This retreat time may include participation in programs at retreat centers, personal reflection, or other forms of spiritual enrichment that support their ministry and well-being.

Initial Performance Review

For new employees, the first **90 days of employment** serve as an introductory training period. During this time, the employee's supervisor will closely evaluate performance, engagement, and overall fit for the role and the diocesan work environment.

If the supervisor determines that the employee is not meeting expectations or that the role is not a good fit, DIOET may, at its discretion, extend the introductory period or end the employment relationship. Likewise, the introductory period allows the employee to assess whether DIOET is a suitable and supportive workplace for their professional growth.

At the conclusion of the 90-day period, an **initial performance review** will be conducted. Successful completion of this review does not alter the **at-will nature of employment**.

Employees who transition into a new role within DIOET, including promotions or lateral moves, will also receive a performance review after 90 days in their new position.

Depending on the timing of the 90-day review, new employees or those in new roles may be exempt from the **Annual Review** process during their first year.

Annual Review

DIOET conducts an **Annual Review** process to evaluate employee performance based on job responsibilities and mutually agreed-upon goals. This process is collaborative, with both the employee and supervisor contributing to the review.

The Annual Review is designed to:

- Support professional development
- Provide constructive feedback

- Recognize achievements and address challenges
- Aligning individual goals with diocesan mission and priorities
- Inform compensation discussions (though it does not guarantee a wage increase)

Supervisors and employees are encouraged to meet regularly throughout the year to discuss progress, goals, and any concerns. The Annual Review is a formal part of this ongoing dialogue.

If an employee disagrees with any portion of the review and the matter is not resolved through discussion, they may submit a **written statement** outlining their perspective. This statement will be placed in the employee's personnel file alongside the completed review. Such statements should be submitted to Human Resources, with a copy to the supervisor, within **seven business days** of the review's completion.

Completion of an Annual Review does **not guarantee continued employment**, nor does it modify the at-will employment relationship. Compensation decisions are made separately and are based on multiple factors, including diocesan budgetary considerations, and COLA percentage.

If the Annual Review results in **significant changes to the employee's role**, Human Resources and the Canon to the Ordinary should be notified. These changes may warrant updates to the employee's job description and a review of compensation.

Annual Reviews are conducted during a designated period each year, as determined by Human Resources and the Canon to the Ordinary, and are **not based on individual hire dates**.

Employee Suggestions and Concerns

The Diocese of East Tennessee (DIOET) values open communication and believes that a healthy, collaborative work environment is strengthened by the voices of its employees. We welcome suggestions, questions, and concerns related to workplace culture, policies, procedures, diocesan events, and opportunities for improvement.

Employees are encouraged to share their ideas and feedback with:

- Their immediate supervisor (if applicable)
- The Director of Human Resources (if applicable)
- The Canon to the Ordinary
- The Bishop

All staff are expected to foster a supportive environment where employees feel safe and respected when offering input. DIOET may also proactively seek employee feedback in connection with diocesan initiatives or events.

While not all suggestions can be implemented, DIOET appreciates every contribution and retains full discretion in determining how to respond to concerns or whether to adopt a particular recommendation.

Workplace Conflicts

As a faith-based organization, DIOET calls all employees to a spirit of mutual respect, accountability, and holiness in their work and relationships. When misunderstandings or conflicts arise, we are committed to addressing them in a manner consistent with our values.

If a conflict involves a co-worker, employees are encouraged to first seek resolution through direct, respectful conversation, sharing the intent and impact of actions to foster mutual understanding. If this is not feasible or does not resolve the issue, the employee should bring the matter to their supervisor.

If the concern remains unresolved, or if the issue involves the employee's supervisor, the employee may escalate the matter to:

- Human Resources representative (if applicable)
- The Canon to the Ordinary
- The Bishop

These leaders will work to resolve the issue through appropriate means, which may include informal intervention, mediation, investigation, or disciplinary action.

In all cases, the perspectives of those involved will be heard, and a determination will be made. The Canon to the Ordinary or the Bishop has the authority to make final decisions regarding resolution.

For concerns involving **harassment, discrimination, or retaliation**, employees should follow the procedures outlined in the **Policy Against Harassment and Unlawful Discrimination and Diocesan Safe Church Policies**.

Work Standards

Clear work standards help ensure mutual understanding of expectations and contribute to a respectful, safe, and productive environment for all. The policies outlined in this Handbook are designed to protect the rights, dignity, and safety of every employee, volunteer, and visitor within the Diocese of East Tennessee (DIOET).

All employees are expected to:

- Maintain high standards of conduct and job performance
- Follow diocesan policies, procedures, and workplace rules
- Exercise good judgment, professionalism, and courtesy in all interactions

If an employee is unsure about how to handle a situation or decision, they are encouraged to consult with their supervisor, the Director of Human Resources, the Canon to the Ordinary, or the Bishop.

While it is not possible to list every form of unacceptable behavior, the following examples represent conduct that may result in disciplinary action, including counseling, written warnings, suspension (paid or unpaid), or termination. This list is illustrative and not exhaustive:

Examples of Prohibited Conduct:

1. Refusal to perform assigned duties (insubordination)
2. Harassment or discrimination of any kind, including sexual harassment
3. Reporting to work under the influence of alcohol, cannabis, or illegal drugs; violation of DIOET's substance use policy
4. Possession of weapons on diocesan property or at diocesan events
5. Threatening behavior, physical violence, or violation of workplace safety policies
6. Engaging in unethical, dishonest, or illegal activities
7. Providing false or misleading information during hiring or employment
8. Failure to maintain accurate time records or to enter time promptly
9. Falsification of timekeeping or other work-related documents
10. Misrepresentation in workers' compensation or insurance claims
11. Use of abusive, threatening, or defamatory language
12. Careless handling or waste of diocesan materials, supplies, or equipment
13. Intentional damage to or destruction of diocesan or personal property
14. Theft of property belonging to DIOET or others
15. Smoking in prohibited areas
16. Creating unsafe or hazardous conditions; violating health and safety rules
17. Unauthorized disclosure or misuse of confidential information
18. Excessive absenteeism, tardiness, or leaving work early without approval
19. Failure to report absences or follow call-in procedures
20. Incomplete or neglected job responsibilities
21. Failure to complete required training (see Training and Continuing Education policy)
22. Misuse of Diocesan credit cards or inaccurate expense reporting
23. Violation of any policy or procedure outlined in this Handbook or other diocesan guidance

Any conduct that is illegal may result in immediate termination and may be reported to law enforcement authorities.

Corrective Action and Disciplinary Measures

The Diocese of East Tennessee (DIOET) may use corrective action to address concerns related to performance, attendance, conduct, or violations of diocesan policies. Corrective action is intended to support improvement and accountability, and may include:

- Informal coaching or counseling
- Documented verbal warnings
- Written warnings
- Performance Improvement Plans (PIPs)
- Suspension (paid or unpaid)
- Termination of employment

Use of corrective action does not alter the **at-will employment status** of any employee, nor does it create any contractual rights. While DIOET may follow a progressive discipline model, it retains full discretion to determine the appropriate level of action based on the circumstances. Steps may be repeated, combined, or skipped depending on the nature and severity of the issue.

