

Mennonite Church Alberta Human Resources Policy Manual

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SECTION I – GUIDING VALUES

Human Resources Guiding Values

God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ

John 15: 8-10, 12 - My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love... This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow as communities of grace, joy and peace.

1 Corinthians 2:12-13 – Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God.

so that God's healing and hope flow through us to the world.

James 1: 23-25 – For if any are hearers of the word and not doers, they are like those who look at themselves in a mirror; for they look at themselves and, on going away, immediately forget what they were like. But those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and persevere, being not hearers who forget but a doer who acts - they will be blessed in their doing.

Communication - We evidence a personal and lively commitment to the Christian faith. Through formation, support and witness we reflect faith in action. We strive to practice direct and open communication with others in a spirit of love.

Community - Community-building actions and attitudes are practiced at home and across Canada, including supportive friendships between staff members. Staff members participate in worship and faith-building experiences together.

Diversity - We seek out and celebrate the diverse gifts of members and are committed to employing the gifts of women and men of all ages, ethnic groups and geographical locations to reflect the make-up of the wider Mennonite church.

Integrity – Staff members give their best energy to their ministry. Relationships between members within the organization and with those outside the organization are conducted to reflect Christ's love. Staff commits to living according to the principles outlined in the HR values and policies, including the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective and the Expectations of Staff.

Justice – Both legal and spiritual justice guide the writing and implementation of all human resource policies. We are accountable to each other, and strive to treat each other fairly and in good faith, indicating when there may be a conflict of interest. We accept responsibility for our actions, always striving to operate in an environment of grace and reconciliation.

Learning – Continuing education and development are encouraged and promoted. Creativity, flexibility, risk-taking and resourcefulness are valued.

Unity - We see ourselves as one body with many members, doing together what we cannot do alone. The mission of the church takes precedence over individual direction.

Vision – We are purposeful, dedicated, and passionate about our vision and mission. We believe that the mission of the church is to proclaim and be a sign of the kingdom of God.

Work/Life Balance – We recognize the importance of rest, work and relationships outside of the formal workplace (with others and with God). Within a healthy, safe environment we support the pursuit of this balance through reasonable pay for service, time off and the promotion of family time, relationship maintenance and self-care.

SECTION II – INTRODUCTION TO THE POLICY MANUAL

Foreword

This manual is intended for use and guidance in Mennonite Church Alberta. Adherence to the approved policies notwithstanding, compliance with all Acts of the various levels of government regulating personnel matters is required.

It is not likely that all possible situations will be covered, but it is intended that the policies will serve as guidelines for personnel management for Mennonite Church Alberta.

In spelling out policies, the intent is to be sensitive to the needs and concerns of all personnel employed by Mennonite Church Alberta in light of approved programs. The further intent is that all policies are to be consistently applied to all employees. When there are exceptions and variations between Committees, these are to be approved by the General Council, and the applicable policy revised or amended with all policy manual holders being advised of the change.

The policy development and revision process allows any Council or staff member to initiate or suggest changes to any policy.

Policy Jurisdiction

Policies approved by the General Council apply to all employees and, where applicable, to volunteers of Mennonite Church Alberta with the following exceptions:

Pastoral staff in Mennonite Church Alberta Congregations will be guided by the document, “A Mennonite Polity for Ministerial Leadership,” and documents that are issued from the office of the Denominational Minister in addition to their own church staff guidelines. Where policies in the above-mentioned policy manuals are absent, the applicable policies in this document may apply.

Philosophy

God entrusts the building of the Kingdom to human beings, and God has endowed each one with particular gifts and abilities to be used in that work. We believe that without each other we are less than God intended us to be. To reach fulfillment we need to nurture and build each other up. When we enter into formal working relationships with each other, we need to do so with confidence in each other, but also in a way that develops the gifts each has, and in a way that promotes the effective building of the Kingdom.

A. Policy Writing

Human Resources Policy is written in light of the stated human resources guiding values and the vision and identity and purpose of Mennonite Church Alberta. All policy is written in accordance with the Government of Alberta employment standards, so that it is rationally connected to the job and duties to be performed, made in good faith and reasonably necessary to accomplish the work at hand.

Mennonite Church Alberta Chair will lead in the writing of policy with the input of General Council. Policy will be forwarded to the General Council for adoption and approval. Any Council or staff member is able to initiate or suggest changes to any policy. Policy will be reviewed and updated by the Executive on a regular schedule to ensure that all policy is current, relevant and in accordance with Alberta government legislation.

B. Uniform Standards

We strive to hire, compensate and support all employees through the use of uniform standards in personnel selection, compensation and supervisory expectations. Regarding selection and appointment of employees, Mennonite Church Alberta Hiring Policy Guidelines will be followed. After the determination of a suitable candidate is made, the following items will be reviewed and affirmed before the hiring covenant is signed:

- a) Job description
- b) Expectations of Staff
- c) Conflict of Interest Policy
- d) Terms of employment
- e) Hours of work
- f) Rate of pay and basis on which it is calculated (responsibility, qualifications, experience)
- g) Benefits (leaves, statutory and designated holidays, pension, etc.)
- h) Process for review of performance
- i) Other relevant aspects of the position

In order to enhance and nurture working relationships for all staff and councils, the above should be mutually agreeable to both the employee and Mennonite Church Alberta before the employment covenant is signed.

SECTION III – EMPLOYEE STANDARDS

Expectations of Staff

Mennonite Church Alberta represents and serves a Christian constituency in Canada that is guided by the Bible, Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective, a vision statement, and an identity and purpose statement. Commitment to compatible doctrines of faith and standards of ethical behavior are essential requirements of all staff.

In accepting employment with Mennonite Church Alberta employees¹ commit themselves to abide by the following expectations:

1. Testifying to and giving evidence of a personal faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord;
2. Maintaining active membership in a local congregation that is part of Mennonite Church Alberta²;
3. Upholding in word and action the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*;
4. Upholding in word and action the spirit of the Mennonite Church Alberta Vision and Identity and Purpose Statements;
5. Upholding in word and action the Mennonite/Anabaptist peace position, and seeking to apply it in interpersonal relationships at home, at work and in the wider community;
6. Practicing faithfulness and self-discipline in sexual relationships—confining active sexual relationships to marriage and exercising respect and propriety in all relationships (see also Personnel Policy “Against Sexual and Other Harassment”);
7. Striving to speak the truth in love and presenting oneself with integrity in regard to abilities, views, faith and discipleship;
8. Practicing good stewardship of personal finances, as well as in the budgeting and administration of Mennonite Church Alberta funds (see also the Personnel Policy, “Conflict of Interest Policy”);
9. Exercising an attitude and actions of mutual support and up-building in relationships, and, in the case of conflict, participating in the Personnel Policy’s “Problem-Solving Procedure;”
10. Abiding by the other policies defined in the Mennonite Church Alberta Personnel Policies.

These standards and guidelines are subject to the understanding and interpretation of Mennonite Church Alberta.

Failure to comply with these expectations will result in conversation with the employee’s supervisor with intent to rectify the failure, and may result in a reprimand (noted in the personnel file), modification in the terms of employment, or dismissal.

¹ Some short-term contract employees may be exempted from this requirement if permitted by the Chair, Mennonite Church Alberta.

² Where there are persuasive contingencies, some employees may be released by the Chair, Mennonite Church Alberta, to maintain active membership in congregations that are not part of Mennonite Church Alberta.

Conflict of Interest and Commitment Policy

A. Scope

This policy is intended to apply to the following persons:

- paid employees at all levels
- persons elected or appointed to Mennonite Church Alberta positions
- persons from other organizations or individuals who are employed / contracted for specific tasks or services.

B. Definitions

1. A conflict of interest is a situation in which the personal interests of an individual, or a close associate of such a person, are in conflict or appear to be in conflict with the best interests of Mennonite Church Alberta or the public it serves. A conflict of interest may arise when an individual has the opportunity or appears to have the opportunity to influence Mennonite Church Alberta decisions in ways that could lead to personal, professional, or financial gain or advantage of any kind.
2. A conflict of interest arises when a person or the person's immediate family (including spouse, parents, siblings, or children) or friends may benefit or appear to benefit from that position personally, professionally, financially, or in some other way.
3. A conflict of commitment refers to a situation where an individual engages in external activities, either paid or unpaid, that interfere with their primary obligation and commitment to Mennonite Church Alberta. Such commitments would detract from rather than enhance the individual's ability to meet these commitments.

Some examples of conflicts of commitment are:

- An individual uses a Mennonite Church Alberta resource for non-Mennonite Church Alberta activities, unless the use is merely inconsequential;
- An individual engages in non-Mennonite Church Alberta activities during their normal work hours;
- An individual engages in activities not in alignment with the values, vision, identity and purpose of Mennonite Church Alberta.

C. Philosophy

The purpose of this Policy is to identify and address potential, actual and apparent conflicts of interest and conflicts of commitment. The guidelines aim at creating a context in which all persons in Mennonite Church Alberta can work with integrity and in freedom.

The policy sets out general expectations, recognizing the impracticality of attempting to address the specifics of all eventualities which may lead to or result in a conflict.

Conflicts of Interest and Commitment can arise naturally from an individual's engagement inside and outside Mennonite Church Alberta, and the mere existence of a conflict does not necessarily imply wrongdoing on anyone's part. However, conflicts must be recognized, disclosed, and assessed so that they can be managed appropriately.

All members have an obligation to disclose activities that that might lead to a conflict of interest or commitment or have the appearance of such.

Commitments outside of Mennonite Church Alberta remunerated or otherwise, are encouraged, provided that they do not impinge on the fulfillment of the member's primary responsibility. Many outside commitments may enhance both an individual's execution of that primary responsibility and the outreach of Mennonite Church Alberta to local and international communities. The freedom that individuals enjoy to engage in these outside activities may, however, lead to circumstances in which their personal interests conflict or may appear to conflict with their primary responsibility to Mennonite Church Alberta.

D. General Guidelines

1. These guidelines are intended to safeguard the interest of Mennonite Church Alberta and are subject to the understanding and interpretation of Mennonite Church Alberta.
2. The purpose of these guidelines is to provide individuals with direction in determining when involvements are considered appropriate and when they may not be appropriate.
3. The guidelines serve as a preventative measure so that individuals do not inadvertently place themselves in a position of conflict of interest or commitment.
4. Individuals will use their best judgment in considering their rights, interests, and responsibilities toward Mennonite Church Alberta.
5. The guidelines are not to interfere needlessly with legitimate personal activities of individuals.
6. Mennonite Church Alberta employees, and others when appropriate, should be aware of the Expectations of Staff outlined in the Mennonite Church Alberta Personnel Policy.

Individuals shall not:

1. Place themselves in a position where they are under obligation to any person, business or organization that might benefit or appear to benefit from improper consideration or favor on their part in the discharge of their official duties and responsibilities.
2. Divulge confidential information pertaining to Mennonite Church Alberta to any person, business or organization or use that information for any purpose other than that required to carry out their duties.
3. Have direct or indirect personal, professional or financial activities that inappropriately conflict with their official Mennonite Church Alberta duties and responsibilities.

Disclosure

Individuals accountable under this policy must identify those situations where a conflict of interest or commitment exists or where a reasonable person might conclude that a conflict of interest or commitment exists in the activity in which they are participating or about to participate.

1. An individual is obligated to disclose, as soon as he or she could be reasonably aware that a conflict exists, all actual or potential conflicts of interest and commitment to their supervisor.
2. If the person to whom the individual reports has an interest in the matter to be discussed, the disclosure should be made to the person at the next higher level of authority. This person will serve as the reviewer of the situation.

3. Persons who wish to obtain clarification when a situation arises in apparent conflict with this policy may request such clarification from the Chair, of Mennonite Church Alberta.
4. All information or reports disclosed in accordance with this Policy will be held in confidence.

Resolution

1. The initial action to resolve the conflict of interest at issue will be through discussion and counsel. The supervisor will act as the reviewer and, in consultation with the individual and others where appropriate, will determine whether a conflict exists.
2. In the event that there is an actual or potential conflict, the reviewer and the individual will agree on a course of action to resolve the conflict.
3. The reviewer will take into consideration whether the activity interferes with the individual's responsibility towards Mennonite Church Alberta, and if so, whether the activity would benefit Mennonite Church Alberta in a way that would warrant the interference.
4. The reviewer may:
 - a. grant approval of the situation with no further action;
 - b. determine that the activity is allowable if a protocol is implemented to ensure appropriate management of the situation; or
 - c. determine that the proposed activity is not permissible.
5. In the event that agreement cannot be reached, the case will be referred to the next higher level of authority for resolution.
6. If all attempts at resolving the conflict of interest or commitment fail, the ultimate resolution could be discipline up to and including discharge of the individual from employment or from the appointed or elected position or from the assigned or contracted task.

