

ARCHDIOCESE OF CINCINNATI
CORRECTIVE COUNSELING GUIDELINES

The Archdiocese of Cincinnati and its Affiliates (defined as “parishes, schools, offices, agencies, and other institutions which operate under the administrative authority of the Archbishop”) have established fundamental principles from church teachings and traditions to govern the conduct of its employees.

The excellent work record and reputation of the Archdiocese and its Affiliates is dependent upon employees maintaining an orderly and harmonious working environment based on the following principles and code of ethics.

CODE OF ETHICS

Archdiocesan and Affiliate employees must:

1. Comply with all applicable rules and regulations of federal, state and local governments and regulatory agencies.
2. Implement policies and procedures to protect the resources of the church from fraud, misuse and waste, and to provide accurate and reliable financial reporting.
3. Follow generally acceptable accounting principles (GAAP) in accounting and reporting the finances.
4. Respect the confidentiality of all employee information and organization information unless disclosure is necessary.
5. Demonstrate the highest level of integrity and honesty in the conduct of responsibilities.
6. Never use his/her position, authority or power to influence a person’s actions or to gain influence or control over them in ways that would be considered harassment, unwanted personal attention or intimidation.
7. Use and control Archdiocesan/Affiliates assets and resources responsibly; and
8. Promptly report any suspected violation of the [Ethics & Conduct Policy](#) in accordance with the reporting procedures published by the Archdiocese. Text of this policy is available on line at: <http://www.catholiccincinnati.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/Ethics-and-Conduct-Policy.pdf>

EXPECTED CONDUCT

Archdiocesan and Affiliate employees are expected to:

1. Report to work in a safe and alert physical and mental condition.
2. Report to work in sufficient time to assume the responsibilities of his/her position at the scheduled starting time.
3. Proceed with each job assignment promptly and in a safe and efficient manner.
4. Deal courteously and honestly with the public and with fellow employees and exhibit conduct at all times in a manner which reflects favorably upon the employee and the Archdiocese.

CORRECTIVE ACTION

The Archdiocesan approach to corrective counseling will focus on solving problems which will assist in encouraging the employee to meet expectations.

PROCEDURE:

There are three types of corrective action. The process can begin with a verbal warning and can progress to termination if the undesirable conduct is not corrected.

Types of Corrective Action:

1. Verbal Warning
 - Documented in the Department or Affiliate file.
 - Is not always required prior to written warning.
2. Written Warning
 - Documented in the employee human resource file at the Archdiocese or the Affiliate.
 - Requires written plan of corrective action by employee.
3. Leave for Decision-Making – Given for the first offense for a major infraction or repeated infractions of minor rules.
 - Serves as the most serious type of corrective action and final notice prior to discharge.
 - Requires written plan of corrective action by employee prior to return to work.

Upon receiving a leave for decision-making, the employee will be required to leave work, with pay, to decide whether he/she wishes to continue employment with the Archdiocese or the Affiliate following all rules and meeting all expectations.

Prior to reporting to work on the next scheduled workday, the employee will meet with his/her supervisor to give his/her decision and complete the **Conduct Improvement Plan** (see page 6). The employee will not be able to return to work until the Conduct Improvement Plan is completed. If the employee fails to complete the improvement plan within three (3) working days, employment will be terminated.

NOTE: If an employee is accused of committing a major infraction of conduct, the employee will be placed on a Leave for Decision-Making with pay until a thorough investigation is completed. If it is determined, from the investigation, that the conduct violation does not warrant discharge, the employee must complete a Conduct Improvement Plan prior to returning to work.

Once the employee reaches a leave for decision-making stage, further deviation from expectation in any area may lead to discharge. The expectations of his/her supervisor are to be given to the employee in writing.

DISCHARGE

Discharge is not a step in positive corrective counseling, but may occur after other steps have not resulted in achieving the desired conduct or when the nature of the deviation warrants it. A supervisor/pastor/principal recommending discharge will consult with the Director of Human Resources of the Archdiocese to discuss the situation and any possible legal ramifications. If a school employee is being considered for discharge, the principal or administrator must first consult with the assigned regional director in the catholic school office to discuss the situation and possible legal ramifications. The regional director will access the HR director as needed.

GUIDELINES FOR ADMINISTERING CORRECTIVE COUNSELING

The following guidelines are provided to ensure effective administration of corrective counseling.

1. **Investigation must be thorough and objective.** In the investigation, all individuals involved will have the opportunity to provide their perception and understanding of the situation before a decision is made as to the appropriate action. The investigation should be done as promptly as possible upon discovery of the incident.
2. **Corrective counseling must be timely.** A corrective counseling session must be held as close to the discovery of the incident or undesirable conduct as possible, within a two to three day time period following the investigation.
3. **Confidentiality and privacy must be maintained.** A corrective counseling session should be conducted in a private setting with strict confidentiality in the investigation and counseling session consistent with the need to conduct a thorough investigation.
4. **Corrective counseling should include a plan of correction/improvement.** As part of the counseling session, a personal plan of action should be developed by the employee to correct the situation. Following a leave for decision-making, a plan of action is required. The employee must meet with the supervisor in charge and complete the plan of action prior to beginning the next scheduled workday.
5. **Proper documentation must be maintained.** As in all situations of counseling, proper documentation is necessary. This includes working with the employee to set specific and measurable goals to reach an agreeable outcome.