Factors considered in determining the appropriate response may include:

- The seriousness of the conduct or performance issue
- Whether the behavior is repeated despite prior coaching or training
- The employee's overall work history and performance
- The impact of behavior on colleagues, the Diocese, parishes, or the wider community
- Any mitigating or aggravating circumstances

If an employee disagrees with corrective action, they are encouraged to discuss the matter with their supervisor. If the issue is not resolved or the employee is uncomfortable speaking with their supervisor, they may bring their concerns to Human Resources, the Canon to the Ordinary, or the Bishop.

The **Canon to the Ordinary**, as Chief of Staff, has final decision-making authority in disciplinary matters. **Termination of employment** must be approved by the **Diocesan Bishop**.

In cases of serious misconduct, DIOET may proceed directly to termination or take other appropriate action without engaging in the corrective process.

Documentation

Employees will receive copies of any formal disciplinary documentation, including warnings and performance improvement plans. Employees will be asked to sign the documents to acknowledge receipt and understanding not necessarily agreement. If an employee refuses to sign, the supervisor will note the refusal and have it witnessed.

Employees who disagree with the contents of a disciplinary document may submit a **written statement** explaining their position. This statement will be placed in the employee's personnel file alongside the disciplinary record.

All disciplinary documentation will be maintained in the employee's personnel file in accordance with diocesan recordkeeping policies and are considered confidential business records of DIOET.

Communications

Social Media Acceptable Use

Responsible use of social media can be a powerful tool for sharing the Gospel, building community, and supporting the mission of the Diocese of East Tennessee (DIOET). Social media

includes, but is not limited to, blogs, podcasts, online profiles, videos, images, messaging platforms, and music or content-sharing services.

When engaging in social media, employees represent both themselves and, in many cases, the Diocese. The **Communications Office** manages DIOET's official social media accounts. Any content intended for diocesan platforms should be submitted to Communications for review and posting.

While DIOET respects employees' personal online presence, it is important to remember that social media content is public and often permanent, even if deleted. The following guidelines are intended to help employees use social media responsibly and in alignment with diocesan values and policies.

When Using Social Media, Employees Should:

- Remember the words of the Baptismal Covenant; book of common prayer, pages 304-305
- Be respectful, fair, and courteous in all interactions, especially with colleagues, clergy, parishioners, and community partners.
- Ensure accuracy and honesty in posts and promptly correct any errors.
- Maintain professional boundaries, particularly with youth, clergy, and coworkers, in accordance with **Diocesan Safe Church** practices. Questions about boundaries should be directed to Human Resources or the Canon to the Ordinary for Clergy Support.
- Protect confidential information. If unsure whether content is confidential, consult with your supervisor, Human Resources, Canon to the Ordinary, or Missioner for Communication before posting.
- Clearly distinguish personal opinions from diocesan positions. When posting on personal accounts, clarify that views are your own and not those of DIOET.
- Refer all media inquiries about DIOET to the Missioner for Communications and Evangelism or to the Canon to the Ordinary.
- Employees may not speak on behalf of the Diocese unless explicitly authorized.
- Use sound judgment and ensure all social media activities, personal or professional, is consistent with diocesan policies and values.

When Using Social Media, Employees Should Not:

- Use DIOET logos, branding, or imagery in personal posts, especially for commercial or promotional purposes.
- Misrepresent personal views as those of DIOET. If there is any risk of confusion, include a disclaimer such as:
"The views expressed here are my own and do not necessarily reflect those of the Diocese of East Tennessee."
- Share confidential, financial, or sensitive information about DIOET, clergy, lay leaders, or employees without consent.

- Post copyrighted content on diocesan platforms without proper authorization and compliance with applicable laws.
- Use diocesan social media for personal financial gain, political advocacy, advertising, or solicitation.
- Engage in harassing, defamatory, discriminatory, threatening, or otherwise inappropriate language or behavior on social media.

Failure to follow **Diocesan Safe Church practices** and this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Employees with questions about appropriate social media use should contact **Human Resources, Canon to the Ordinary, or Missioner for Communication**.

Computer, Email, and Internet Usage

The Diocese of East Tennessee (DIOET) recognizes that access to email, the Internet, and other digital tools is essential for effective communication and ministry. Employees are expected to use diocesan Information and Telecommunication Systems (ITS) responsibly, ethically, and in a manner consistent with diocesan policies and values.

Use Constitutes' Consent

By using DIOET's ITS including computers, email, Internet access, and other digital platforms, employees consent to the terms outlined in this Handbook. Questions about appropriate use should be directed to your immediate supervisor.

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, including loss of access privileges, suspension, or termination of employment. In certain cases, misuse may also result in civil or criminal liability.

Confidentiality and Monitoring

All technology and digital resources provided by DIOET are the property of the Diocese. This includes hardware, software, communication systems, and any data stored or transmitted through diocesan systems. These systems are intended primarily for work-related purposes.

DIOET reserves the right to monitor, access, and review all electronic communications and data including email, files, internet activity, and messaging, whether accessed onsite or remotely. Employees should have no expectation of privacy when using diocesan systems.

All data stored or transmitted through DIOET's ITS is considered confidential and/or proprietary. Unauthorized use, modification, destruction, or disclosure of diocesan systems or data is strictly prohibited.

Electronic communications, including email, voicemail, and text messages may be considered business records and could be subject to legal discovery in the event of litigation. Employees should exercise care and professionalism in all digital communications, both internal and external.

Appropriate Use of Diocesan Technology Systems

Employees of the Diocese of East Tennessee (DIOET) are expected to use diocesan Information and Telecommunication Systems (ITS) including computers, email, and internet access—responsibly and primarily for work-related purposes. Occasional, limited personal use is permitted, provided it does not interfere with job performance, violate diocesan policies, compromise system security, or disrupt the work of others. Personal use is a privilege and may be revoked at any time. All users are responsible for ensuring that their use of diocesan systems is professional, ethical, and lawful.

Use of DIOET systems must reflect the values of the Diocese and comply with all applicable policies. Employees must not use diocesan ITS to transmit, store, or retrieve content that is defamatory, discriminatory, harassing, sexually explicit, or otherwise inappropriate. Communications containing derogatory or inflammatory remarks about race, age, disability, religion, national origin, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, or any other protected characteristic are strictly prohibited. Additionally, employees may not engage in illegal activities such as hacking, piracy, copyright infringement, or unauthorized access to systems or data.

The following activities are **strictly prohibited**:

- Excessive personal use of diocesan systems
- Sending or storing unauthorized advertisements, solicitations, or political materials unrelated to diocesan work
- Accessing or modifying files or systems without proper authorization
- Making and/or sharing unauthorized copies of diocesan data
- Destroying, deleting, or concealing diocesan files or data
- Accessing another employee's files or communications without consent
- Sharing passwords or access credentials unless directed by a supervisor or diocesan IT consultant
- Attempting to bypass or disable security protocols
- Downloading software or files without prior approval
- Failing to scan downloaded files for viruses before use
- Storing non-employee or institutional payment information in written or electronic forms including credit card, debit card, bank account, or other financial account identification information.