Appeals

After a determination regarding conflict of interest has been completed, the individual or employee may choose to exercise the problem-solving procedures as listed in the problem-solving policy in this manual.

Application upon hiring or appointment

All individuals are to be made aware of this policy upon employment, election or appointment, and covenants or letters of offer of employment to successful candidates should include reference to the conflict of interest policy and requirement for disclosure of potential conflicts of interest and commitment as related to the job being offered.

Intellectual Property Policy

A. Scope

This procedure is intended for the use of the following persons:

- paid employees at all levels
- persons from other organizations or individuals who are employed for specific tasks or services by Mennonite Church Alberta

B. Definitions

1. Copyright

Copyright is defined by the Copyright Act as the sole right to produce or reproduce a work or any substantial part thereof in any material form, to perform the work or any substantial part thereof in public, or, if the work is unpublished, to publish the work or any substantial part thereof.

Copyright protection includes the right to translate or record a work as well as the right to transmit the work by telecommunication. The Copyright Act also creates "moral rights", which include the right of an author to be associated with the work and to prevent the distortion or modification of the work.

2. Ownership

The author of a work is generally the first owner of copyright. However, if a work is created in the course of employment, the author's employer is the first owner of copyright. Ownership of copyright for a work created by an independent contractor or consultant will depend on the terms of the contract between the parties. It is common practice for copyright owners to assign their rights in various commercial contexts. Moral rights, however, are not assignable (though they may be waived).

3. International Protection

Copyright protection in Canada is extended to Canadian citizens, or citizens of countries that are parties to certain international treaties. These treaties also provide copyright protection to Canadians in treaty countries (most notably the United States and Europe). Copyright protection in Canada does not require any marking of the work.

4. Registration

Formal registration of a work is not required. An author or the author's employer usually enjoys copyright protection automatically on creation of the work.

5. Infringement

Copyright is infringed whenever a person does something which is within the exclusive right of the copyright owner. Most copyright infringement occurs as the result of the reproduction in a material form of any substantial part of a work in which copyright exists. **(the above is adapted from an outline of the Intellectual Property Institute of Canada, Ottawa, ON © 2010)**

6. Moral Rights

Moral rights are additional copyrights which also attach to an author's works. More importantly, moral rights remain with the author, even in a clear employment relationship. The most significant of the moral rights are the right of integrity of work and the right to attribution.

A company may want the author to waive these moral rights, so that it can modify a work after the fact or avoid having to name the author of a work; especially if the author is no longer with the company. If this is the case, the author has to explicitly waive his or her moral rights.

A written agreement, between employer and independent contractor, can both assign ownership of copyright to the employer and waive the moral rights of the contractor.

C. Guidelines

1. In simplest terms, within an employment relationship with Mennonite Church Alberta, the employer owns the works created by an employee within the scope of employment.
2. The employer also owns the works created by an employee when the work falls within any of nine statutory categories. In these cases the agreement commissioning the work will be documented in writing (normally in a Memorandum of Understanding or Covenant) and signed by the author before work begins. Consideration should be given to whether or not this agreement will both assign ownership of copyright to the employer and waive the moral rights of the contractor.
3. The nine statutory categories include: contribution to a collective work; part of a movie or other audiovisual work; a translation; a supplementary work; a compilation; an instructional text; a test; answer material for a test; or an atlas.
4. If a work does not fit within the statutory definition of a work-for-hire, the employer may still own it if it is created following documentation indicating assignment of copyright.
5. Works by an employee that draw upon Mennonite Church Alberta resources to bring it to fruition are also considered to be subject to employer ownership. Determining ownership can sometimes be complex. When there is a question as to ownership, the employee will consult with the employer before undertaking the work.
6. Please remember that the works you produce reflect on Mennonite Church Alberta and the greater church. This is true even if you do not specifically identify yourself as a Mennonite Church Alberta worker or refer to it in your work. You should obtain permission before publishing anything related to your function or assignment. Personal works should not conflict with the fundamental vision and goals of Mennonite Church Alberta. Mennonite Church Alberta workers should refer to the Expectations of Staff (for office workers) when they produce works outside the scope of employment.
7. Be sure to discuss any proposed work that falls outside of these definitions with your supervisor. Also, if you have any questions, feel free to share them with your supervisor.

Staff and Elected Representative Attendance at Area Church and National Assemblies

Due to conflict of interest guidelines, staff of Mennonite Church Alberta are not to act as congregational or area church delegates to Mennonite Church Alberta assemblies.

General Council and committee members are encouraged to serve as congregational or area church delegates to Mennonite Church Alberta and Mennonite Church Canada assemblies, but should also be alert to potential conflicts of interest when they act as area church or congregational delegates to Mennonite Church Alberta assemblies or area church annual meetings. They are asked to consider possible areas of conflict and to disclose any potential conflicts of interest as appropriate.

Salary Scale Policies

A. General Guidelines

Mennonite Church Alberta employees working in pastoral ministries will be compensated according to Mennonite Church Canada Pastor's Salary Guidelines.

The Chair, Personnel Committee, in consultation with the Chair, Finance Committee, and with the Chair of the Committee to which the employee reports will be responsible for determining the appropriate salary range for other (non-pastoral) employees, and the appropriate compensation for short-term contracted persons who are not in pastoral ministries.

Increments for Ongoing Service

Mennonite Church Alberta will use the basic unit amount determined on an annual basis by Mennonite Church Canada in their yearly Pastor's Salary Guidelines as the baseline for salary increments.

One experience increment is given for each earned full year of experience at the assigned job.

Annual salary increments for experience on the job are applied to the salary effective January 1st of each year. For those employees whose start date is other than February 1st, in their first year of service they may be assigned .5 of an increment if they have served a minimum of five months at their particular job, or a full increment if they have served a minimum of 10 months in the particular job. Subsequent assignment of increments will be at a rate of 1 increment per year up to the maximum increments for that salary scale classification.

B. Annual Updating

The Consumer Price Index for Canada will be the guide for updating the base component and increments of the salary ranges. Mennonite Church Alberta will use the percentage adjustment recommended by Mennonite Church Alberta in their yearly Pastor's Salary Guidelines.

Implementation of annually adjusted salary scales will be retroactive to January 1st of each year.

C. Revisions and their Implementation

The revision of salary base, range and increments is the responsibility of the Chair Personnel Committee, and the Chair, Finance Committee, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee to which the employee reports. Occasionally there may be a need to phase in salary components at a slower than normal rate. This will only be done after discussion with all concerned and will be the exception.

Full Time Employment

The "standard" work week and its definitions are changing quickly in today's flexible workplace. In order to acknowledge these shifts, Mennonite Church Alberta defines full-time employment to apply to any employee who is:

- employed at least 3.5 days (26 hours) per week or more,
- able to fulfill the duties of the position or positions within the time parameters given, and
- accepting the income from this position or combination of positions as their principal means of livelihood

Other Employment

When employees are hired on a full-time basis it is understood that their full attention will be to Mennonite Church Alberta. It is recognized that employees of Mennonite Church Alberta may consider employment or self-employment outside of the organization, either due to less than full-time positions being available at Mennonite Church Alberta or for other reasons. Mennonite Church Alberta supports this employment as long as it does not conflict with the Conflict of Interest Policy or the human resource value of work/life balance. Employment or self-employment not directly related to Mennonite Church Alberta should be discussed with the Mennonite Church Alberta administrator responsible before such employment is accepted.

Honoraria

A. Philosophy

An honorarium is a voluntary payment of money as an expression of appreciation for a service for which it would not be appropriate to set a fee. The payment and receipt of honoraria are an acceptable practice in Mennonite Church Alberta for work that extends beyond the normal duties associated with a position. If an honorarium is paid, it should be proportional to the service rendered, and it should be clearly separated from reimbursement for expenses incurred. The former is an expression of appreciation; the latter is an obligation.

B. General Guidelines

When an invitation is extended to a Mennonite Church Alberta employee to provide a service, the employee should clarify whether the invitation is related to his or her position as a Mennonite Church Alberta representative or to their abilities independent of his or her staff position. In cases where this distinction is unclear, the employee should consult with his or her Supervisor.

1. If the honorarium is paid for services rendered that are related to a person's Mennonite Church Alberta position, he or she will submit travel expenses and related receipts for reimbursement. The employee will instruct the inviting group to make the honorarium payable to Mennonite Church Alberta, and a receipt for the honorarium will be issued to the inviting group.
2. If the honorarium is paid to the employee for services rendered that are not related to his or her Mennonite Church Alberta position, the employee will not submit a claim for reimbursement of expenses. If an employee chooses to donate the honorarium to Mennonite Church Alberta they will receive a tax-deductible receipt. Whether or not the honorarium is donated, the employee must declare the honorarium as income.

SECTION IV - BENEFITS

A number of employee benefits accompany formal working relationships. Some are extended by statutes and others by the employer. Those available to employees of Mennonite Church Alberta at present are:

1. Statutory benefits (CPP, EI, designated holidays)
2. Mennonite Church Alberta Pension Plan (5% contributed by employee and 5% contributed by employer)
3. Group Insurance: Life Insurance (employer paid), Long Term Disability (employee paid) and Accidental Death and Dismemberment (employer paid)
4. Vacation Leave
5. Sick Leave
6. Other types of Leave
7. Other types of Benefits

At the time of appointment, the Personnel Committee will describe and discuss all benefits available to the employee.

All employees are eligible for the pension plan upon hire. All employees whose terms of employment are expected to exceed 12 months with 20 or more hours per week (15 hours if job-sharing) qualify for other benefits upon employment. Benefits for eligible part-time employees will be on a pro-rated basis (except for Life Insurance which is employer paid)

All non-statutory benefits are subject to the plan or benefit plans and policies in effect at the appropriate time. Benefit plans, policies and carriers or administrators of the benefits may be changed at any time without notice.

Pension Plan

The employee pension plan is a money purchase pension plan fully vested from the first day of employment. Payroll deductions are 5%, matched by the employer and begin with the first pay cheque. The Pension Plan is administered through Mennonite Church Canada.

Group Insurance

This coverage commences on the first day of employment and is mandatory for all employees. The Group Insurance plan is managed by Mennonite Church Canada.

Leave - Statutory and Declared Holidays

Legal and religious holidays are to be observed according to local and general church practice. At present, eleven holidays are allowed:

1. New Year's Day
2. Family Day
3. Good Friday
4. Easter Monday
5. Victoria Day
6. Canada Day
7. Civic Holiday (August)

8. Labour Day
9. Thanksgiving Monday
10. Remembrance Day
11. Christmas Day
12. Boxing Day

If a holiday falls on a weekend, Mennonite Church Alberta Chair will establish the day on which the holiday will be taken.

Leave - Vacation

A. Philosophy

Vacations are an opportunity for the employee to rest, experience variation, participate in study and recreation and have space for family time and fellowship with God and others. One of the purposes of vacations is realized when the person returns to the assignment with renewed energy and vision.

B. Accrual of Credits

Vacation time will be earned at the rate of 1 1/4 days per month of completed service for the first three years (3 weeks) and then at the rate of 1 2/3 days per month (4 weeks).

For new employees, past experience shall be recognized when establishing initial vacation leave entitlement of 1 1/4 or 1 2/3 days per month. Credit for past experience will either be equivalent to the number of experience increments ascribed to the employee upon hire, or will be equivalent to the number of years served in a sister Mennonite institution (for example, CMBC, MBM, MCC), whichever is greater, up to a maximum of 1 2/3 days. Leave credits shall accumulate from the first day of employment, and the anniversary date will be used for accounting purposes.

C. Accumulation

All employees are strongly encouraged to take vacation for which they are eligible. Vacation leave may be taken whenever sufficient credits have accumulated and the proper approval has been obtained. As soon as possible after the anniversary date, all the unused leave for the year just past should be taken (Maximum time is within ten months after the anniversary date).

Carryover of leave from one year to the next is permitted only if a valid case is presented; e.g. a long trip, a course of studies or some other specific activity is planned.

D. Approval

Vacation plans should be discussed in advance with the immediate supervisor and arranged so that leave is taken at a convenient time for the employer and the employee. An accurate record is to be maintained of all vacation leave taken by the staff person using the vacation, sick, flex and overtime form and submitted to the immediate supervisor.

