

Sample Employee Handbook

How to Use This Sample

This sample provides a framework for a church employee handbook. It is not intended to replace legal counsel, denominational guidance, or state specific employment requirements. Each church should adapt the language to fit its governance documents, staffing structure, theology, and applicable law.

Suggested Table of Contents

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Tip: Keep the handbook readable. Put detailed policies such as reimbursements, drug free workplace, child protection, and technology use in appendices or separate policies when they require frequent updates.

1. Staff Values

The staff of the church exists to serve Christ, equip the saints, and strengthen the ministry of the church. The following values should shape the way staff members work together and serve the congregation.

- Integrity: We seek to live and serve according to biblical standards.
- Collaboration: We work together and assume the best of one another.
- Excellence: We do our work with care because ministry matters.
- Lay Leader Empowerment: We equip and encourage members to use their gifts.
- Mission Focus: We prioritize the mission of making disciples over personal preference.

2. Purpose and Nature of Employment

The purpose of this handbook is to provide guidance for church employees. No handbook can address every situation. Employees should direct questions to their supervisor or the designated administrative leader.

Sample language: Employment with the church is not a contract for a fixed term unless a separate written agreement states otherwise. The church may revise this handbook as needed and will communicate significant changes to employees.

3. Employment Classifications

Classification	Description	Notes
Full Time Exempt	A staff member whose role meets applicable criteria for exempt status.	Not normally eligible for overtime.
Full Time Nonexempt	A staff member regularly scheduled for full time hours.	Eligible for overtime when required by law.
Part Time	A staff member regularly scheduled for fewer than full time hours.	Benefits may vary by church policy.
Temporary or Seasonal	A staff member hired for a limited project, event, or season.	Define expected end date in writing.
Intern or Resident	A staff member serving in a developmental ministry role.	Clarify compensation, housing, education, and expectations.

4. Work Schedule and Attendance

- Regular office hours should be stated clearly.
- Supervisors should approve changes to normal work hours in advance.
- Employees should report absences or late arrivals as soon as possible.
- Church ministry often requires evening and weekend service. Expectations should be discussed before hiring.
- Nonexempt employees should not work overtime without prior approval.

5. Standards of Conduct

- Employees are expected to conduct themselves in a way that reflects the mission and doctrine of the church.
- Employees should treat members, guests, volunteers, students, parents, and coworkers with respect.
- Employees should avoid conflicts of interest, misuse of church property, and personal gain through their position.
- Employees should raise concerns through appropriate supervisory channels.
- Employees should not use church resources for outside business or personal projects unless approved in advance.

6. Confidentiality

Employees and volunteers may have access to sensitive personal, pastoral, financial, medical, student, donor, or personnel information. Such information should be treated as confidential unless disclosure is required by law or authorized by appropriate church leadership.

7. Reporting Concerns

- Employees should report harassment, discrimination, abuse concerns, safety concerns, financial irregularities, and unethical conduct promptly.
- The church should identify more than one reporting pathway in case the concern involves the normal supervisor.
- The church should prohibit retaliation against anyone who makes a good faith report.
- Reports should be handled with appropriate confidentiality and documentation.

8. Compensation, Benefits, and Reimbursements

- State pay frequency and payroll procedures.
- Explain vacation, holidays, personal leave, conferences, sabbaticals, retirement, insurance, and other benefits.
- Reference the church accountable reimbursement policy.
- Require timely receipts, ministry purpose, and approval for reimbursed expenses.
- Clarify that personal expenses are not reimbursable.

9. Technology, Social Media, and Church Property

- Church equipment, accounts, networks, files, keys, and access credentials remain church property.
- Employees should protect passwords and avoid sharing access.
- Employees should use social media in a way that reflects well on Christ and the church.
- The church may review church owned systems and files as necessary for ministry, security, or legal reasons.

10. Safety, Background Checks, and Child Protection

- Require background screening for employees and volunteers as appropriate.
- Require child protection training before service with minors.
- Require employees to report accidents, injuries, suspected abuse, and unsafe conditions.
- Maintain separate detailed child protection and safety policies.

11. Discipline, Resignation, and Dismissal

Corrective action should be handled with fairness, documentation, and pastoral care. Some concerns may be addressed through coaching. Serious misconduct may require immediate suspension or dismissal. Churches should follow their bylaws, personnel policies, and applicable law.

12. Acknowledgment of Receipt

I acknowledge that I have received, read, and understand this handbook. I understand that I am responsible to follow the policies and expectations contained in it and any future updates communicated by the church.

Employee Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____