Employees are responsible for the content of all text, audio, video, or image files they send or store using diocesan systems. No email or electronic communication may misrepresent the sender's identity, and all outgoing messages should reflect the professionalism and mission of the

Diocese. DIOET reserves the right to monitor and restrict access to websites or content deemed inappropriate for the workplace, including sexually explicit material.

To promote respectful and effective communication, employees are encouraged to follow these **email and messaging etiquette guidelines**:

- Check inboxes regularly and respond promptly when needed
- Keep messages concise and clear
- Use respectful language and avoid gossip or criticism
- Consider alternative forms of response (e.g., phone call, in person meeting, or online meeting) for emotionally charged messages
- Copy relevant parties appropriately and avoid unnecessary forwarding
- Do not forward messages without the sender's permission unless necessary and with proper context
- Never assume electronic communications are private or secure

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, including termination of employment. Employees with questions about appropriate use of diocesan technology should contact **Human Resources** or the **Canon to the Ordinary**.

Cybersecurity

Protecting the Diocese of East Tennessee's (DIOET) Information and Telecommunication Systems (ITS) and data is a shared responsibility. Cybersecurity threats, including phishing, malware, and data breaches, can compromise diocesan operations and personal information. While spam filters and security tools are in place, no system is foolproof. Cybercriminals often gain access when someone unknowingly clicks on a malicious link or attachment or responds to fraudulent messages with confidential information.

All employees must remain vigilant, especially when receiving emails or texts that seem unusual, urgent, or out of character, even if they appear to come from known colleagues. New employees are particularly vulnerable, as cybercriminals often target them before they become familiar with diocesan staff names, email styles, and communication norms.

Common signs of phishing or fraudulent messages include:

- Requests to change direct deposit, banking, or payroll information
- Messages from bishops, canons, or staff claiming urgency and stating they cannot be reached by phone
- Inquiries about wire transfers or financial transactions
- Requests for passwords, cell phone numbers, or login credentials
- Alerts about compromised accounts asking you to click a link, scan a QR code, or call a number
- Notifications about delayed packages or orders requiring additional information or payment

- Invoices or charges for items you did not order
- Requests for gift cards, rewards, or donations
- Messages from unfamiliar or suspicious email addresses or phone numbers

Employees should hover over sender names and email addresses to verify authenticity. However, be aware that sophisticated attackers can “spoof” diocesan email addresses, making them appear legitimate. If the reply address differs from the original sender or if Outlook displays a “Warning message at the head of the email” next to the sender’s name, this may indicate a spoofed or unauthenticated message.

If you receive a suspicious message, **do not click on links, open attachments, or scan QR codes**. If you believe you may have clicked on a malicious link or shared sensitive information, you must immediately notify the **Missionary of Communications**.

Cybersecurity is a collective effort. By staying alert and following these guidelines, employees help protect diocesan systems, data, and the integrity of our shared ministry.

Artificial Intelligence Use

We recognize the opportunities artificial intelligence (AI) tools provide to support our mission, enhance efficiency, and strengthen communication. At the same time, we acknowledge the ethical, environmental, privacy, and stewardship responsibilities that come with their use. Accordingly, the following principles guide authorized use of AI software, tools and platforms:

- **Mission Alignment:** AI tools may be used to support—but not replace—the human judgment, creativity, and relational work that are central to our mission. AI output should be evaluated to ensure they reflect our organizational values and commitments.
- **Transparency:** Staff must disclose when AI has been used in creating written materials, images, or other outputs for external audiences, particularly in cases where accuracy or authorship could be misunderstood.
- **Confidentiality & Privacy:** AI tools may not be used to input, store, or process sensitive, confidential, or personal identifiable information unless the tool has been explicitly approved by leadership and complies with all applicable data protection requirements.
- **Accuracy & Accountability:** AI-generated content is not inherently reliable as it is prone to “hallucinations”, false answers or information, information that is stale, or responses that are overly sycophantic. Users are responsible for fact-checking, editing, and ensuring that any AI outputs used in organizational work are accurate, respectful, and appropriate for their intended audience.
- **Equity & Ethics:** AI must be used in ways that respect the dignity of all people, avoid harmful bias, and promote fairness. Staff should be attentive to potential bias in AI outputs and correct it before use.
- **Resource Stewardship:** AI should be used with awareness of its financial and environmental costs. When feasible, more efficient or lower-impact tools should be preferred.
- **Oversight:** Questions about appropriate use of AI should be directed to the Missioner for Communication and Evangelism. This policy may be reviewed periodically to reflect emerging best practices and ethical standards.

Artificial intelligence platforms already approved for use include the OpenAI platform (ChatGPT), the Anthropic platform (Claude), Apple Artificial Intelligence (Siri), Google Gemini, and Microsoft Copilot.

Personal Electronic Equipment

To maintain the security and integrity of the Diocese of East Tennessee's (DIOET) Information and Telecommunication Systems (ITS), employees must obtain **express approval** from both their **immediate supervisor** and the **Missioner** before connecting any personal computers, smartphones, tablets, or other electronic devices to Diocesan systems. This includes access to diocesan networks, servers, or email platforms. Personal equipment may be connected to the Diocesan House guest network at any time.

By connecting a personal device to DIOET's ITS, the employee grants permission for the Diocese to inspect the device at any time. This inspection may include reviewing files, data, and any connected storage media, and may be conducted by diocesan personnel or designated consultants.

Rather than issuing diocesan-owned cellular phones, DIOET may choose to **reimburse employees** for work-related expenses incurred on their **personally owned phones**, when the use of such a device is required by the employee's role. The Diocese retains full discretion over whether to issue diocesan devices and, if so, under what terms, including policies regarding personal use, cost-sharing, and device management.

Employees are expected to follow all diocesan policies regarding data security, confidentiality, and appropriate use when using personal devices for diocesan work. Unauthorized access, data sharing, or failure to comply with these guidelines may result in disciplinary action.

Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality

Conflicts of Interest

Employees of the Diocese of East Tennessee (DIOET) are expected to uphold the highest standards of integrity and impartiality in their work. All employees have a duty to avoid relationships, activities, or interests that conflict, or appear to conflict, with the mission, values, or operations of the Diocese. Any actual or potential conflict of interest must be disclosed promptly to the employee's supervisor. Questions or concerns about possible conflicts should be raised with the supervisor, Human Resources, or the Canon to the Ordinary.

A conflict of interest may arise when an employee's personal, financial, or professional interests interfere with their ability to act in the best interests of DIOET. Even the appearance of a conflict can undermine trust and credibility. Employees are expected to disclose any situation that could compromise their objectivity, independence, or decision-making.