Supervisors may choose to approve vacation leave in advance of the credits earned by the employee, but in no case is this to exceed one year. If the person's employment with Mennonite Church Alberta is terminated for any reason, the employee will be paid out for accrued but unused

vacation time. Conversely, vacation leave used but not accrued will be deducted from the employee's final pay cheque.

E. Duration

Vacation periods may be broken: that is, one or several days may be taken at one time. In each case the approval process is to be followed.

F. Longevity Leave

For employees working at a salaried position, in the 10th, 15th, 20th and 25th years of continuous employment they will be entitled to a two week paid vacation longevity leave in addition to their regular vacation leave.

Employees who have taken any leaves of three months plus one day or more will be deemed to be in continuous service but the leave time will not be included in the calculation of years of service required for a longevity leave. Although this leave may be combined with the regular vacation time, it cannot be broken up and must be taken in its entirety. The timing of the leave will be mutually agreeable to the employee and the supervisor. This leave is intended to provide a space of rest and renewal for the employee and to promote a work and life balance.

The initial implementation of leaves for those meeting the continuous service criteria will be phased in to avoid disruption of operations. Employees who have passed their 10 year anniversaries at the time of implementation will be allowed to take their first two week longevity leave between the implementation period and their 15th year anniversary. Excepting this implementation period, all staff will be expected to take their longevity leave within the year of their anniversary date. Scheduling of leaves will be determined with the supervisor and the senior staff person for that area.

Leave - Sick

A. Accumulation

Sick leave shall be earned at the rate of 1 1/4 days per month worked, and shall be cumulative. The maximum accumulation is to be 75 days (five years accumulation). Staff working .80 full time equivalent (FTE) or less will earn sick leave on a prorated basis. Sick leave credits will not be accrued for contract or summer student positions, nor for hourly positions less than .80 FTE.

B. General Guidelines

1. Employees unable to come to work because of illness are expected to report to their immediate supervisor (or in their absence, their designate or the next level of supervisor) by telephone each day of their absence at the beginning of their shift.
2. For illnesses lasting more than 5 working days, employees will provide a Doctor's note acceptable to Mennonite Church Alberta to their immediate supervisor.
3. For absences longer than two weeks (e.g., surgery), the supervisor should contact the employee approximately twice a week to keep in touch with him or her and stay updated on his or her progress and any developments.
4. Sick leave credits earned may be applied to absences due to emergency room visits, doctor and dentist appointments.
5. An accurate record is to be maintained of all sick leave taken by the staff person using the vacation, sick, flex and overtime form and submitted to the immediate supervisor.

6. Sick leave with pay shall be granted whenever employees are unable to perform their duties because of illness, provided they have the necessary sick leave credits. If employees have not earned enough credits before they take sick leave, they should discuss the situation with their immediate supervisor, who will determine whether future earned credit may be applied retroactively.
7. In situations where all sick leave credits have been used, Mennonite Church Alberta Chair is to be notified by the immediate supervisor and the employee benefits as specified by the Employment Insurance Act are to be exercised. S/he will ensure that Long Term Disability (LTD) insurance claims will be processed if LTD insurance is in force.
8. All sick leave forms should be signed by both the immediate supervisor, thereby ensuring all benefits are claimed and documented.
9. Sick leave credits cease with the termination of employment and are not transferable.

Leave – Care of Dependents

Up to 25% of earned sick leave credits may be applied to situations involving illness or emergency care of dependent others (e.g., children, elderly parents) to a maximum of five days per calendar year.

Leave - Bereavement and Compassionate

A. Bereavement leave

In the event of the death of an employee's spouse, child, parent, parent's spouse, brother, sister, step-brother, step-sister, mother-in-law, father-in-law, in-law's spouse, grandchild or grandparent of the employee or the employee's spouse, an employee shall be granted up to five days of paid leave by their immediate supervisor in order to arrange and attend the funeral. The amount of paid leave given will be granted in relationship to the employee's expressed closeness of the relationship, responsibility for coordinating the funeral, the travel time required to attend the funeral, and any other factors considered to be relevant to the request.

For employees who have been employed for 30 days or more, unpaid or paid leave of up to three calendar days to arrange and attend the funeral of an uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, or any other person whom the employee considers to be like a close relative, may be requested of the immediate supervisor. If a partial day is taken it is considered the equivalent to a full leave day. Alternately, an employee may make a request for a paid leave of absence from their supervisor. In this case, the immediate supervisor shall process the request. As listed above, the amount of paid leave will be granted in relationship to the employee's expressed closeness of the relationship, responsibility for coordinating the funeral, the travel time required to attend the funeral, and any other factors considered to be relevant to the request.

B. Compassionate leave

General

A paid leave of up to five days may be provided to respond to an emergency situation arising in an employee's personal or family life necessitating an absence from regular responsibilities. Examples of an emergency situation would be a serious injury in the employee's immediate family or the need to make urgent interim care arrangements for an elderly family member. In the event that the emergency involves a dependent, the employee will first apply all leave credits earned through the Leave – Care of Dependents policy.

The decision to grant leave will be processed by the immediate supervisor in consultation with the executive staff person for that program area and the Director of Human Resources. In certain cases compassionate leave may be added onto a bereavement leave.

Critical Illness

Leave necessitated by the critical illness of a spouse, child, parent, or other person in a close family relationship with the employee, as defined by provincial legislation, shall be granted by the employee's executive secretary in consultation with the general secretary and the human resources director. To be eligible for this benefit, employees must meet the provincial eligibility requirements for this type of leave and care for a dependent who meets the definition of critical illness as evidenced by a medical certificate from a doctor.

They must also have worked for 30 days for Mennonite Church Alberta, unless their province of residence has a lower standard, in which case the provincial legislation will apply.

Definition of critical illness

The patient must be suffering from a serious medical condition with a significant risk of death within 26 weeks in order for the employee to qualify for leave. An unpaid leave will be considered if the patient is suffering from a serious illness or accident but there is no significant risk of death.

Applying for critical illness leave

A request for leave should be made in writing to the supervisor by the employee.

As soon as practicable, a medical certificate should be given to the employer.

Employees should note that Compassionate Care Benefits provided by Employment Insurance are also available to them, and may be of benefit if the illness extends beyond any paid leave provided by Mennonite Church Alberta.

Application of leave benefits to a critical illness situation.

1. Up to 5 days (1 week) of sick leave credits may be applied as per the leave – care of dependents policy.
2. Up to 8 weeks of compassionate leave will be granted with pay and benefits as long as a medical certificate is provided.
3. An additional unpaid leave of absence may be granted, not to exceed 8 weeks.
4. General compassionate leave will not be added to the time given under the critical illness leave policy.
5. An employee may also choose to apply overtime and vacation leave credits to this period.
6. Vacation leave and longevity leave credits will not accrue during a critical illness leave.
7. For the first 9 weeks of a leave period (1 week care of dependents, 8 weeks of compassionate leave), all other benefits will accrue, including sick leave, seniority, pension, group insurance, dental/vision plan and extended health where applicable.
8. If additional leave is requested beyond the initial 9 weeks, it will be considered as an unpaid leave. If the employee elects to continue benefits during an unpaid leave (pension, group insurance, dental/vision plan and extended health where applicable) that staff person will pay both the employer and employee premiums before the additional leave commences. Prepayment of premiums may be made by either a lump sum or a series of postdated cheques.

9. After a leave, the employee will be returned to the same or similar position in the organization without loss of salary or benefits.
10. Further leave will not be considered unless it would prove to be of benefit to the organization and is requested by the employer.
11. In all cases, the total period of absence by an employee will not exceed 12 months. This total period includes all types of leave and overtime hours.

Constituency

From time to time we experience the death of a constituency or community member. Many members of our constituency are also personal friends of staff. In these cases, attendance of staff at the funeral should be coordinated with others in the organization, and paid or unpaid leave to attend should be arranged with the immediate supervisor in consultation with the executive staff person for that program.

Leave - Pandemic Absence Policy

In the case of a pandemic being declared, the following policy shall be followed regarding staff absences.

A. Background

Human pandemic influenza occurs three to four times a century and can take place in any season, not just winter. Pandemic influenza results from the emergence of a new human influenza strain to which no human immunity exists. This new human pandemic strain can arise from either avian influenza strains or from influenza viruses infecting swine and potentially other mammalian species. It is usually associated with a higher severity of illness and, consequently, a higher risk of death. All age groups may be at risk, and experts predict an infection rate of 25-50% of the population, depending on the severity of the strain. Since the virus strain cannot be accurately predicted, a vaccine against pandemic flu may not be available until several months after the pandemic begins. A major factor in protecting populations will be the time from emergence of a new strain to the development and manufacture of vaccine. It is hypothesized that use of anti-virals may control the progression of a pandemic following its emergence, so adequate supplies of anti-virals are important. At all phases of a pandemic outbreak, but especially during the period when vaccine is unavailable, infection control is critical. [from The World Medical Association Statement on Avian and Pandemic Influenza].

In the event that a pandemic is declared, we can expect a pandemic wave to last 6-10 weeks. An individual can be sick from 5-8 days.

B. Philosophy

We want to maintain and sustain the health of our staff physically, emotionally and spiritually. The following policies are being put in place to provide financially for staff if they are sick, and to encourage them to stay home when they are sick to stem the spread of transmission.

In the event of a flu pandemic, the Church will be looked to for a response, and as a model, of how to respond to a major emergency. This policy is intended to provide for adequate leave for staff to meet their needs, and to ensure that a flexible workforce is available to be the Church in the event of a pandemic.

C. General Guidelines

1. On the basis of the WHO and other appropriate indicators, Mennonite Church Alberta will follow Mennonite Church Canada's decision on when a pandemic is in effect and when it has subsided.
2. All international and interprovincial travel will be suspended until reviewed by Mennonite Church Canada.
3. All supervisors will consider possible alternative work arrangements in the light of operational needs (see the existing policies listed under the Family Enhancement Policy, including flexible work schedules, telecommuting and compensatory time off under the extensive travel policy). Staff are encouraged to work from home as is possible.
4. If an employee must be on site to work, consideration will also be given to assign and reassign duties to various staff and to provide opportunities to do professional development at home to maintain continuity in employment.
5. All staff are reminded to take advantage of any health and counseling services provided by their benefits plans during times of crisis.

Sick Leave

1. In the case of absence due to illness, staff will use their existing sick leave credits and report their absences according to the policy.
2. During a declared pandemic year, eight additional working days (7.5 hours per day x that person's FTE) of unpaid leave will be added to each person's sick leave bank. An additional eight days of unpaid leave will also be available to staff at the same rate for family care emergencies.
3. Staff who are sick and report to work will be sent home, and their sick credits will be applied to the absence.
4. Staff will not be required to produce a Doctor's note for an illness over five working days, but will be if the time is over eight working days (this does not include weekends).
5. Staff may be required to use sick leave in the event of a main office closure.

Vacation Leave

1. When a staff person needs leave time due to illness, they will normally apply leave credits in the following manner: Sick leave credits, overtime or flextime hours, vacation leave, unpaid leave.
2. Staff may apply any approved overtime or vacation time to their absences, but are not required to do so. If they do not wish to apply overtime or vacation time to their absence and they have no more sick leave credits they may make an unpaid leave request.

Compassionate Leave

Compassionate leave to attend funerals which do not meet the Leave – Bereavement and Compassionate policy guidelines will be unpaid leave days.

Leave – Maternity and Parental

Maternity and parental leave without pay will be granted to employees who have worked at Mennonite Church Alberta for a minimum period as outlined in the legislation of the employee's province. The leave may extend beyond the statutory limits if circumstances warrant.

There will be no accrual of vacation or sick leave credits during the time of maternity or parental leave unless otherwise provided for by provincial legislation. An employee may use vacation leave before using maternity leave. In applicable cases, parental leave shall be applied after the maternal leave is taken. Leave should be applied for in advance to permit the hiring of replacement staff.

A staff person on maternity or parental leave has the option of continuing their dental/vision and group insurance benefits as a package, or to discontinue benefits while on leave. If the employee wishes to continue benefits, they must notify the finance department in writing one month in advance of their leave. The employee-paid premiums will be deducted from their last paycheck before leave commences, and the employer will continue to remit the employer-paid portion of the premiums.

Upon the employee's return from leave, Mennonite Church Alberta shall place the employee in his or her previous position or a similar position with no less than the wages and any other benefit earned by the employee immediately before the leave began.

