

Volunteers in the Workplace

As budgets are tight and additional work continues to increase, the trend has been to increase the number of volunteers in the workplace. Many locations are blessed with parishioners and parents of school children who offer to volunteer. The purpose of this HR Connect is to bring attention to the importance of helping those volunteers to have a safe, effective working relationship with their “Co-workers in the Vineyard of the Lord.”



Fortunately we already have some very specific and helpful Archdiocesan and Department of Catholic Schools resources that address working with volunteers. The Bishops’ Charter for the Protection of Children is very specific in addressing the importance of training and background checks or mandatory fingerprinting of certain individuals who interact with or supervise children. For information or specific resources, please review the following link: www.shieldthevulnerable.org

The Department of Catholic Schools has advocates the additional resource, the Family Handbook or Parent and Student Handbook, that addresses the necessity of working “courteously and cooperatively with the school” and “... may not do so in a manner that is discourteous, scandalous, rumor driven, disruptive, threatening, hostile, or divisive.”



All of our employees are required to read and acknowledge the policies and expectations in the Employee Handbook which include the statement that “the spirit of Christian concern should be the hallmark of our relationships and the guiding principle in addressing matters that are part of our day-to-day relationships as persons in society.”

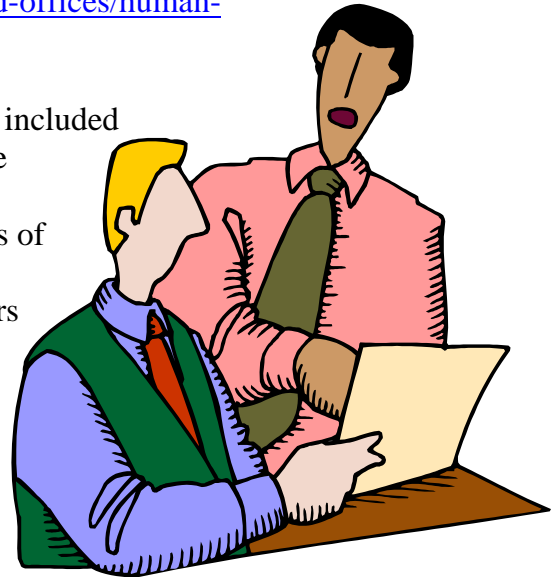


Even beyond all the policies mentioned, it is very important for those in leadership positions to be aware of whom we are inviting to be volunteers and to put in place some or all of the following practices:

- conduct reference checks on the volunteers

- have the volunteer provide contact information (complete a volunteer application) We will have a sample “Volunteer Application” on the HR Web site at: <http://www.sfarchdiocese.org/about-us/departments-and-offices/human-resources/information-for-new-employees/>

- Provide the volunteer with a brief job description:
 - Some detail of the job responsibilities should be included in a job description designed for and given to the volunteer.
 - If the volunteer is taking over the responsibilities of what had been a full time or even a part time position, then setting expectations and parameters of what is expected of the volunteer becomes increasingly important. If some aspects of the position will not be delegated to the Volunteer, then those responsibilities should be removed from the position description. For example, if a volunteer is willing to work in the Parish Office, the individual may be expected to interact with other staff. We would want the volunteer to be certain of which responsibilities have been assigned to their position and which responsibilities have been delegated to others.



- Training – Just like employees, a volunteer who is working must have instructions and training if safety or security is part of that individual’s job content. Formal “Safety” training may important as well as any restrictions that the Parish or the Archdiocese has on Volunteers’ activities. Example: Volunteers may be restricted from climbing ladders or not climbing above a certain height on a ladder.



- Review your “Employee Handbook” and determine which policies you would also like your volunteers to review and sign the acknowledgements:
 - Confidentiality Agreement
 - Standards of Conduct
 - If the volunteer is handling cash and/or checks – We may wish to consider running a credit check.
 - E-mail, Internet Policy



Again, the Archdiocese has many policies and procedures related to employees. As volunteers become an ever increasing resource for parishes and for schools, many of the policies would be appropriate to adapt to apply to our volunteers.

Please feel free to contact the Office of Human Resources regarding this topic or any other HR topic.