Examples of situations that may present a conflict of interest and require disclosure include, but are not limited to:

- Providing services to or being employed by an outside organization that may interfere with diocesan duties or cause reputational harm
- Having a financial interest in a transaction involving the DIOET that could affect the employee's judgment or conduct
- Serving as an elected officer or vestry member in an Episcopal parish, Intentional Episcopal Community, or other religious organization.
- Participating on diocesan boards or committees such as the Commission on Ministry, Mission Council, Standing Committee, Bishop Transition Committee, or Bishop & Counsel.
- Leading or serving in Intentional Episcopal Communities, Regional Leadership Teams, Ministry Networks, or as a Regional Dean
- Engaging in substantial financial transactions with diocesan vendors, clients, or suppliers (excluding routine banking)
- Performing outside work during regular diocesan work hours
- Using diocesan resources, such as facilities, equipment, or supplies, for personal or outside business activities
- Disclosing or using confidential diocesan information without proper authorization
- Supervising or being supervised by a family member, romantic partner, or someone with whom the employee has a close personal relationship

DIOET may employ relatives of current employees, provided that the relationship does not create conflict of interest. This includes avoiding direct supervisory relationships or situations where one relative can exert influence over the other's employment terms. If an employee becomes romantically involved with or related to another employee in a supervisory capacity, they must notify Human Resources immediately.

If a conflict of interest is identified, the employee may be given an opportunity to resolve it within a reasonable timeframe, especially if the situation arose unintentionally. However, knowingly engaging in a conflict-of-interest transactions is a serious violation of diocesan policy. If an employee knew, or reasonably should have known, about a conflict and failed to disclose it, or avoid it, disciplinary action may be taken, up to and including termination of employment.

Confidential Information

Employees of the Diocese of East Tennessee (DIOET) are entrusted with sensitive and confidential information and are expected to handle it with care, discretion, and integrity. This responsibility applies to all employees and continues even after employment ends. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to, financial data related to parishes or clergy, donation and bequest records, and non-public information about churches and clergy in transition. Employees must use such information only for approved purposes, limit its dissemination, and take reasonable steps to prevent unauthorized access or disclosure.

In the course of employment, DIOET may collect or receive **Personal Information** from employees, job applicants, clergy, and others. This may include personal contact details, emergency information, EEO (Equal Employment Opportunity) data, Social Security numbers, birth dates, employment eligibility documentation, benefits enrollment data (including dependent information), educational credentials, and other non-public information that can be linked to an individual. Personal Information does not include publicly available data or information the individual has authorized for general release.

DIOET is committed to maintaining the confidentiality of all Personal Information. Access is restricted to employees with a legitimate business need to know, and disclosure to third parties is prohibited unless expressly authorized by the individual, required by law, or the information is already publicly available. Former employees are expected to continue honoring this confidentiality and must not take or disclose Personal Information belonging to others.

In addition to Personal Information, DIOET-assigned data—such as organizational charts, department titles, staff directories, budgets, coding systems, and internal contact lists—is considered proprietary and intended for internal use only, unless otherwise published on the diocesan website or released for public use. DIOET reserves the right to distribute such information as needed to support its operations.

All hard copy records containing Personal Information must be stored in locked, secure areas with access limited to authorized personnel. Electronic records must be protected through diocesan security protocols and systems. Personal Information shared with benefit plan providers will be used solely for enrollment, claims processing, and recordkeeping purposes.

If an employee becomes aware of a material breach involving their own Personal Information or diocesan proprietary data, they must report the incident immediately to their supervisor, Human Resources, or the Canon to the Ordinary. These parties will investigate and take appropriate corrective action. A standard of reasonableness will apply in evaluating such incidents.

Examples of acceptable disclosures that do **not** constitute a breach of this policy include:

- Sharing partial birth dates (day and month) for employee birthday recognition, unless the employee opts out by notifying Human Resources
- Providing personal contact information to supervisors or colleagues for scheduling, operations, or emergency purposes
- Sharing employee identifiers for payroll, budgeting, or timekeeping with those who have a business need to know
- Distributing service anniversaries or recognition details to department heads
- Sharing employee and dependent information with benefit providers during open enrollment or for benefits continuation

Time Off and Leaves of Absence

Vacation and Personal Time (PTO)

The Diocese of East Tennessee (DIOET) encourages all eligible employees to take regular time away from their responsibilities to rest and recharge. All regular employees, defined as those who work at least 20 hours per week on a consistent basis, are entitled to paid time off (PTO). For employees working between 20 hours and full-time, PTO is prorated based on their Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) status. PTO may be used in increments of one full hour or more. Paid holidays recognized by DIOET do not count against PTO.

Employees are strongly encouraged to take at least one full week (five consecutive business days) of vacation each year. Time off may be scheduled at any point during the year, subject to supervisor's approval and the operational needs of The Diocese. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring adequate coverage before approving vacation requests. Employees should record planned absences on Diocese of East Tennessee shared calendar.

Employees are expected to monitor their PTO usage to ensure they do not exceed the amount they will accrue during the calendar year. While PTO may be used in advance of accrual, up to the amount expected to accrue within the same calendar year, this must be approved by the supervisor and accompanied by a signed repayment agreement. PTO may not be borrowed from the following year.

PTO can be used for any reason, including vacation, personal appointments, religious holidays not observed by DIOET, or to cover illness or medical appointments for the employee or a family member once paid sick time has been exhausted. PTO does not count as hours worked for the purpose of calculating overtime.

Non-exempt employees may carry over up to 20 hours of unused PTO into the next calendar year. In exceptional circumstances, more than 20 hours may be carried over with prior written approval from both the employee's supervisor and the Canon to the Ordinary. However, accrued but unused PTO will not be paid out at the end of the calendar year and must be used by April 1st of the following year, or it will be forfeited.

Upon termination of employment, accrued but unused PTO will generally be paid out, subject to the terms outlined in the **Separation from Employment** policy.

PTO Accrual

Paid Time Off (PTO) for employees of the Diocese of East Tennessee (DIOET) is accrued based on employment classification, length of service, and scheduled hours. PTO accrues on a bi-weekly basis and is prorated for part-time employees who work at least 20 hours per week.

Non-Exempt Employees

Non-exempt employees accrue PTO with each pay period. Those hired mid-year will earn prorated PTO during their first year of employment. Accrual rates are based on years of service as of the employee's anniversary date:

- **Less than 3 years of service:**
15 workdays per year (based on a 7.5-hour workday)
→ 112.5 hours annually, accruing at approximately **4.33 hours per pay period**
- **3 to 5 years of service:**
17 workdays per year
→ 127.5 hours annually, accruing at approximately **4.9 hours per pay period**
- **5 or more years of service:**
22 workdays per year
→ 165 hours annually, accruing at approximately **6.35 hours per pay period**

For part-time non-exempt employees regularly scheduled to work 20 or more hours per week, PTO is prorated according to their Full-Time Equivalent (FTE). Adjustments to accrual rates based on service milestones are made on the **first day of the month**, in which the employee's anniversary date falls.