Leave - Special

Special leave with pay to a maximum of five days per year in total will be granted as follows:

1. Birth or adoption of a child - up to five consecutive days
2. Employee's marriage - up to four consecutive days
3. Marriage of employee's child or parent – one day
4. Moving of an employee's household - one day
5. Graduation or convocation of an employee, employee's spouse, child or parent from high school or a post-secondary institution – up to one day
6. Court-related duties – accompanying a dependent or appearing as a witness – up to two days.
7. Volunteering – up to one day or a total of 7.5 hours over different days.

With the exception of volunteer leave, each special leave must be taken in one continuous period including the date of the event. A public holiday which falls during a special leave period shall count as part of that leave.

Leave – Jury Duty

A leave of absence will be given to every employee who is required to:

1. serve on a jury;

2. be available for jury selection; or is called upon to meet other court-related civic duties and obligations.¹

If the employee serves as a juror, up to ten days of the jury duty will be granted as paid leave, minus any compensation paid to the juror by the courts.

Any additional time away will be granted as unpaid leave.

A leave application form shall be completed for record purposes and for purposes of claiming reimbursement from the civil authorities as regulations permit.

We also recognize that some employees understand that the teaching of the Anabaptist-Mennonite makes it inappropriate to serve on a jury to judge others. In such cases, Mennonite Church Alberta fully endorses applications for exemption based on these grounds.

Leave – Professional Development and Service

A. Philosophy

Learning is a guiding value of Mennonite Church Alberta, and we encourage all staff to pursue lifelong learning and development opportunities and excellence in their work.

Leave privileges granted under this program are not an entitlement or a reward for past work, but an investment by Mennonite Church Alberta in the future of its work. It is expected that a leave will:

- Relate to some aspect of the employee's current responsibilities,
- Improve the organization's effectiveness and efficiency and move it closer to realizing its vision and mission,
- Broaden the skills base of the individual and enhance his or her contribution toward the total program.

Every department, council and board should seriously examine its work to determine whether or not a leave by one or more of its workers will improve the overall effort. The principles of integrity and justice will guide those responsible for applying these policies and procedures in each instance.

B. Short-term Leaves

Eligibility and Approval

Leave to pursue training during an employee's probationary period is acceptable provided the training is requested or required by the employer. After successful completion of the probationary period, no further qualifying period of employment will be required for a leave of seven days or under and its associated expenses. The person requesting a leave is to present a proposal to his or her immediate supervisor. The supervisor is authorized to grant one seven-day leave per year, or shorter leaves amounting to no more than seven days per year.

Expenses

A person receiving this type of leave shall receive full salary during the time of leave upon their supervisor's approval. Course fees and related expenses (e.g., travel, meal costs) may also be

¹ Court appearances allowing an employee to accompany a dependent or appearing as a witness are granted up to two paid leave days under the special leave policy.

considered for reimbursement. Payment of these expenses shall be discussed with the immediate supervisor in advance.

Obligations

No further employment obligation will be required of the employee regarding salary or related expenses.

C. Long-term Leaves

Eligibility and Approval

After seven years of full-time service (or its equivalent for those working part-time) the employee may be eligible for a professional development and service leave.

The granting of this type of leave will depend on:

- how the leave could be accommodated within the department's budget and operational needs
- how the timing of the leave would create the least possible disruption to the department
- how the proposed program would be of benefit to Mennonite Church Alberta and the employee

A minimum of six years must elapse between each professional development and service leave taken by an individual, and a minimum period of 2 years between this leave and a vacation longevity leave. However, if a period of vacation leave is being considered (this includes the longevity leave), the employee should arrange to take it together with the professional development and service leave if eligible to do so within the same year.

Procedure

1. The person requesting a leave is to present a written proposal to his or her immediate supervisor. The proposal should include the reasons and plans for the leave, including:
 - objectives to be achieved
 - benefits to Mennonite Church Alberta and the employee
 - financing estimates, including all salary and related costs
 - suggestions regarding backup during employee's absence
2. The proposal will be forwarded to the Chair, Mennonite Church Alberta for that area, and will be presented to the Executive for discussion.
3. The Executive will respond to the proposal after considering the following criteria:
 - validity of the objectives/reason for the leave
 - soundness and practicality of the plan to achieve the objectives
 - capability of the employee to successfully achieve those objectives
 - benefits to Mennonite Church Alberta and the employee
 - employee's length of service, period of leave requested and other leaves granted
 - costs requested
 - current budget restrictions
 - whether a replacement is required and available
 - value of the professional development opportunity
4. The response to the leave proposal will be relayed to the employee by the Chair, Mennonite Church Alberta.

Expenses

A leave up to three months will be reimbursed at 100% of salary. A leave authorized for a period between three and six months will be reimbursed at 80% of salary. Those granted a leave of six to eight months will receive remuneration of 75% of salary.

Benefits will be continued as allowed by Mennonite Church Alberta's policy holders. Arrangements will be made by the employee with the Coordinator of Payroll & Benefits to continue available coverage, including the continuation of pension benefits. Sick leave credits will accumulate during the leave of absence. Vacation leave credits will not.

Costs of course tuition, seminar registration or other such event will be considered for cost-sharing between the employer and the employee. To be fully reimbursable by Mennonite Church Alberta, qualifying courses and seminars need to be a requirement for the position held by the employee or be approved as directly benefiting the work of the employee in his or her position.

In the case of joint assignments with constituent congregations or other agencies, the aforementioned benefits and conditions will be dealt with jointly by the respective parties.

Any allowance being provided to the employee by another agency will be deducted in whole from the remuneration or leave allowance the employee is receiving from Mennonite Church Alberta.

Obligations

For leaves up to four months, the service obligation to Mennonite Church Alberta is equivalent to one year. If the employee terminates employment with Mennonite Church Alberta within that year of service, he or she will be expected to repay 60% of the salary and benefits received.

Four to eight month leaves incur the obligation of two full years of service. If the employee terminates employment with Mennonite Church Alberta within the first year of service, he or she will be expected to repay 60% of the salary and benefits received. In the second year of service, there will be an expectation of 40% repayment of salary and benefits.

A brief report will be given to the immediate supervisor within two months of the employee's return giving a description of the activities engaged in and the effectiveness of the leave according to the criteria listed above.

Leave - Without Pay

Persons desiring to take leave without pay are expected to follow the same procedure as that for professional development and service leave.

During a leave of absence without pay, an employee may be eligible to continue group insurance and dental vision benefits for up to one year. Depending on the particular circumstances and benefit, the employee may either pay his or her normal share of the cost of the insured benefits or pay them in full. The determination of this will be made by the Director of HR and the appropriate supervisor or supervisors. If the employee is allowed and wishes to continue benefits, they must notify the finance department in writing one month in advance of their leave, so that the appropriate premiums may be deducted from their last paycheck before the leave commences.

SECTION V – HIRING AND SUPERVISION

Hiring Policy

A. Scope

These guidelines outline the hiring policy of Mennonite Church Alberta. These guidelines apply to all employees with the exception that certain term employees and summer students will not be subject to the Expectations of Staff as a condition of employment.

B. Accountability

Hiring at Mennonite Church Alberta includes religion as a bona fide occupational requirement for the fulfillment of position duties, as is reflected in the Expectations of Staff and elsewhere in this document. Occasionally, a position will be filled by a person who does not have a direct or current relationship covenant with a congregation in Mennonite Church Alberta. In all cases, that person will be expected to follow the standards of faith and conduct of Mennonite Church Alberta and its personnel policies as outlined in this manual. In addition, where that person is holding an office that the General Council requires credentials for, he or she will be commissioned or licensed by a Mennonite Church Alberta body in accordance with the standards outlined in the document [A Mennonite Polity for Ministerial Leadership \(1996\)](#).

C. Initiating the Hiring Process

The hiring process shall be initiated when a new position is created, or when a vacancy needs to be filled as a result of an employee's retirement, resignation, termination, secondment, or leave of absence. In addition to skills, qualifications and experience, gift discernment is encouraged to be part of the hiring process for any position. During the hiring process, Mennonite Church Alberta will also consciously work towards diversity in staff appointments (i.e., gender, age, ethnic group and geographical location).

General Guidelines

1. The jobs will be advertised in the community as appropriate (normally on the Mennonite Church Alberta website and for two Sundays in church bulletins, ads in the *Canadian Mennonite*). During the advertising period it is appropriate to invite suitable candidates to apply for a given position.
2. In certain circumstances, such as filling term and summer student positions, other forms of advertising may be considered more appropriate to reach potential candidates.

Responsibilities

1. Mennonite Church Alberta Personnel Committee is responsible for the hiring of all employees.
2. Members of the Committee are appointed, following Mennonite Church Alberta by-laws and constitution.

D. Interviewing and Selecting a Candidate

Interview Committee

1. The Personnel Committee will act as the Interview Committee.

General Procedure

1. Applicants will be asked to submit a resume and the names of at least three references, including a recent employer (with the applicant's permission) and their current pastor. Resumes will be reviewed according to the qualifications outlined in the job description.
2. No less than two candidates will normally be invited to interview for a position, unless there is only one suitable applicant.
3. Applicants selected for further processing will be contacted for an interview. After the interview stage, telephone references will be conducted for applicants being considered for the position. A minimum of two, preferably three, completed reference checks will be conducted before a position will be offered.
4. The candidate selected for or offered the position should first be informed of and committed to the expectations with respect to faith and ethics, as outlined in the Expectations of Staff and Conflict of Interest policies within this policy manual.
5. If no applicant is deemed as suitable for the post, the job advertisement will be reposted to attract new applicants.

The Job Offer – Additional Considerations

1. The Human Resource Manual should be shared with the successful candidate before he or she starts employment.
2. Mennonite Church Alberta recognizes the importance of its partnership with member congregations and is committed to consulting with them when the hiring process may affect the congregation. Therefore, when a pastor from a congregation within (or outside) of Mennonite Church Alberta is offered a position of employment, the person who offers employment will initiate a conversation with the successful candidate and the congregational leader(s) involved to facilitate a smooth transition for the new employee. This will be done before the appointment is announced.
3. When an interview is being offered to a prospective candidate from another province, consideration should be given to paying for the travel expenses for the spouse to accompany the candidate.

Spousal and Family Hiring Practices

A. Philosophy

We recognize that the desire to serve the church is often fostered and nurtured in the family unit. However, Mennonite Church Alberta recognizes that the issues surrounding the employment or appointment of family members in one organization can create complicated and sometimes problematic workplace relationships, especially regarding supervisory relationships. Therefore, Mennonite Church Alberta will accept the employment or appointment of family members only if they are the best qualified candidates for the position and will not be involved in a direct

supervisory relationship with a relative already employed or on the Mennonite Church Alberta Council or committees directly supervising the position..

We also recognize that close relationships can develop in the workplace after employment commences. Where such relationships develop they foster a conflict of interest situation and as such should be declared to the immediate supervisor.

B. Definitions

A relative is defined as a parent, child, sibling, spouse, grandparent, grandchild, niece, nephew, aunt, uncle, in-law, first cousin, foster relation or anyone living in the immediate household.

C. General Guidelines

1. In cases where a relative of an employee, council or board member is considered to be the most qualified candidate for a job, the persons responsible for interviewing and selection will consider the relationship in light of the operations and program structure of Mennonite Church Alberta. The hiring of relatives in the same program area is discouraged. Rather, positions in other program areas will be explored if the gifts of the candidate are deemed to be of significant benefit to the organization. The same guidelines will apply to the selection and appointment of committee, and council members.
2. In certain cases where a relative is the only candidate qualified and available for the post, consideration of the relationship will be discussed by the Personnel Committee, and the Chair, Mennonite Church Alberta, and a decision made whether to hire or repost the position.
3. If a situation arises where related staff are to be employed in the same program area (with the exception of job sharing), there will not be a direct supervisory or reporting relationship between the two. If that is the case, the relative in the supervisory position shall excuse him- or herself from all supervisory activities, and his or her immediate supervisor or a supervisor designated by the Chair, Mennonite Church Alberta, will take over these duties.
4. The respective Committee or General Council will monitor their program areas for compliance with these guidelines and arbitrate situations as required.
5. When intimate relationships develop in the work setting, their existence should also be brought to the attention of the immediate supervisor for that program area. In such cases, the above guidelines will apply.

Probation

Upon starting a new position at Mennonite Church Alberta, there will be a probationary period of at least six months. Supervisors are encouraged to conduct early and ongoing reviews throughout the probationary period so as to provide opportunities to improve performance.

From time to time employees may be placed on probation to address issues of their performance in the specified position. As a general guideline, this type of probation should be for a four to six month period. In no case should the appointed terms exceed two four-month or two six-month periods.