When determining the proper level of corrective counseling, supervisors/pastors/principals are expected to consider past performance, length of service and previous 12 month disciplinary record.

CORRECTIVE COUNSELING GUIDELINES/RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

The following guidelines are for use in normal situations and should be followed in most cases where corrective counseling is necessary. This list is not all inclusive. Due to extenuating circumstances, the guidelines may be altered when it is determined to be necessary to protect the welfare of visitors or fellow employees.

The following infractions will normally result in verbal or written warning depending upon circumstances:

1. Failure to follow department/office/parish/school/agency/institution procedures.
2. Hindering or restricting normal operations or inciting others to do so.
3. Loitering or loafing while on duty.
4. Horseplay, disruptive activity or other forms of disorderly conduct.
5. Failure to meet an established standard of performance.
6. Disregard of one's appearance, uniform, dress or personal hygiene.
7. Solicitation, distribution, or posting of provocative, controversial and/or inflammatory literature on Archdiocesan or Affiliate property.
8. Failure to properly wear ID as required.
9. Creating unsafe or unsanitary conditions.
10. Violating Archdiocesan or Affiliate law or regulations of any division, department or service of the Archdiocese or the Affiliate.
11. Any conduct detrimental to fellow employees or Archdiocesan or Affiliate operations.
12. Gambling on Archdiocesan or Affiliate premises.
13. Soliciting or accepting tips from visitors or any other employees.
14. Failure to follow general safety guidelines or universal precautions.
15. Insubordination – initial refusal but subsequent compliance with instructions of a supervisor.
16. Use of abusive or obscene language; acting in a defamatory or disrespectful manner to any employee or visitor.
17. Frequently tardy and/or absent. Text of this guideline is available on line at:
<http://www.catholiccincinnati.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/Reporting-to-Work-Guidelines.pdf>

The following are major infractions and will normally result in a leave for decision-making or discharge.

18. Failure to adhere to the Decree on Child Protection.
19. Negligence or irresponsibility involving work or any Archdiocesan/Affiliate operation.
20. Physical abuse or verbal abuse of visitors or employees.
21. Unauthorized disclosure of confidential information.
22. Illegal conduct. Employee will generally be suspended until matter is settled.
23. Possession, use, sale or distribution of alcohol, illegal narcotics and/or controlled substances or reporting to work under the influence of such substance.
24. Unlawful possession of firearms or other concealed weapons.
25. Theft of employee, visitor or Archdiocesan/Affiliate property.

26. Deliberate destruction or misuse of Archdiocesan/Affiliate, employee or visitor property.
27. Failure to comply with Archdiocesan/Affiliate hazardous and infectious waste safety guidelines and regulations.
28. Falsification of employment application including any Archdiocesan/Affiliate records or information.
29. Insubordination – absolute refusal to comply with instructions from an authorized supervisor.
30. Fighting or provoking a fight on Archdiocesan/Affiliate premises.
31. Sleeping while on duty.
32. Threatening, intimidating or harassing employees or visitors.
33. Job abandonment; three days no call, no show.
34. Failure to comply with and act consistently in accordance with the stated philosophy and teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. (See [School Contract for Certificated Employees](#), Section F, for further clarification)
35. Any conduct considered **seriously** detrimental to fellow employees or Archdiocesan operations.

MANAGEMENT EXCEPTIONS

A guideline is not a replacement for thought and good judgment on each individual case. All the facts must be obtained before taking corrective action. The following may be considered before corrective action is taken:

1. A long-term employee with a previously good record who begins to develop a problem.
2. An employee facing personal stress or a family crisis which will be resolved in a reasonable period of time.
3. Other situations which may require special consideration.

MODIFICATIONS AND EXCEPTIONS

These are guidelines only, and nothing in these guidelines create a contractual obligation between the Archdiocese/Affiliates and any employee, nor is it intended to alter the employment-at-will status of employment. While these guidelines set forth general management practices, the Archdiocese/Affiliates reserve the right to skip disciplinary steps if warranted by circumstances and terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without prior notice. The Archdiocese/Affiliates also reserve the right to unilaterally modify or delete these guidelines at any time without prior notice.

INFORMATION PROVIDED TO PARISHES, SCHOOLS, AND OTHER RELATED ENTITIES OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF CINCINNATI

CORRECTIVE ACTION NOTICE

NAME: _____
TITLE: _____
DEPARTMENT: _____
COST CENTER #: _____

- Verbal Reminder**
- Written Reminder**
- Leave for Decision-Making**
- Discharge – Complete Form B**

Describe performance or behavior inconsistent with expectations and the change(s) required to meet those expectations:

Previous corrective action related to this incident:

Consequences if expectations are not met and maintained:

Supervisor Signature: _____

Date: ____/____/____

This section to be completed by the employee: Please describe what actions will be taken in order to correct behavior/conduct.

**CONDUCT
IMPROVEMENT
PLAN**

Employee Signature: _____

Date: ____/____/____

Signature verifies that you have received this information

DISCHARGE NOTICE

NAME: _____

TITLE: _____

DEPARTMENT: _____

COST CENTER: _____

REASON(S) FOR DISCHARGE

Supervisor Signature: _____

Date: _____ / _____ / _____

Employee Signature: _____

Date: _____ / _____ / _____

Signature verifies that you have received this information.