Exempt Employees

Regular full-time exempt employees receive **four calendar weeks** (20 workdays) of PTO annually, regardless of length of service. This equates to **160 hours per year**. Part-time exempt employees working 20 or more hours per week receive prorated PTO, with accrual rates specified in their **Letter of Employment**. Employees hired mid-year will receive prorated PTO based on their start date.

Vacation Sharing Policy

The Diocese of East Tennessee (DIOET) offers a Vacation Sharing Program to support employees facing a family health-related emergency or personal crisis. This policy allows eligible employees to donate a portion of their accrued Paid Time Off (PTO) to colleagues who have exhausted their own leave, including sick time, PTO, and any applicable state leave benefits.

• Donating Employees

All regular employees with at least one year of continuous service are eligible to participate as donors. Donations must be voluntary and approved by both the donor's and recipient's supervisor. Donors may contribute up to **50% of their currently accrued PTO** within any twelve-month period. Employees currently on approved leave of absence are not eligible to donate PTO. Only **accrued PTO** may be donated—**sick time is not eligible**—and donations must be made anonymously in **minimum increments of 7.5 hours**.

- **Receiving Employees**

To receive donated PTO, employees must also have at least one year of continuous service and must have **exhausted all available sick leave, PTO, and applicable Tennessee Paid Leave benefits**. The number of days an employee may receive must be approved by their supervisor.

- **Qualifying Situations**

PTO donations may be used in the following circumstances:

- A medically certified **serious health condition** affecting the employee or a close family member (spouse, parent, child, sibling, grandparent, or grandchild), as defined by Connecticut FMLA
- A **personal crisis** of a severe nature that directly impacts the employee and requires time away from work, such as a natural disaster affecting the employee's primary residence
- **Non-qualifying situations** include routine pregnancy/childbirth, minor illnesses, or conditions covered by Workers' Compensation

Employees who believe they may qualify for donated PTO should speak with their supervisor or Human Resources to initiate the request process. All donations and approvals will be handled with discretion and compassion, in alignment with diocesan values.

Sick Time

The Diocese of East Tennessee (DIOET) encourages employees to prioritize their health and well-being. Employees who are ill or injured should take time to rest and recover before returning to work, both for their own benefit and to protect the health of colleagues.

At the beginning of each calendar year, all full-time exempt and non-exempt employees receive **10 days of paid sick time**, calculated based on their regular daily work hours. This equates to **80 hours** for full-time non-exempt employees (based on a 7.5-hour day) and **80 hours** for full-time exempt employees (based on an 8-hour day). Part-time employees who work at least 20 hours per week receive prorated sick time based on their Full-Time Equivalent (FTE). New employees receive prorated sick time based on their start date.

Employees may carry over up to **10 days of unused sick time** into the following calendar year. Carryover limits and total maximum sick time available are prorated for part-time employees. Unused sick time is **not paid out** during employment or upon termination, and it does **not count as hours worked** for overtime purposes.

Sick time may be used for a variety of qualifying reasons, including:

- The employee's own illness, injury, or health condition
- Mental health wellness days
- Medical appointments for treatment or preventive care

- Illness or healthcare appointments for immediate family members (spouse, children, grandchildren, parents)
- Situations involving family violence or sexual assault, including medical care, counseling, relocation, or legal proceedings
- Public health emergencies, such as closures of Diocese of East Tennessee or a family member's school or care facility, or when exposure to a communicable illness poses a health risk
- Any other reason permitted under applicable paid sick leave laws

Sick time is **not interchangeable with PTO** and must be used only for the qualifying reasons listed above. It is not to be used as additional vacation time or to extend weekends or holidays. Working from home is generally **not a substitute** for using sick time when an employee is ill or caring for a sick family member who requires support.

Sick time may be taken in **minimum increments of four hours**. If an employee has a short appointment but wishes to take the full day off, they should use sick time for the appointment and request PTO for the remainder of the day, as agreed upon with their supervisor.

If the need for sick time is **foreseeable**, such as for a scheduled procedure or appointment, employees should notify their supervisor in advance, submit the request by email to the Canon for Finance & Administration, and add the absence to Diocese of East Tennessee shared calendar. If the need is **unforeseeable**, employees should notify their supervisor as soon as practicable, ideally before the start of the workday, and submit the request via email when able. Supervisors may assist in updating the shared calendar if the employee is unable to do so.

Employees are responsible for tracking their sick time usage and ensuring they do not exceed their available balance. Sick time may not be borrowed or advanced from the following calendar year. Questions about sick time balances should be directed to the employee's supervisor or the Canon for Finance & Administration.

In certain cases, such as extended use of sick time beyond 40 hours or qualifying leaves for which an employee is eligible and DIOET is a covered employer. **Documentation may be required** by the supervisor or Human Resources to verify the reason for the absence.

Holidays

Diocese of East Tennessee observes several paid holidays throughout the calendar year. These holidays are intended to provide employees with time for rest, reflection, and celebration. In addition to the listed holidays, DIOET is closed from **Christmas through New Year's Day**.

Observed Holidays

The following holidays are recognized and observed:

- New Year's Day

- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Presidents' Day
- Good Friday
- Easter Monday
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Indigenous Peoples Day/Columbus Day
- Thanksgiving Day and the Day After Thanksgiving (in lieu of Veterans Day)
- Christmas Day

If a holiday falls on a **Sunday**, it will be observed on the following **Monday**. If it falls on a **Saturday**, it will be observed on the preceding **Friday**.

The **Bishop** may authorize additional paid time off (full or partial days) at their discretion. These additional days are not guaranteed and may vary from year to year.

Holiday Pay and Scheduling

- **Part-time employees** are paid for holidays only if the holiday falls on a regularly scheduled workday or as outlined in their Letter of Employment (LOE).
- If a holiday falls on a scheduled day off for a part-time employee and they do not work that day, they will not receive holiday pay.
- **Non-exempt employees** who work on a holiday or its observed day will be compensated at **time and a half** for hours worked.
 - Work on holidays must be **approved in advance** by the employee's supervisor.
 - If the hours worked are fewer than the employees' regular schedule, the remaining hours will be paid at the regular rate.
- Holidays do **not count as hours worked** for the purpose of calculating overtime.

Early Closings

Diocese of East Tennessee closes early on the workday preceding certain holidays:

- **12:00 P.M. closure** before:
 - New Year's Day
 - Memorial Day
 - Independence Day
 - Labor Day
 - Thanksgiving
 - Christmas

Full-time non-exempt employees working on these days will receive their full day's pay. Part-time non-exempt employees who are regularly scheduled to work on these days will receive their regular (pro rata) day's pay.

Parental Leave Policy

Eligibility

Regular employees of the Diocese of East Tennessee who are scheduled to work **20 or more hours per week** and have been employed for **at least one year** are eligible for **up to twelve weeks of Parental Leave** following the **birth of a child**, or the **placement of a child for adoption or foster care**.

Employees working **less than full-time** but more than 20 hours per week will receive **pro-rated leave benefits** based on their **Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)** status.