At the conclusion of a probation period, the action taken (removal from probation, continuation of probation, transfer or termination) should be documented by the immediate supervisor as part of

the probationary review (see performance planning and review). The employee will receive a copy and another copy will be placed in the employee's personnel file.

Staff Training and Development

A. Orientation

Orientation to Mennonite Church Alberta will be provided within the first several weeks by the Personnel Committee responsible for the hiring.

B. Ongoing Education

The Personnel Committee responsible for the hiring will assist in coordinating and providing staff educational in-services as required. It will also assist in identifying training needs and resources.

Performance Planning and Reviews

A. Philosophy

In alignment with the purposes underlying ministerial reviews, we conduct performance planning and reviews primarily "...to facilitate growth toward more effective...[service]. Such growth is more related to affirmation and support than to critique and negative evaluations; it is also more oriented to the future than to the past. While identifying weaknesses and problem areas and taking them seriously, the assumption should be that the...[employee] will also build upon existing strengths rather than focusing entirely upon correcting weaknesses." (*A Mennonite Polity for Ministerial Leadership*, 1996, p. 97).

We engage in performance planning and reviews in order to see where we have been and where we are going, and to assist employees in expanding their learning and performance capabilities in an environment of ongoing change and adaptation. Annual planning ensures that the supervisor and employee are working from the same starting point to accomplish the same goals. Performance planning and reviews are not tied to salary adjustments. They are, rather, a summary review of the past year and a part of the ongoing planning process for staff in the coming year.

In a review, there should be no new information presented regarding past performance – only a summary review of previously received feedback. Regular and immediate feedback should be a continual process in staff relationships, and should be exchanged by all employers and employees on a regular basis to identify:

1. the positives of particular systems and performance
2. the obstacles encountered, and
3. how to reinforce or redesign processes.

B. Procedures

1. Immediate supervisors are responsible for leading and conducting the planning and review process.
2. Planning and review should be done just before the end of the initial probation period, and annually thereafter.

3. Both parties to the review should give consideration to the following items and provide input to the process. Annual plans and reviews should include:
 - a) review of last year's goals,
 - b) review of performance in areas defined in the job description, including:
 - i) areas of strength,
 - ii) obstacles to performance of duties
 - c) educational upgrading completed
 - d) review and updating of job description
 - e) identification of next year's work goals
 - f) future training needs related to accomplishing those goals
 - g) identification of the employee's personal career development goals and any training needs associated with these
4. After planning and review, updated goals and strategies are developed mutually by the employer and the employee.
5. Records of completed reviews are to be forwarded to the Secretary, Mennonite Church Alberta, where they will be kept in the employee's personnel file.

SECTION VI – PERSONAL INFORMATION

Record Keeping

In order to facilitate the work of Mennonite Church Alberta, personal information will be kept regarding each employee in the following manner:

1. The Secretary, Mennonite Church Alberta maintains personnel files on each employee containing the following:
 - a) Pay information
 - b) Benefit information
 - c) Employment covenant

The Secretary, Mennonite Church Alberta will maintain these files a minimum of 10 years after closure. Records will be kept for 10 years after the closing of a file and then destroyed, unless records legislation directs otherwise.

2. The Secretary, Mennonite Church Alberta keeps personnel files that may include the following:
 - a) Resumé
 - b) Job description
 - c) Employment reference checks
 - d) Employment covenant
 - e) Performance planning and review documentation
 - f) Letters of offer, notice or commendation and memos of understanding
 - g) Exit interview

Human resources personnel files will be in the keeping of the Secretary, Mennonite Church Alberta. As the possibility of reemployment is high for church workers, records will be kept by the Secretary until the possibility of reemployment ceases due to permanent retirement or other circumstances. They will then be destroyed, unless records legislation directs otherwise,

3. The Secretary, Mennonite Church Alberta also maintains job competition files, which include the job description and advertisements, resumes of applicants, interview notes and reference checks. Competition files will be destroyed after two years.

Access to Personnel Records

If an employee wishes to access his or her personnel files, he or she may make a written request to the Chair, Mennonite Church Alberta. Only that information specifically requested will be released.

Amendment of Personal Information

If an employee disagrees with the information kept in his or her personnel files, the employee should approach his or her immediate supervisor to discuss the point(s) of disagreement and work towards correction or resolution and subsequent documentation.

If an issue cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of both parties, then the employee may file an amendment to the document or documents concerned stating his or her corrections. The employer may then also attach an amendment indicating areas of disagreement with the employee's amendment(s).

Requests for the Release of Employee Information

Mennonite Church Alberta is committed to treating personal information in a confidential manner. When approached by persons outside of the organization who are requesting personal information, we desire to work with the employee in releasing that information in a responsible manner.

Inquiries about earnings, etc., by banking institutions regarding mortgage approvals will be directed to the Chair, Mennonite Church Alberta. The employee is asked to alert the director if an inquiry is imminent. The director will release the information unless otherwise directed by the employee.

Other inquiries (i.e., police, government officials) will also be directed to the Chair, Mennonite Church Alberta. Release of information will only occur when the request is legally authorized.

Reference requests will be handled by the immediate supervisor of the employee for whom the inquiry is made. Employees are requested to notify their immediate supervisors if they are to be contacted as a reference.

SECTION VII – CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Problem-Solving Procedure

A. Scope

This procedure is intended for the use of the following persons:

- paid employees at all levels
- persons elected or appointed to Mennonite Church Alberta positions
- persons from other organizations or individuals who are employed for specific tasks or services by Mennonite Church Alberta
- Mennonite Church Alberta constituents and the general public

This procedure will apply to, but not be limited to, interpersonal conflicts and the alleged improper interpretation, application or violation of the terms and conditions of employment and administration of Mennonite Church Alberta business. Complaints about harassing or discriminatory behavior should be processed according to the guidelines set out in the policy against sexual and other harassment.

B. Philosophy

Differences of opinion, disputes, and dismissals may occur from time to time. It is important that situations and relationships be handled sensitively and with goodwill. The goal of these procedures is to work for reconciliation between individuals and to ensure that the institution acts fairly and in a manner consistent with its policies and values in the treatment of employees.

We strive to follow Jesus' teaching in Matthew 18: 15-17. When we encounter conflict, we will first approach the other person directly. It is our hope that this open and direct communication will lead to constructive problem-solving, revealing best practices and positive courses of action.

C. Procedures

All parties agree that these proceedings will be kept confidential as may be appropriate at any level of the procedure.

Informal

If a person has a problem, he or she should discuss it directly with the person, Council, Committee or Board involved, with the aim of resolving the particular difficulty as close to its source as possible. This should be done as soon as feasible after the circumstance which gave rise to the problem.

Those who have not been able to resolve conflict with another may wish to seek assistance from a facilitator or trusted person. This assistance may come in the form of counsel or mediation. A person may wish to approach his or her supervisor, a person of the Executive, Mennonite Church Alberta, the Area Minister, or the Chair, Congregational Leadership Committee to explore this option.

When a case involves allegations of serious misconduct, the person assisting to resolve the informal complaint should consult with the Chair, Mennonite Church Alberta, the Area Minister, or the Chair, Congregational Leadership Committee.

Formal

1. If the problem is not resolved satisfactorily during the informal resolution period, the complainant should state the issue in writing and include the remedy sought. This should be given to the complainant's supervisor or to the person to whom the supervisor is responsible. The written complaint must be initiated within 15 working days of its occurrence, or within 5 working days of the conclusion of the informal process.
2. Information from the complainant should include:
 - the name, address, and telephone number of the complainant
 - the name of the accused individual(s)
 - a description of the alleged offense(s)
 - the date on which the alleged offense(s) occurred,
 - witnesses, if any, should be named with, if possible, their address, telephone number, position and a brief description of what it is they are alleged to have seen or have knowledge of, and
 - other information which will assist in the investigation and resolution of the complaint

If a complaint contains incomplete information, those responsible for the investigation will gather the necessary information from the complainant. Complainants are expected to cooperate by providing relevant information relating to the complaint.

3. The person receiving the written statement has the responsibility to inform the Chair, Mennonite Church Alberta (unless the complaint is against the Chair), who will then initiate a workplace investigation. In some cases, an external person or an ad-hoc committee may be appointed to the investigative team.
4. The investigative team members will investigate the incident(s) as they see fit, in their discretion, in as confidential manner as possible. The team will attempt to determine the validity of the complaint, and will make a written report of its findings. The written report and options for further proceedings will be submitted to the Chair, Mennonite Church Alberta and the appropriate supervisor for action.
5. After the conclusion of the investigation, the Chair, Mennonite Church Alberta will inform the person orally and in writing of the results of the team's recommendation and what, if any, resolution and or discipline is forthcoming. The Chair, Mennonite Church Alberta, will inform the complainant when the investigation is completed, and advise the individual that appropriate action has been taken.
6. A record of any resolution and disciplinary measures taken will be filed in the employee's personnel file.
7. If and when a resolution is agreed to by the parties, a memo of understanding shall be composed and signed by both parties.

Appeals

If the problem is not resolved to the satisfaction of the involved parties, either party may initiate an appeal within 30 calendar days from the date of the written recommendation of the

Investigative Team by informing the Chair, Mennonite Church Alberta, or his or her designate in writing of the request to be heard by an Appeals Committee. The request should include a full description of the problem.

The role of the Appeals Committee is to hear the complainant as well as other parties to the complaint, and to report its findings and actions within the constraints of Mennonite Church Alberta's Personnel Policy. It may also recommend policy changes if its findings suggest the policy might be improved. The actions of the Committee are binding and its decisions shall be final.

The Appeals Committee shall consist of a General Council Member selected by the complainant, a General Council Member be selected by the accused person, a member of the appropriate Mennonite Church Alberta Committee, and a member of the supporting constituency agreeable to each of the other parties.

The Appeals Committee must be established by the Chair, Mennonite Church Alberta, or, if the complaint is against the Chair, by the chair of the Congregational Leadership, within two weeks of the request. The Appeals Committee must complete its work of interviews and deliberation within 30 working days of having been established. It shall submit its report within 15 working days thereafter to the complainant, and to the General Council*.

The majority decision of the Appeals Committee shall be the deciding and final decision of the Appeals Committee.

*All time lines are subject to the availability of personnel, and may be extended if complaints involve persons who are not easily accessible to the Appeals Committee due to geographical distance, leaves of absence or other unforeseeable events.

Policy Against Racial, Sexual and Other Harassment

A. Scope

This policy is intended to apply to the following persons in the working environment and anywhere else as a result of employment responsibilities or employment relationships:

- paid and appointed employees at all levels
- volunteers elected or appointed to Mennonite Church Alberta positions
- persons from other organizations or individuals who are employed for specific tasks or services by Mennonite Church Alberta

No employee or volunteer may harass and abuse another employee, volunteer. In addition to employee, volunteer and visitor relationships within their own offices, staff members and volunteers also have contact with people outside their office that may present a potential arena for sexual or other kinds of harassment to occur. This includes Mennonite Church Alberta employees and volunteers working from remote locations, traveling together, as well as staff relationships with other people. The same standards and expectations apply to these situations as apply within the offices among employees, volunteers and visitors.

Any individual within or outside of the organization can use these guidelines to register a complaint of harassment against a person falling under the jurisdiction of Mennonite Church Alberta as listed above.

Mennonite Church Alberta also recognizes that its employees and volunteers may be subject to harassment by vendors, constituents and office visitors. In these cases Mennonite Church Alberta recognizes their responsibility to support the complainant and assist them in resolving these situations wherever possible.

In all cases involving a member of the pastoral community, the Mennonite Church Canada Ministerial Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedure (2000) will be applied in addition to this policy.

B. Philosophy

God our creator and redeemer has called each of us to a basic and deep respect for all humankind. We desire to give leadership in holding each other accountable to this call as well as calling society to this standard. Sexual harassment and abuse violate this sacred call as does all harassment based on race, gender, religion, national origin, disability or any other class protected by discrimination laws. We seek to apply our values of communication, community, diversity and integrity to our work in a harassment-free environment.

C. Definitions

Harassment

According to the Manitoba Human Rights Code [S.19(2)], harassment “is a course of abusive and unwelcome conduct or comment that is directed at an individual because of a group to which they belong or appear to belong”. Harassment is a type of discrimination and, for the purposes of this policy, may include the following:

1. threats, intimidation or verbal abuse;
2. unwelcome remarks or jokes about a person’s ancestry, nationality or ethnic origin, colour or perceived race, religion, disability, gender determined characteristics, marital or family status, sex, or age;
3. displaying or circulating sexist, racist or other offensive pictures, posters or written jokes;
4. unnecessary physical contact, such as touching, patting, pinching or punching;
5. physical assault.