Leave Duration and Timing

Parental Leave must be taken **within twelve months** of the qualifying event (birth or placement) and is generally expected to be taken **consecutively**, unless otherwise approved by DIOET leadership.

The **maximum leave period is twelve weeks**, regardless of whether the leave is paid, unpaid, or a combination of both.

Notice Requirements

Employees intending to take Parental Leave must provide **at least 30 days' advance written notice** to their supervisor and the Director of Human Resources prior to the expected start date of the leave.

Paid Parental Leave Benefit

DIOET provides a **paid Parental Leave benefit** to eligible employees who have completed one year of service. This benefit is **secondary to any other wage replacement benefits** the employee may be eligible for, such as **short-term disability insurance**.

Employees are required to apply for any applicable disability benefits first. DIOET will then pay the **difference between those benefits and the employee's regular wages**, ensuring the employee receives **100% of their regular compensation** during the Parental Leave period.

Employment Restrictions During Leave

Employees on Parental Leave may not engage in **self-employment** or work for another employer during the leave period, unless they receive **express written permission** from DIOET leadership.

Pregnancy Disability Leave Policy

Eligibility and Scope

DIOET will grant a **reasonable leave of absence** to employees who are **temporarily disabled due to pregnancy or childbirth**, in accordance with **Tennessee law** and applicable **federal protections**.

Employees who have been employed **full-time for at least 12 consecutive months** are entitled to **up to four months of unpaid leave** for pregnancy, childbirth, adoption, or nursing [1].

Medical Certification

The duration of leave will be determined by **medical necessity**, as certified by the employee's **health care provider**. The employee must provide documentation specifying the expected period of disability.

Compensation During Leave

Pregnancy Disability Leave is generally **unpaid**. However, employees may:

- Use **accrued paid leave** (e.g., sick time or PTO)
- Apply for **short-term disability benefits**, if applicable
- Be eligible for **Parental Leave benefits** under DIOET policy

Use of paid leave or disability benefits **does not extend** the maximum leave period under this policy.

Job Protection and Reinstatement

Upon conclusion of the approved leave, the employee will be reinstated to their **original or a similar position** with equivalent pay and benefits, unless doing so would impose an **undue hardship** on DIOET or if circumstances have changed significantly [3][2].

Additional Leave After Disability Ends

This policy covers only the period of **disability** related to pregnancy and childbirth. If the employee wishes to take additional time off to care for a newborn after the disability period ends, they may request leave under DIOET's **Parental Leave policy**.

If the employee is not eligible for Parental Leave or has exhausted available leave, they may request additional time off under DIOET's **Personal Leave policy**, subject to approval by leadership.

Family Violence Leave Policy

Eligibility and Purpose

DIOET recognizes the serious impact of family and domestic violence and supports employees who may need time away from work to address related issues. Employees may take up to 12 days of unpaid leave per calendar year for reasons related to or resulting from an incident of family violence, including:

- Seeking medical care for physical or psychological injury or disability
- Obtaining services from a victim services organization
- Relocating for safety
- Participating in civil or criminal proceedings

Definition of Family Violence

'Family violence' includes incidents resulting in physical harm, bodily injury, assault, or threatened violence that causes fear of imminent harm between family or household members. Verbal abuse or arguments are not considered family violence unless there is a present danger and a likelihood of physical harm.

Compensation and Leave Use

Family Violence Leave is generally unpaid. However, employees may:

- Use available paid leave (vacation, personal time, or sick time)
- Apply for short-term disability benefits, if applicable

Use of paid leave does not extend the maximum 12-day leave period under this policy.

Notice and Documentation

If the need for leave is foreseeable (e.g., scheduled court proceedings), employees should provide at least seven days' notice to their supervisor and the Director of Human Resources. If the need is not foreseeable, notice should be given as soon as practical. Employees must complete a leave attestation form and may be asked to provide supporting documentation, such as a court notice, police report, or letter from a service provider.

Bereavement Leave

Eligibility and Duration

Regular exempt and non-exempt employees may take up to **five days** of paid bereavement leave per calendar year to attend funeral services and manage personal matters related to the death of a loved one. Part-time employees will be paid for bereavement leave only on days they are regularly scheduled to work.

Bereavement leave must be arranged in consultation with the employee's supervisor and the Canon to the Ordinary. This leave cannot be carried over from year to year and does not count as hours worked for overtime purposes.

National Guard and Military Reserve Leave

Eligibility and Use

Employees who serve in the National Guard or Military Reserve may take time off to attend mandatory drills, exercises, or meetings that occur during their regularly scheduled work hours. This leave will not reduce accrued PTO.

Notice and Documentation

Employees should notify their supervisor and the Canon to the Ordinary as soon as practicable and may be asked to provide documentation of the mandatory service.

Active Military Leave

Unpaid Leave and Reinstatement Rights

Employees called to active duty are entitled to unpaid leave in accordance with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). Employees may choose to use accrued paid leave during this time. Upon return from active duty, employees who meet the conditions outlined in USERRA generally have the right to be reinstated to their previous position or a comparable role with equivalent pay, status, and benefits.

Notice Requirements

Employees should submit a copy of their military orders to Human Resources or to the Canon to the Ordinary as soon as possible, unless prevented by military necessity.

Additional Information

Details regarding benefits continuation and reinstatement conditions are available from the Human Resources office.

Jury Duty Leave

Compensation and Eligibility

Employees summoned for jury duty will be granted time off. Full-time employees will be compensated at their regular rate, offset by any payment received from the court. Part-time employees will be compensated only for days they are normally scheduled to work, also offset by court payments.

Administration

Documentation and Expectations

Employees must provide proof of jury service and any court-issued payments to Human Resources. Time spent on jury duty does not count toward overtime. If jury service is cancelled or

ends early, employees are expected to return to work.

Witness and Crime Victim Leave

Employees of the Diocese of East Tennessee may take unpaid leave to appear in court as a witness in a criminal proceeding, provided they have received a legal subpoena requiring their attendance. Additionally, employees who are victims of a crime may take unpaid leave to attend court proceedings or participate in police investigations related to the case. Employees may choose to use accrued paid time off (PTO) if they wish to be compensated during this time.

Personal Leave

Personal leaves of absence are intended for situations that temporarily prevent an employee from working but do not qualify under family and medical leave or other DIOET leave policies, or when the employee has exhausted available leave under those policies. Requests for personal leave should be submitted in writing to Human Resources and the Canon to the Ordinary, detailing the reason, start date, and expected duration. Personal leave is generally unpaid and will only be considered after the employee has used all applicable paid leave. In some cases, employees may be eligible for workers' compensation or disability benefits if the leave is due to medical condition and they are enrolled in DIOET's disability program. Approval of personal leave is at the sole discretion of DIOET leadership, including the length of the leave.

Employees on personal leave may not engage in other employment without prior written approval. They must also consult with Human Resources or with Canon to the Ordinary regarding continuation of benefits during unpaid leave and are responsible for any premium payments required for employees to maintain coverage. Paid leave benefits do not accrue during unpaid personal leave.

Upon return, DIOET will not hold open, but will attempt to reinstate the employee to their previous or comparable position but cannot guarantee availability. **If no position is available, the employee may be subject to termination. If the employee chooses not to return, the termination date will be the last day of the authorized leave or the date the employee notifies DIOET of their decision, whichever is earlier.**

Employee Benefits

A large part of the Diocese of East Tennessee's (DIOET) success depends upon our employees' health and ability to perform their jobs in a reliable and productive manner, as well as their ability to plan for retirement. DIOET currently offers a comprehensive benefits package for its regular full-time and part-time employees. Benefit eligibility depends on a variety of factors. For example, some benefits have a waiting period before an employee becomes eligible; other benefits may differ depending on an employee's status, such as lay or clergy, exempt or non-exempt, full-time or part-time, and length of service.

The information contained in this Handbook regarding employee benefits is for general guidance only and does not constitute a contract to provide these benefits to any employee. The benefits offered, including eligibility and other terms, may change from time to time, or be suspended or discontinued at any time.

This section of the Handbook includes a description of DIOET's short-term disability policy, as well as a summary of other benefits currently offered. Employees can obtain additional information, including copies of insurance policies and other plan documents, from the Canon for Finance & Administration, or in the shared DIOET TEAMS folder in the Benefits subfolder.

Employees are encouraged to read the insurance policies and other applicable plan or program documents thoroughly to ensure that the benefits and limitations are understood. In the event of any conflict between this Handbook and the plan documents, including the terms of any insurance policy, the plan documents will govern.

Open Enrollment

Once a year during open enrollment (usually in October-November), employees can make changes to their medical, dental, and vision coverage for the following calendar year. Otherwise, changes may only be made during the year if a qualified status change occurs—for example, marriage, divorce, death, birth or adoption of a child, or a spouse's loss of coverage. In such cases, the employee must notify the Canon for Finance & Administration, elect the change, and submit proper documentation within 30 days of the qualified status change. Benefit guidance and a cost matrix will be made available to employees during Open Enrollment.

Medical Insurance

Regular employees who are regularly scheduled to work at least **1,000** hours each year can elect to participate in the medical benefit plans offered by DIOET through the Church Medical Trust of the Church Pension Group (CPG). Currently, DIOET offers a variety of plans through both Anthem and Cigna. Details of the plans, including eligibility requirements, covered benefits, and exclusions, are included in the plan documents. DIOET offers a cost-sharing program where the percentage of premium paid by the employee depends on the employee's regularly scheduled hours of work and the plan selected. Employees who elect to participate in a high-deductible plan are eligible to participate in a Health Savings Account (HSA), which allows pre-tax contributions up to the IRS annual limit to pay for qualified health expenses. Coverage for eligible employees begins on the first day of the month following the start of employment. For employees who leave DIOET, coverage ends on the last day of the month, in which their employment ends. Employees may opt out of DIOET medical or dental plans if they have alternative coverage. More information is available in the Benefits Guide or from the Canon for Finance and Administration or Canon to the Ordinary.

Vision Benefits

CPG offers a vision care benefit through EyeMed for employees participating in a medical plan, at no additional cost. EyeMed provides one free basic eye exam per calendar year with an in-network provider. Out-of-network services may incur costs. The program also offers discounts on frames, lenses, contacts, prescription sunglasses, and other eyewear and eyecare needs.

Dental Insurance

Employees eligible for a CPG medical plan or Group Medicare Advantage Plan may elect to participate in dental plans offered by DIOET. Enrollment in dental coverage is available even without enrollment in a CPG medical plan. Coverage begins on the first day of the month following the start of employment for eligible employees.

Health Savings Accounts (HSA)

Employees enrolled in high-deductible plans typically use a Health Savings Account (HSA). Employer contributions to an employee's HSA are determined each year before open enrollment

begins. All HSA plans are subject to annual IRS limits.

Short-Term Disability (STD) – Non-Ordained Employees

DIOET provides supplemental short-term disability benefits for regular full-time and part-time lay employees who have been employed for at least six months and are unable to perform the essential functions of their job due to disability. These benefits are paid directly by DIOET from budgeted employee compensation funds and are not provided through insurance. The short-term disability program is secondary to any applicable state disability programs, and employees are required to apply for those benefits at the onset of disability. If the disability is foreseeable, such as recovery from childbirth or planned surgery, employees are encouraged to apply for benefits in advance. To qualify, the employee must be disabled for a continuous period of 14 calendar days or more and must provide medical certification from a healthcare provider. Benefits begin on the 15th calendar day of disability. During the initial 14-day waiting period, employees may use accrued sick time, PTO, or other applicable benefits. If the disability is work-related, workers' compensation may apply. Once eligible, DIOET will pay supplemental benefits to ensure the employee receives 100% of their regular compensation, accounting for any other disability income received. Regular compensation excludes overtime, premium pay, and bonuses. Benefits are payable only while the employee remains disabled, up to a maximum of 180 calendar days. Employees unable to return to work after this period may apply for long-term disability benefits. Employees receiving short-term disability benefits may not engage in outside employment and must check in with Human Resources biweekly. They are expected to follow medical advice and avoid activities that may delay recovery. Note that this is a supplemental income benefit and not a leave policy. Time off is governed by DIOET's sick time and leave policies.

Long-Term Disability (LTD) – Non-Ordained Employees

Regular full-time and part-time lay employees scheduled to work 20 hours or more per week are eligible to participate in DIOET's long-term disability plan. LTD benefits are funded through insurance, and eligibility is determined by the insurer according to the terms of the group insurance policy. Benefits begin after 180 calendar days of continuous disability as defined by the policy.

Disability Benefits for Ordained Employees

Short- and long-term disability benefits for eligible ordained employees are provided through the Church Pension Group. For a description of plan benefits, employees should visit the Church Pension Group website: <https://www.cpg.org/active-clergy/retirement/clergy-pension-benefits/additional-benefits/benefits-if-you-are-disabled-prior-to-retirement/short-term-disability-benefits/>

Life & Accidental Death and Dismemberment (AD&D) Insurance

All non-exempt and exempt employees who work 20 hours per week or more are provided with basic life insurance and accidental death and dismemberment (AD&D) coverage. This coverage becomes effective upon the start of employment. Employees also have the option to purchase additional supplemental life insurance for themselves or their dependents, subject to eligibility requirements. Ordained employees may have additional life insurance coverage available through the Church Pension Group (CPG).

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

An Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is available to all employees of DIOET, administered through Cigna. EAP personal advocates work with employees and their household members to help resolve issues they may be facing. Available services include mental health counseling, legal assistance, financial counseling and resources, and resources and referrals for parenting, childcare, eldercare, identity theft, and pet care. DIOET covers the cost of the EAP, and employees have access to these services at no cost.