Bullying – Bullying behavior may involve

- repeated humiliation or intimidation that adversely affects a worker’s psychological or physical well-being
- a single instance so serious that it has a lasting, harmful effect on a worker.

Reasonable actions by supervisors or managers to help manage, guide or direct workers in the workplace are not harassment. Appropriate employee performance reviews, counseling or discipline by a supervisor or manager is not harassment.

Racial harassment - Mennonite Church Alberta recognizes that racism is a system of social, political and economic domination that oppresses people belonging to a particular racial or ethnic group. As a church comprised of many different peoples and engaging the worldwide church, we further recognize that racism has no place in the Christian community. Even as we seek to dismantle the racism found in our structures, policies and practices, we will work to create

ministry environments and relationships that are anti-racist and culturally sensitive in which all people are respected and welcomed.

Sexual harassment - Mennonite Church Alberta recognizes two areas of sexual harassment:

1. A quid-pro-quo¹ type of harassment where sexual favours are expected or requested from or offered to a staff or community member in exchange for some benefit, or where discrimination or discipline is threatened if expectations or the requests are not met. This kind of conduct generally involves a person in a position of authority.
2. Maintaining, condoning or contributing to an offensive work environment which may include, but is not limited to, a variety of unwelcome behaviors (listed below) which may create a hostile or intimidating atmosphere. The initiator of the action is expected to change her or his behavior upon notification that it is offensive. Any repeated unwelcome behavior is harassment regardless of whether or not it is intended as such.

Sexual harassment, for the purposes of this policy, may include the following:

1. Unusual and overly friendly attention, including such things as gifts, frequent social telephone calls, letters, private visits, etc.;
2. Persistent shadowing or following; repeated or prolonged staring;
3. Sexual talk and innuendo, dirty jokes and offensive gestures;
4. Sexual or intrusive questions about the individual's personal life;
5. Use of familiarities or diminutive such as "honey," "baby," "dear," etc.;
6. Whistling, catcalls, leering;
7. Unsolicited or unwelcome flirtations, romantic gestures, advances, propositions, manner of dress or display of body;
8. Graphic, degrading, excessive or unwelcome comments about another individual's appearance, dress or anatomy;
9. Display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures;
10. Explicit descriptions of the employee's own sexual experiences;
11. Unnecessary, unwanted physical contact such as touching, hugging, pinching, patting, kissing;
12. Verbal and emotional manipulation and control;
13. Exposing genitalia;
14. Physical or sexual assault;
15. Sexual intercourse or rape.

Retaliation – For the purposes of this policy, retaliation against an individual for having invoked this policy, for having participated in the investigative process or for associating with a person who has invoked this process will be treated as harassment.

D. General Principles

Every employee and volunteer of Mennonite Church Alberta is entitled to work free of harassment and has a responsibility to ensure that the workplace is free from harassment. Persons who observe such incidents should discuss the problem with their supervisor, the Chair, Mennonite Church Alberta, or any person on the Executive. Such supervisors will take appropriate steps to investigate, keeping the information as confidential as is reasonably possible. Mennonite Church Alberta will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that no worker is

¹ **Quid pro quo** is a Latin phrase meaning "something given or received for something else."

subjected to harassment in the workplace. Mennonite Church Alberta will take corrective action respecting any person under its direction who subjects another person to harassment in the workplace.

Persons who choose to follow the procedures outlined in this policy will not be discriminated against in any way. The goal is to address and rectify problems rather than to deny them or cover them up. It is the policy of Mennonite Church Alberta to promote diversity in the workforce and maintain an environment free of intimidation, insult, hostility, harassment and abuse. This harassment prevention policy does not discourage or prevent anyone from exercising their legal rights. All employees have the right to file a complaint with the Human Rights Commission or other provincial body.

Those who offer to facilitate dialogue between parties and those who formally investigate are expected to (a) excuse themselves from either role if there is a conflict of interest or a perceived conflict of interest; and (b) avail themselves of any training opportunities that will sharpen their skills regarding conflict mediation, investigation procedures, and other related areas.

E. Processing Complaints

Informal Direct Contact

Where a person might reasonably be unaware that his or her comments or actions are unwelcome, the complainant may first clearly make known to the other person that such comments and conduct are unwelcome and ask that they cease. It is often helpful to write down such conversations and actions.

Facilitation Assistance

It will not always be possible for the offended person to directly confront the offender, often because of power dynamics. In such a case, consultation with another member of Mennonite Church Alberta staff or Council may be helpful in facilitating resolution. If such persons should agree to act, they should do so as an impartial third party and assist the complainant and the respondent to explore resolution of the conflict. Facilitators cannot nor should not promise complete confidentiality in matters that may constitute harassment, since in certain situations they may be required by this policy to file a report to a member of the Investigative Team.

Formal Investigation Team

The investigation team shall consist of a primary investigator and a recorder. Mennonite Church Alberta will work to seek gender balance in designating a two-person investigation team which will act together in responding to any complaint. Normally the primary investigator will be the Chair, Mennonite Church Alberta, unless there is a conflict of interest situation or the perception of a conflict of interest while investigating the allegation. If the complaint is against the Chair, Mennonite Church Alberta, a suitable, trained investigator will be selected from outside of the Mennonite Church Alberta staff and Council pool. The name or names of suitable persons to act as the team recorder or primary investigator will be suggested by the Executive, Mennonite Church Alberta. The recorder of the team may be found from within or outside of the Mennonite Church Alberta Council and will be invited to participate by the Chair, Mennonite Church Alberta, at the time an investigation is initiated. The team may consult with a professional from outside the organization if necessary.

Throughout the investigation, communications between the investigators and the concerned parties will be conducted in a balanced and impartial manner. Care will be taken on the part of the investigators not to let a person who has easier access to the team unduly influence the investigation or to take advantage of closer relationships with the investigators to communicate (i.e., one who works in the same office with them versus the other party, who might be separated by a greater geographical distance).

Anyone who believes the acts or comments of a Mennonite Church Alberta employee or volunteer constitute harassment is encouraged to communicate with that person's immediate supervisor, Council Member, or with a member of the investigation team. Formal complaints must be presented in writing. The investigation process should begin within five working days of receiving the complaint and be concluded as quickly as the assembling and proper dissemination of reasonable and necessary information allows.

Confidentiality

All complaints of harassment will be investigated with reasonable confidentiality. A lack of confidentiality can lead to the damage of reputations, and the investigative team will consider the impact of a formal complaint on those in the workplace and attempt to avoid any preventable negative circumstances during the process.

Mennonite Church Alberta will not disclose the name of a complainant or an alleged harasser or the circumstances of the complaint to anyone except where disclosure is necessary to investigate the complaint, a part of taking corrective action or required by law.

The investigation team will determine what information and documents obtained through the investigation will be shared with the parties involved. Throughout the process, the investigation team will ensure that the complainant and the respondent receive timely updates about the progression of the investigation and the sharing of information, copies of the written allegations and written response, and any other documents or summary documents as necessary. Information sharing will be done with prudence and discretion, balancing the desire for open communication and reconciliation with the importance of maintaining the safety of all parties. In instances where the safety of a party is jeopardized, a summarized form of the information may be given.

During the proceedings of the investigation team, no party should make any public comment. In addition the complainant and the accused are requested to have no contact or communication with each other during the process.

Personal Support

Although not required, the parties to the complaint are welcome to bring a personal supporter of their own choosing to any interview proceedings to provide emotional support and act as an observer.

Acknowledging that the investigation of harassment is a stressful event, Mennonite Church Alberta understands that both the complainant and the respondent may need help to identify the necessary and appropriate pastoral supports to be put in place. If these supports are not easily identified through discussion with the human resources department, the Area Minister may be asked to assist.

Procedures

Upon receiving the complaint, the investigation team will:

1. Inform the Chair, Mennonite Church Alberta, unless the complaint is against that individual.
2. Meet in person with the complainant to discuss the details of the incident(s), record in writing the allegations, the parties involved and the names of any witnesses, determine whether further investigation is warranted and review the Mennonite Church Alberta Policy Against Sexual and Other Harassment.
3. Inform the person against whom the complaint is lodged of the allegations, advise them whether there is enough evidence to lead to the complaint being investigated, request a response to the allegations where investigation is warranted, and review the Mennonite Church Alberta Policy Against Sexual and Other Harassment.
4. Separately interview in person the parties to the complaint and any witnesses. Witnesses may include those who have direct knowledge of the conduct or behavior complained of, or those who may have knowledge or experience of similar conduct from the accused. Past employees and volunteers may also be interviewed, where necessary.
5. The team members will investigate the incident(s) as they see fit, in their discretion, in as confidential manner as possible. The team will attempt to determine the validity of the complaint, and will make a written report of their findings. The written report and options for further proceedings will be submitted to the General Secretary and the appropriate executive staff person for action.
6. After the conclusion of the investigation, written details of the investigation and the evidence will be compiled by the investigation team, placed in a sealed, confidential file and forwarded to the Chair, Mennonite Church Alberta for storage. Files will be kept for 10 years in the archives, unless new circumstances dictate that the files should be retained for a longer period of time. Access to them will be restricted to the Chair, Mennonite Church Alberta, or the Vice-Chair. Only the outcome of the investigation will be made available in written form in files that are available to the complainant and the accused.

The Chair, Mennonite Church Alberta, will review whether there is reason to suspend the employment or volunteer relationship during the investigative phase, using the procedures provided in the Guidelines for Ministerial Sexual Misconduct Policy.

Findings

Following these meetings and any other investigation deemed necessary by the team, the Chair, Mennonite Church Alberta, will inform the employee or volunteer orally and in writing of the results of the team's recommendation and what, if any, discipline is forthcoming. The Chair, Mennonite Church Alberta will inform the complainant when the investigation is completed, and advise the individual that appropriate action has been taken.

Disciplinary Action

Any employee or volunteer found to have engaged in harassment of another person will be subject to disciplinary action. The Chair, Mennonite Church Alberta will determine the disciplinary action. Factors such as severity, persistence, multiplicity of the offensive behavior and any recommendations from the investigative team will weigh in the disciplinary decision. Disciplinary actions will be recorded in writing and may include:

1. a written apology to the complainant,

2. an oral or written warning or reprimand,
3. temporary suspension of employment with or without pay,
4. termination of employment or volunteer duties,
5. other appropriate discipline not mentioned.

A copy of the disciplinary action taken will be filed in the employee or volunteer's personnel file. Depending upon the nature and severity of the offensive behavior, a report may be filed with legal authorities.

F. Appeals

After a formal investigation has been completed, any interested party may choose to use the appeal process as outlined in the Problem-Solving Procedure in this Policy Manual.

G. Other

The above procedure may be altered, amended or modified in any manner by Mennonite Church Alberta at any time. For the purposes of fulfilling this policy, if the Chair, Mennonite Church Alberta is the complainant or the accused, their normal duties according to this policy and procedure will be assigned to the Vice Chair, Mennonite Church Alberta. Conversely, if a council member is either the complainant or the accused, a suitable replacement will be sought.

SECTION VIII – COMPUTER POLICIES

Computer and Internet Acceptable Use Policy

A. Scope

This Computer and Internet Acceptable Use Policy applies to all Mennonite Church Alberta staff, volunteers and to anyone with access to MC Canada computer resources.

B. Overview

Mennonite Church Alberta provides computer systems that are used by staff and volunteers to further the work of the denomination. Use of the Internet by Mennonite Church Alberta staff is encouraged in the execution of day-to-day business inasmuch as it supports Mennonite Church Alberta goals. This policy outlines the acceptable use of this computer system in order to protect the security of this system and the reputation of all users. All users are responsible for seeing that these computing resources are used in a manner in alignment with denominational standards as expressed in the Expectations of Staff and the Human Resources Guiding Values statement.