Electric Vehicle Charging

Diocesan employees may charge their electric vehicles at the office as a courtesy benefit, if charging does not interfere with normal diocesan operations. Employees wishing to charge their vehicles must use the last two parking spaces in front of the staff entrance side of the building. Charging should be limited to the time an employee is actively at work. Vehicles should be moved promptly once charging is complete to allow others access should both spaces be occupied. The diocese reserves the right to discontinue, limit, or modify this privilege at any time.

Retirement Plans

Lay employees are eligible to enroll in the defined contribution pension plan, which includes a 401(a) plan for employer contributions and a 403(b) plan for employee contributions. The 401(a) plan includes an employer contribution of 5% of the employee's total compensation. Employees may also contribute to the 403(b) plan on a pretax, Roth, or after-tax basis, up to IRS annual limits. DIOET matches employee contributions to the 403(b) plan up to 4% of compensation. Ordained employees may participate in the Clergy Pension Plan offered by the Church Pension Fund, which is a defined benefit plan. This plan provides benefits based on years of service and compensation history, funded through contributions made by DIOET. In limited circumstances, clergy may contribute themselves. For more details, employees should refer to the Guide to Clergy Benefits available on the CPG website.

This summary of benefits is provided for general guidance. DIOET retains the discretion to change, suspend, or discontinue any benefits at any time, with Mission Council approval if required. In case of any conflict between this Handbook and the official plan documents or insurance policies, the plan documents will govern.

Separation from Employment

Voluntary Resignation

Non-exempt employees planning to voluntarily terminate their employment are requested to give at least two weeks' written notice to their supervisor, Human Resources, the Canon to the Ordinary, and the Bishop. Payment for accrued but unused PTO will be included in the employee's final paycheck only if the employee has given notice at least two weeks prior to the planned termination date. If the employee has used PTO that has not yet accrued, the amount for the unaccrued time will be deducted from the last payment of wages consistent with applicable labor and wage rules. Unused paid sick time is not paid out upon termination.

Exempt employees are requested to give written notice at least **one month** prior to the planned

termination date to the Bishop or the Canon to the Ordinary and Human Resources. Payment for accrued but unused PTO will be included in the final paycheck only if notice is given at least one month in advance. DIOET may ask an employee to depart prior to the end of their notice period and may offer payment in lieu of notice at its discretion. Bishops must resign by the age of 72 years and may resign earlier. The process for resignation by a Bishop is governed by Title III.12.8 of the Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church. Voluntary separation interviews are conducted with terminating employees during the final weeks of employment by the employee's supervisor or a designated individual.

Involuntary Termination

When DIOET initiates a termination, such as for poor performance or violation of policies, the termination is considered involuntary. Involuntary termination of a Bishop's service is governed by the Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church. Bishops serve until they resign, reach age 72, are found to be incapacitated, have irreconcilable differences with the diocese, or are removed from office for committing an offense, as outlined in Titles III.12.8 and IV.17.

Layoff

Layoff due to a reduction in force (RIF) occurs when changing programmatic definition, budgetary constraints, or other business conditions require DIOET to eliminate a department or position, resulting in the termination of one or more employees and a reduction in overall headcount. Layoff due to reorganization occurs when changing business conditions require DIOET to eliminate one or more positions, altering the organizational structure within a department, which may or may not reduce headcount. When positions identified for separation are approved by the Bishop, the Canon to the Ordinary, and Human Resources, the affected employees will be notified of their status and separation date, with as much advance notice as practicable.

Return of Property

Regardless of the circumstances of termination, at the time an employee leaves employment with DIOET (or sooner if requested by a supervisor, Canon, or Bishop), the Canon for Finance & Administration, Human Resources, or their designee will collect all DIOET property. This includes credit cards, keys, access cards, key fobs, cell phones, tablets, laptops, auxiliary devices, nametags, files, and passwords to all devices or systems.

Access to Data and Accounts After Resignation or Termination

Prior to voluntary resignation or layoff, employees should, in consultation with the Bishop, Canon to the Ordinary, or the Canon for Finance & Administration, arrange for any need for extended access to data, systems, or accounts that are either accessed through diocesan-owned email addresses or on diocesan-owned equipment. At the discretion of the Bishop, Canon to the Ordinary, or the Canon for Finance & Administration, employees that leave employment with DIOET either through voluntary resignation or layoff may be granted ownership of their assigned laptop and/or cell phone and may be granted a copy of select data to retain. This process will be coordinated with the Missioner for Communications and Evangelism.

Employees that leave employment with DIOET under the circumstances of involuntary termination will lose immediate control and access to any data, systems, or accounts that are either accessed through diocesan-owned email addresses or on diocesan-owned equipment. Any personal data that is "comingled" with diocesan data will be deleted immediately.

Data, systems, and accounts for employees that resign, are laid off, or terminated may be retained temporarily or indefinitely.

Continuation of Benefits

Under the current health and dental plans, employees participating in coverage at the time of separation will have benefits end on the last day of the month in which termination occurs. Employees may be eligible to continue health and dental benefits at their own expense for a period following termination. Information on continuation rights will be provided by the Church Pension Group (CPG) or the benefits administrator. All other benefits end upon termination. Employees will be notified of their pension options, including rollover opportunities, by CPG or the benefits administrator. Participants in the life insurance plan may be eligible to convert to an individual policy, with details provided by the insurer. Plan documents govern in the event of discrepancies.

Severance Pay

In cases of involuntary termination due to layoffs and job elimination, DIOET offers severance benefits. Part-time employees receive pro-rated severance based on scheduled hours. Severance is calculated on regular base pay and is subject to tax and other deductions. Payments are deposited into the employee's designated bank account. Employees terminated for policy violations or who resign voluntarily are not eligible for severance.

Severance in the Event of Layoff/Job Elimination

Employees with 5 years of service or less receive 2 weeks of severance per year of service, up to 10 weeks. Employees with 6 to 20 years of service receive 10 weeks plus one additional week per year over 5, up to 25 weeks. Employees with 21 or more years receive 26 weeks of severance. Employees may apply for open positions within DIOET. If hired into a comparable role, severance ends upon the new start date.

No Unemployment Compensation

As a religious non-profit organization, DIOET does not participate in state or federal unemployment compensation programs. Employees are not eligible for unemployment benefits through DIOET employment upon layoff or termination.

References

- [1] [Maternity Leave - Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development](#)
- [2] [POLICY - Tennessee State Government - TN.gov](#)
- [3] [Employment Issues Related to Pregnancy, Birth and Nursing](#)

Acknowledgment of Receipt of Employee Handbook

(HR Copy – To be kept with personnel file)

I acknowledge that I have access to a copy of the most recent Employment Policies and Practices Handbook (effective January 1, 2026) for employees of the Diocese of East Tennessee. This Handbook is available to me on the dioet.org website as well as through the DIOET Shared folder. I understand that I am responsible for reading the information contained in the Handbook, including any updates, and am responsible for complying with all the provisions. I understand that this Handbook supersedes all other Handbooks and Manuals.

Employee Signature: _____

Employee Name (Printed): _____

Date Signed: _____