C. General Guidelines

Users shall not:

1. Internet
 - Visit Internet sites that contain obscene or offensive materials.
 - Make or post indecent remarks, proposals or materials on the Internet.
2. Email
 - Solicit emails that are unrelated to Mennonite Church Alberta activities or for personal gain.
 - Send or knowingly receive any material that is obscene or defamatory or which is intended to harass, annoy or intimidate another person.
 - Represent personal opinions as those of Mennonite Church Alberta.
3. Confidentiality
 - Upload, download or otherwise transmit commercial software or any copyrighted materials on Mennonite Church Alberta owned computers without appropriate permissions.
 - Reveal or publicize confidential or proprietary information which includes, but is not limited to: financial information, new program ideas, promotional strategies and plans, databases and the information contained therein, customer and donor lists, computer software source codes, computer/network access codes, partnership information and church relationships.
 - Send confidential emails without suitable encryption.
4. Download
 - Download any software or electronic files on Mennonite Church Alberta owned computers without implementing virus protection measures that have been approved by Mennonite Church Alberta.
 - Intentionally interfere with the normal operation of the computers, including the propagation of computer viruses and sustained high volume network traffic that

substantially hinders others in their use of the network.

- Examine, change or use another person's files, output or user name for which they do not have explicit authorization.

5. Publish or distribute unauthorized recordings, photos, images, text or video

- With the availability of low cost cameras, smart phones, and consumer electronics, it is possible for someone to acquire voice, video images, still images, multimedia, or text in non-public situations without the knowledge or consent of all parties. Mennonite Church Alberta devices and computing assets must not be used by anyone in the organization to publish or distribute this type of material without the expressed consent of all involved parties.

6. General

- Waste time on non-company business.

D. Disciplinary Action

Any employee or volunteer found to have engaged in improper use of the computer or internet will be subject to disciplinary action, which may include termination of employment. Mennonite Church Alberta retains the right and acknowledges its obligation to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.

Note. Refer to Personal Website and Social Media Policy for more information.

Personal Website and Social Media Policy

A. *Philosophy and Scope*

Many Mennonite Church Alberta workers maintain personal websites and blogs. In addition, they may engage in social media such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and other media technologies. Mennonite Church Alberta regards the use of these types of media positively, recognizing that they serve to connect with people in ways that have not been previously imagined.

“While communication through social media networks is primarily a personal matter, this is not the same as it being private. In a lot of cases, written conversations inside these networks can be found through search engines such as Google. Even in cases where only your contacts can see what you write, there is a possibility that one of them will forward what you say and make it visible to a wider audience. As a result, personal conversation within social media networks should be considered public rather than private.” (from the **International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies Guidelines**)

Mennonite Church Alberta recognizes that all Mennonite Church Alberta workers (employees and volunteers) are seen as representatives of the church in the world, and a website or other personal representation of a worker will be seen as a reflection on Mennonite Church Alberta and the church. This is true even if you do not specifically identify yourself as an Mennonite Church Alberta worker or refer to it in your personal communications. Thus this policy applies to all Mennonite Church Alberta workers, both paid and unpaid.

The following guidelines are designed to provide helpful, practical advice, and outline best practice and your obligations as you establish and maintain personal communications on line.

B. General Guidelines

1) Keep your supervisor in the loop

If you currently have a personal website or weblog, or are considering starting one, be sure to discuss this with your supervisor. Also, if you have any questions, feel free to share them with your supervisor or the Communications Department.

2) Get advice

You should obtain permission before publishing anything related to your function or assignment. If your group wants to use social media to promote Mennonite Church Alberta activities, please contact the communications department for direction on social media activities and help with best practice.

3) Include a Disclaimer

Personal sites should not conflict with the fundamental vision and goals of Mennonite Church Alberta. We recommend a disclaimer if your site is published under your name, even if it is entirely personal and does not mention Mennonite Church Alberta or your employment, as readers will inevitably connect your personal life to your professional life. If you have a blog and talk about work-related issues, add a disclaimer to each page making clear that the views you express are yours alone. Be aware that this disclaimer doesn't free you from the obligations you have under the Expectations of Staff, Lifestyle Expectations or Volunteer Covenant Policies.

4) Respect Copyright

Do not use the Mennonite Church Alberta logo on your site without first obtaining written permission from Mennonite Church Alberta. If you have an “about me” page, we advise against using photos where you stand in front of one of the emblems since this might give the web site or blog an official appearance. If you have any question on this matter, please contact the Communications Department.

5) Stay focused on your job

While Mennonite Church Alberta encourages the use of social media and online communities for church engagement purposes and recognizes that these can be a valuable resource, keep in mind that you were not hired to spend time on Facebook and YouTube for private matters. All time and effort spent on your personal site should be done on your personal time and should not interfere with your job duties or work commitments.

6) Be a good ambassador

While it is everyone's personal decision whether to use social media networks and tools or not, you should always be aware that your behaviour and opinions reflect on the church. If you would not be comfortable with your supervisor, co-workers, or the executive team reading your words, do not write them.

If you are about to publish something that makes you even the slightest bit uncomfortable, let it sit for a few more hours or a day and think again whether this is what you want to say. If it still makes you feel uncomfortable, ask your supervisor for advice.

7) Observe good IT security and protect your own privacy

Don't download or install software that you find through social networks on your work computer. Please re-read the Computer and Internet Acceptable Use Policy, if you are not familiar with it, and pay special attention to the parts about unacceptable use and personal use.

All social media sites have policies about how they will or will not use your content, what is and is not allowed, etc. Be sure to familiarize yourself with these policies before you launch your site. A lot of web sites and other social media allow you some form of control over who can see your material. Use these features.

8) Respect privacy and confidentiality

You must take proper care not to purposefully or inadvertently disclose any information that is confidential or proprietary to Mennonite Church Alberta. Mennonite Church Alberta expects its employees to observe the Mennonite Church Canada privacy guidelines, which are based on international standards of good privacy practice (see the web for guidelines at www.mennonitechurch.ca).

Respect people's right to privacy and don't take photos or videos without their permission. Even, if you take photos or videos for personal use only, make sure that you respect the dignity of the people portrayed. If in doubt, don't post a photo or video. Focus on positive images. It is your responsibility to protect vulnerable people. Don't post anything about any minors that could lead to anyone identifying them or where they live.

9) Keep security in mind

Be particularly careful with what you are discussing online. Please make sure that you are aware of any security requirements related to the assignment. Never talk about routes or times of planned travel or distribution of goods. If in doubt, talk to your supervisor. Never post personal details such the home addresses of yourself or colleagues. Bear in mind that personal details of local staff members can be very security sensitive in many operational areas – this includes their names and pictures. To guard against burglaries, do not post information on when you are travelling or away from your home.

10) Live in sync with the vision

Your personal communications reflect on Mennonite Church Alberta and the greater church. Personal communications should not conflict with the fundamental vision and goals of Mennonite Church Alberta. Mennonite Church Alberta workers should refer to the Expectations of Staff (for office workers), or Volunteer Covenant (for volunteers) when they craft their communications. In addition, it is understood that workers will abide by all other applicable policies. Do not engage in personal, racial or sexual harassment, unfounded accusations, or remarks that would contribute to a hostile workplace. What you say on your site could potentially be grounds for dismissal.

11) Add value through communications

Mennonite Church Alberta believes that sharing of information and experiences benefits all and can strengthen the church. Feel free to share and discuss your experiences in service. Passion is contagious. Share the passion you feel for your work and talk about the successes you have been part of. Feel free to talk about the successes of your colleagues. Connect with them through social networks and spread their success stories.

Use common sense where information is concerned that is internal or confidential. If in doubt - ask the owner of the information you want to share. Refrain from commenting on the work of colleagues in this or other organizations that are outside your field of expertise.

If you have made a mistake, be upfront about it. Admit and correct the mistake. If you correct an earlier post in a blog do so visibly, e.g. by using the strikethrough function and adding a paragraph that explains the update at the end.

If you come across a misrepresentation of facts, contact the communications department for guidance as to how to respond.

Adapted from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Guidelines and Fellowship Church Personal Website and Weblog Policy, <http://www.leaveitbehind.com>

SECTION IX – GENERAL OPERATING PROCEDURES

Dress Policy

Employees are asked to be sensitive to the constituency and the diversity of the community when selecting their apparel.

Family Enhancement Policy

It is understood that employees may be in the position of looking after family members in need, such as a physically challenged dependent or elderly parents. We wish to be flexible and responsive to the needs of staff in these situations when the nature of the work allows, and do so by the following methods which are defined in detail elsewhere in this policy:

1. A flexible work schedule, where hours of work per week are redistributed to fall outside of regular office hours
2. Job sharing
3. Working from home by telecommuting (part-time or full-time)
4. Extensive travel policy
5. Use of personal sick leave credits to take time to attend to the needs of dependent family members.

In the case of extended needs, consideration may also be given to grant compassionate leave or a leave of absence to the employee.

Flexible Work Schedules

A. Philosophy

A flexible work schedule is a schedule where the employee works the same number of hours as usual, but the timing of those hours are adjusted as agreed upon by the employee and their supervisor. This may also be referred to as flex time.

At Mennonite Church Alberta it has been common practice for staff and supervisors to work out both formal and informal arrangements to facilitate various flexible work schedules. Flexible work schedules are available when they serve to further the vision and work of the church and provide staff with another tool to support a healthy work/life balance. A flexible work schedule should be regularly reviewed by both parties to ensure its usefulness and effectiveness, and may be discontinued if either need is not met.

B. General Guidelines

The following points should be considered when initiating and reviewing a flex time arrangement:

- Employees shall have prior approval of their supervisor to work a flex time schedule
- Operational requirements must be met
- Service to constituents must be maintained or improved
- Costs to the employer will not be increased
- Each office or operation must be covered during normal or core hours of operation

- Flexible hours will not diminish the ability of the employer to assign responsibility and accountability to employees
- The supervisor is responsible for clarifying all expectations of work schedules to the employee
- Employees are responsible for attending all mandatory department meetings and training, even if the meeting or training is scheduled at an “off” time.
- Flexible work schedules will be assessed by the employee and the supervisor after a 3 month period to decide upon their value and continuance. If a flexible work schedule continues after this review, the schedule will be reviewed annually as part of the performance planning and review process.

C. Flextime options

Any flextime option can be approved that meets the needs of the employee and the supervisor in a mutually agreeable manner.

Examples of Other Flex time Options:

- * Modified daily start and stop times
- * Changes in days worked in a two-week time period to accommodate weekend or evening work-related responsibilities (i.e., meeting, speaking, teaching and preaching engagements).
- * Appropriate time off to compensate for extensive travel
- * Changes to monthly schedules or one time only changes to accommodate a large, one time project (i.e., planning a building move)
- * Schedules reflecting seasonal variations in departmental responsibilities (i.e., Finance department and fiscal year end, Communications department and Assembly communications)

Hours of Work and Overtime

A. Scope

These guidelines apply to all employees.

B. Philosophy

Working for the church can be very rewarding, and we see it as “...a calling and a blessing from God”¹. Our passion for the work of furthering the mission of the church can also make us vulnerable to the idolatrous and oppressive aspects of work (pp. 8-9). It is the responsibility of each employee and supervisor to encourage and model a positive work/life balance so that the responsibilities and pleasures of work and home life do not overwhelm each other.

It is also recognized that many staff donate or volunteer additional time beyond the hours of their regular work week without expectation of recompense. The volunteer time given by staff is a greatly appreciated gift, but for employees it is not expected nor required as a condition of employment.

¹ Waldemar Janzen, 1999, *Work and Rest in Biblical Perspective*, Winnipeg: Conference of Mennonites in Canada, p.8.

C. General Guidelines

1. Needs Assessment and Approval of Overtime

Staff use their skills in planning and prioritization to deliver quality services and projects within the normal and necessary time constraints. Flexible work schedules are also used to effectively accommodate the seasonal nature of some work. However, on occasion additional time will be required to complete a project.

- In these cases, the employee will approach their supervisor to discuss the need for the overtime.
- It is expected that the immediate supervisor will not require more than 40 hours a week without considering its impact and possible long-term effects on the employee.
- Situations where employees routinely work or communicate to their supervisor the need to work substantial amount of time on routine jobs can be indications of workload or scheduling imbalance, need for training, or some other contributing factor. These situations should be reviewed by both the employee and the supervisor.
- All overtime must be preapproved by the employee's supervisor.

2. Tracking and Use of Reimbursable Overtime

- It is our practice that time off will be given in lieu of salary.
- Employees are discouraged from accumulating large amounts of banked overtime
- Employees must take the time off in lieu within three months of receipt of the paycheck in which the overtime was worked.
- Overtime records will be submitted on a monthly basis to the approving supervisor.
- The immediate supervisor will keep a record of overtime for each staff person.

3. Other Considerations

- Staff who are exempt from overtime provisions are expected to use flexible work schedules and other means to model a healthy work/life balance appropriate to their senior role.
- During the annual performance review meeting, supervisors are to be evaluated on their competency to model a healthy work/life balance.

4. Travel Work Hours

- Time spent traveling for work purposes, excluding travel time to and from the office, will be considered work time. Time spent on trips not engaged in meetings, travel, preparation or paperwork will not be counted towards overtime (i.e., time spent in rest accommodations).

Extensive Travel Policy

A. Philosophy

Mennonite Church Alberta places a high value on work/life balance, and wishes to ensure that employees have the opportunity to arrange their work and personal schedules to promote the maximum benefits of a balanced work and home life. The following guidelines outline the policy for employees required to travel and work away from home for a significant part of their ministry for Mennonite Church Alberta.

B. Compensatory Time Off

1. Employees are expected to take at least one full day off each week (see Ex. 20:9-10). Where possible, employees are encouraged to take this day off on Sunday, but those who preach, teach, travel or otherwise work on Sunday for Mennonite Church Alberta are expected to take another day of rest.
2. It is anticipated that employees whose travel schedules require them to be away from home over the weekend will:
 - a) limit weekend travel to no more than two weekends a month on average over the year.
 - b) take off one other day during the week, preferably at a time when it is appropriate to be with the family.
 - c) track the total number of days spent traveling and working away from the office and to feel free to claim compensatory time when the demands of the job permit.

C. Spousal Travel

1. Mennonite Church Alberta may pay for all or a portion of spousal travel when the following conditions apply:
 - a) The spouse is accompanying an employee to assist with carrying out the Mennonite Church Alberta program.
 - b) A written request by the employee, outlining the specific tasks of the spouse, is submitted to the immediate supervisor for approval.
 - c) The request has been considered in respect to the guidelines in the Conflict of Interest Policy outlined in this Personnel Policy.
 - d) The costs are charged to the budget of the respective council or board concerned.

The immediate supervisor will recommend to the Chair, Mennonite Church Alberta, whether the request should be approved.

2. For an employee who is required to attend, Mennonite Church Alberta or Mennonite Church Canada Annual Meetings, Mennonite Church Alberta may pay the registration costs for his or her spouse—not including travel, lodging or meals—unless 1a) applies.

Inclement Weather

Occasionally, we experience extremes in weather conditions which may present obstacles to reporting for work. As most weather phenomena usually present only temporary obstacles to travel, employees are normally expected to report to work. Employees are not normally expected to travel for work if their route is impacted by the following:

1. Major thoroughfares in the city have been closed due to extreme weather, or
2. School systems in the rural location of an employee's residence are closed due to extreme weather.

Moving

A. Scope

Mennonite Church Alberta will assist in paying for moving expenses in the following cases:

1. When it calls a person into service and at the time of the call requests that he or she move; or
2. When it requests a person to move from one location to another during his or her employment.

This policy will apply to all employees of Mennonite Church Alberta.

B. General Principles

The mover shall seek guidance from his or her Supervisor prior to the move on the most appropriate mode of moving. Except in unusual circumstances, it is assumed that a self-packed, self-driven vehicle (such as a U-Haul) will be used for the move. It is also assumed that heavy and bulky items, such as books and tools, will be shipped by the least expensive mode available.

C. Coverage of Moving Costs

1. **House hunting trip:** The costs of travel for one round trip to the new location to secure a residence will be reimbursed. The cost of airfare or mileage for the employee and his or her spouse will be eligible. It is expected that the most economical means of travel will be obtained.
2. **Moving:** If the move is made privately or with the assistance of a self-driven rental vehicle, 100% of the vehicle costs will be covered. If a commercial mover is employed, up to 60% of the cost may be covered. Arrangements for a move by a commercial company should be negotiated in advance with Mennonite Church Alberta. At least two written estimates should be obtained.

The fuel costs of driving one personal vehicle and the cost of lodging and meals en route will be paid upon presentation of receipts.

The Treasurer will make payment to the individual after a paid invoice from the moving company, trailer lessor or freight line is submitted.

A travel advance may be requested from the appropriate executive staff person.

D. Conditions

If a person is called by Mennonite Church Alberta and the moving costs are paid at the time of the move, it shall be a condition of employment that if employment is terminated of the employee's own volition within the first three years, he or she shall repay this cost to Mennonite Church Alberta on the basis of one-third (1/3) for each year not served. This condition shall not apply to moves made at Mennonite Church Alberta's request during the course of a person's employment.

Travel Expenses

A. Scope

This policy is intended to apply to employees in the working environment and anywhere else as a result of employment responsibilities or employment relationships.

B. Philosophy

Mennonite Church Alberta employees are entrusted with the resources of donors and seek to use these resources responsibly as outlined in the Expectations of Staff. Reimbursements will be on the basis of the most economical fare and accommodations available at the time of travel.

C. General Guidelines

Receipts or copies of receipts (showing the GST number and GST charges) for air fare, car rentals, meals, accommodations and other travel expenses must be submitted with the appropriate form for reimbursement.

Transportation

1. **Airfare** – Fliers will normally choose the least expensive flying option available, consideration being given to number of stops, length of stops and flight times. Costs are normally less if the traveler is prepared to stay in the location over the weekend. Mennonite Church Alberta travelers are encouraged to take advantage of seat sales whenever possible. They should not purchase flight cancellation insurance.
2. **Car** – Mileage will be reimbursed at the established rate set by the Mennonite Church Alberta, except where the airfare between the departure point and the arrival point is less than the mileage reimbursement. In such cases the airfare rate will apply. A car rental should be obtained if the total costs will be less than the mileage reimbursement for a private car.
3. **Other Commercial Transportation** - Actual costs should be submitted with supporting receipts. Wherever possible courtesy transportation should be arranged or utilized.
4. **Travelers with “gold or platinum status” credit cards** may already have car rental collision or liability coverage or both. If they are charging rental transportation, they may call the phone number on their credit card to see if both types of insurance are provided, which will enable them to turn down the collision damage waiver insurance at the car rental agency. Otherwise they must purchase both liability and collision damage insurance. As a general rule this is most economically purchased before the trip from your usual insurance provider.

Accommodation and meals

1. Individuals will seek out clean and safe accommodations with reasonable rates or find billeting accommodations. Normally, billeting is recommended where available to enhance contact with church members.
2. Mennonite Church Alberta will pay for moderately priced meals while traveling on Mennonite Church Alberta business. This does not include alcoholic beverages.

Phoning Home

1. It is appropriate for employees traveling and working away from the office to telephone home at the employer's expense. Staff are expected to keep the costs reasonable.

Annual Assemblies

1. Attendance at Assembly, travel, accommodation arrangements and coverage of expenses is to be approved by the supervisor in advance.
2. Mennonite Church Alberta will pay for the assembly meal package or up to an equivalent amount for off-site meals.
3. Billeting is encouraged. For those who choose a designated assembly hotel, it is preferred that accommodations will be arranged on a two person per room basis. Subsequently, Mennonite Church Alberta will reimburse each individual for half of the room cost. If a person chooses not to share a room with another Mennonite Church Alberta staff person or volunteer they will personally cover the additional costs incurred. Exceptions require prior approval by the appropriate executive staff person.

Reimbursement for Expenses

All requests for reimbursements shall be handed to the Treasurer, Mennonite Church Alberta. The receipts for reimbursement must be accompanied by a reimbursement of expenses form, which is then signed by the appropriate person.

Staff Offices

Dispersed Staff

In each case where employees will be working in their home office at the request of Mennonite Church Alberta, normal office expenses (i.e., rent, phone, computer) will be paid by the employer.

Voluntary Service

Periodically, individuals may volunteer their services to Mennonite Church Alberta, or Mennonite Church Alberta may call on volunteers to accept specific assignments. In every case, details of the assignment should be clearly defined and discussed with the volunteer.

All volunteer work should be supervised and controlled to ensure that it fits into Mennonite Church Alberta programming. In most instances, there will be no remuneration to the volunteer, but in others a stipend will be paid. Careful consideration should be given to whether a volunteer assignment should be assigned a stipend and to the amount of the stipend. A job description should be produced, and a copy should be given to the volunteer, together with any stipend agreement.

All employee positions are also available on a voluntary or partially voluntary arrangement and will be processed under the guidelines and policies contained in this policy manual.

SECTION X – COMPLETING EMPLOYMENT

Termination

When an employee terminates his or her employment with Mennonite Church Alberta, the following procedure is to be followed:

A. Voluntary termination

Any employee voluntarily leaving the employ of Mennonite Church Alberta shall give notice in writing within a reasonable time (depending on the nature of the position), but no less than one month in advance of the departure date.

B. Requested termination

If an employee is requested to terminate employment, it shall be treated the same way as an involuntary termination.

C. Involuntary termination

If an employee is dismissed by Mennonite Church Alberta, he or she shall be notified in writing. The employee will have all the rights and privileges that relate to severance allowance and vacation leave, and shall be directed to the Mennonite Church Alberta problem-solving procedure if the employee wishes to grieve the dismissal.

D. Termination for cause

An employee may be terminated by Mennonite Church Alberta for cause, which may include, but is not limited to, willful misconduct, disobedience, willful neglect of duty or theft.

Mennonite Church Alberta recognizes that the employee is a part of a larger system. When employment is terminated, the employer and employee will consider how to discuss the termination with the employee's spouse, children and significant others. They will also consider a discussion with the employee's congregational leader or area church administrator, in hopes of making the transition a smooth one and providing the departing employee with appropriate emotional and spiritual support.

Retirement

When an employee reaches an age where he or she is considering retirement, he or she should arrange a meeting with his or her immediate supervisor to discuss personal plans and how they will continue to fit into Mennonite Church Alberta programs. Employee expectations and Mennonite Church Alberta options should be discussed. The possibility of taking reduced responsibilities and remunerations should be looked at. The employee is encouraged to initiate this discussion as early as possible so that retirement planning can take place.

When an employee reaches the age of 65 or expresses their intention to retire, the Director of Human Resources shall inform him or her of all the Mennonite Church Alberta benefit programs available, and shall refer the employee to a Financial Planner to facilitate the understanding of these benefits and options.

After an employee's retirement there may be an ongoing interest in specific tasks and programs or in projects which still need to be completed. Assignment to such tasks may be made on a part-

time or voluntary basis. If part-time employment is considered, such activities will fall under the jurisdiction of Mennonite Church Alberta's employment policies.

Severance Allowance

A. Scope

This policy is intended to apply to paid employees who have been requested to terminate or are involuntarily terminating their position with Mennonite Church Alberta. The policy will not apply in cases where the employee:

- is retiring or otherwise voluntarily terminating his or her employment
- works on an "on call" basis or a term position of one year or less
- is an hourly-paid employee
- has refused reasonable alternative employment with Mennonite Church Alberta
- is terminated for cause, including, but not limited to, wilful misconduct, disobedience, theft or wilful neglect of duty.

B. Definitions

Available benefits In addition to statutory notice, when staff employment is terminated involuntarily, but not for cause, the following benefits are available:

1. Employment counseling or retirement planning services, and
2. Additional working notice or pay in lieu of notice based on the following chart:

Years of Service	Additional Notice or Rate of Pay in Lieu of Notice
Under 1 year	statutory notice
1-3 years	3 weeks per year
4+ years	1 month per year up to a maximum of 13 months

Additional factors that will be considered when determining notice include the length of service in the organization, employee's years to retirement and likelihood of reemployment, and the seniority of the position.

Statutory notice Statutory notice is determined by province.

Additional working notice or pay in lieu of notice Additional working notice or pay in lieu of notice is understood to be added to the statutory notice and together is defined as the severance period. This period may include a portion of time which is to be worked by the employee (working notice) and a portion of time that is not worked but paid out (pay in lieu of notice); this will be negotiated by the employer and employee.

Employment counseling and retirement planning services Mennonite Church Alberta will arrange employment counseling services for up to a three month period, which may commence any time after notice is given to the employee. Depending on the employee's circumstances, retirement planning services may be a more useful alternative to employment counseling services and will be provided through Mennonite Church Alberta's pension providers.

C. General Principles

1. As employment counseling services are considered to be an important bridge to obtaining future employment, these services will not be paid out in cash. Likewise, retirement planning services will not be paid out in cash.
2. The employer and the employee will determine whether severance will be paid out as a continuance of monthly pay cheques or as a lump sum.
3. During the severance pay period, the following benefits and deductions will cease:
 - Group Insurance, consisting of Life Insurance, Long Term Disability and Accidental Death & Dismemberment
 - - Clergy Residence Deductions
4. The employee will be entitled to continue his or her 5% pension benefit deductions during the length of the severance period at his or her own expense. Arrangements for payment of contributions should be made with the finance department before the employee leaves service.