

Employee Handbook



St. John's Lutheran Church

Shiremanstown, PA

May 2023

Welcome

Welcome to St. John's Lutheran Church, a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran church in America! We are a congregation of God's people doing God's work in this time and place. As an employee of St. John's, you are important part of our ministry team. This handbook is meant to help you understand more about your role as an employee of the church.

Mission Statement

Our mission statement is *Grow in faith, Share God's love, Serve others*. Everything that we do as a congregation is meant to be a reflection of that mission and it is important to measure our work against it. We are committed to a life of worship, service, and grace in this place. We use our time, talents and treasures to help do ministry together.

Important Notice about this Handbook

This handbook is designed to provide employees with information about working conditions, employee benefits, and important policies affecting employment. These policies are published to provide a convenient resource for all employees, to assist in the orientation of new employees, and to promote consistency in the administration of the services provided by the church. Employees are expected to read, understand, and comply with all provisions in this document. This handbook summarizes the policies and practices in effect at the time of its approval by Council, and it supersedes all previously issued handbooks and any policy that is inconsistent with the policies described here.

No set of personnel policies can anticipate every circumstance or question or summarize every policy, and the need may arise for us to revise, add or cancel policies, at which time the Congregation Council (Council) of St. John's has the authority to make changes without prior notice. In addition, ST. JOHN'S may deviate from its stated policies at its sole discretion as individual circumstances warrant.

At-Will Employment

In addition, this handbook is not a contract, expressed or implied, nor does it guarantee employment for any specific length of time. Although we hope our employment relationship will be long term, every non-ordained employee of St. John's is an at-will employee. That means that either St. John's or the employee may end the employment relationship at any time, with or without notice and with or without reason.

Keeping our Children Safe: Clearances and Criminal Background Checks

This congregation's ministry with children and youth begins by striving to provide a safe environment with caring and effective leaders. To protect the safety of our children and youth, and in compliance with Pennsylvania law, all employees and volunteers will be screened for their eligibility to work with children and youth and must submit the mandated clearances:

- Pennsylvania State Police Criminal Record Check: <https://epatch.state.pa.us/Home.jsp>
- Pennsylvania State Child Abuse History Clearance: <https://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis/public/home>
- Federal Criminal History Report, which includes submission of the individual's fingerprints
<https://www.identogo.com/locations/pennsylvania>
- National Sex Offender Registry - <https://www.dhs.pa.gov/KeepKidsSafe/Resources/Documents/NSOR.APPLICATION.05.02.22.pdf>

All employees must keep these clearances current by renewing them every five years. St. John's will pay/reimburse for the cost of clearances.

Policy Against Harassment

The church will not tolerate any form of discrimination or harassment including sexual harassment or hazing. It is important for you to understand that jokes, stories, cartoons, nicknames and comments about appearance may be offensive to others. It is our policy to strictly prohibit any conduct that may constitute sexual harassment or other unlawful harassment and to discipline any employee guilty of such conduct.

Sexual harassment is often difficult to define. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment. This includes many forms of offensive behavior. However, as a guide, the following behavior may constitute harassment:

- Unwelcome sexual flirtation, advances or propositions;
- Verbal comments related to an individual's age, race, gender, color, religion, national origin, disability, or sexual orientation;
- Displaying cartoons or telling jokes which relate to an individual's age, race, gender, color, religion, national origin, disability or sexual orientation;
- Explicit or degrading verbal comments about another individual or his/her appearance;
- The display of sexually suggestive pictures or objects in any workplace location, including transmission or display via computer;
- Physical conduct that includes touching, assaulting, impeding or blocking movements;
- Offering employment benefits in exchange for sexual favors;

- Making or threatening reprisals after a negative response to sexual advances.

It is the responsibility of each member of the work team to create an atmosphere free of harassment. In addition, it is the responsibility of each employee to respect the rights of other employees. This policy encourages any witness of an incident of harassment to report such incident immediately. All reasonable efforts will be made to protect the confidentiality of the individual reporting the incident. If you believe that you are being subjected to harassment, you should:

- If you feel able to do so, tell the harasser that his or her actions are not welcome and that they must stop, and
- Immediately report the incident to the Lead Pastor or a member of the Executive Team. A report of any type of harassment will be treated seriously, and a thorough investigation will be conducted. An employee who files a complaint will be treated fairly and courteously at all times, and will not be retaliated against for making such report. Confidentiality will be honored for all parties involved to the degree possible. The employee(s) involved will be informed regarding the findings of the investigation and any disciplinary action to be taken.

Prohibition of Threats and Violence

It is the policy of St. John's that there will be zero tolerance for violence. No weapons are allowed on the premises and no threats or talk of violence will be tolerated. All potentially dangerous situations, including threats by co-workers, should be reported immediately to the Lead Pastor or the Executive Team. Reports of threats will be confidential to the extent that maintaining confidentiality does not impede the ability to investigate and respond to the complaints. All threats will be promptly investigated. All employees must cooperate with all investigations. No employee will be subjected to retaliation, intimidation or disciplinary action as a result of reporting a threat in good faith under this policy.

If St. John's determines, after an appropriate good faith investigation, that someone has violated this policy, St. John's will take swift and appropriate corrective action. In addition to the appropriate disciplinary action, the employee and/or other parties involved may be subject to criminal proceedings as appropriate. If you are the recipient of a threat made by an outside party, please follow the steps detailed in this section. It is important to be aware of any potential danger in the workplace. We want to take effective measures to protect everyone from the threat of a violent act by an employee or by anyone else.

BENEFITS

Employee Pay

Employees are paid bi-weekly.

- Social Security and Medicare Taxes: St. John's makes contributions for its lay employees as required of employers under the Federal Insurance Contribution Act (FICA).
- Unemployment Compensation: St. John's employees are not covered by unemployment compensation insurance. Therefore, upon termination of their employment, they are not eligible to collect unemployment insurance benefits

Reimbursement for Approved Business Expenses

Employees of St. John's who are required to expend funds in connection with the performance of their work will be reimbursed for expenses that have been pre-approved by the Lead Pastor.

Credit Card Use

Any employees of St. John's that are issued a church credit card shall only use the card for approved expenses and shall have a receipt for all purchases. Any personal or nonapproved expenses will be reimbursed by the employee to St. John's within 30 days of purchase.

Vacations

All employees of St. John's are given time off as allotted in their job description. All vacation time taken shall be approved by the Lead Pastor. All vacation time shall be recorded. If more time is needed than allotted in the job description, then the time off shall be unpaid for the remainder of the calendar year. All vacation requests should be made at least one month prior to scheduled days off.

Holidays

It is the policy of St. John's that the Church office will be closed on the following holidays:

- New Year's Day (January 1)
- Presidents' Day (Feb)
- Monday following Easter
- Memorial Day (last Monday in May)
- Juneteeth (June 19th)
- Independence Day (July 4)
- Labor Day (first Monday in September)

- Indigenous People’s Day (Second Monday in October)
- Thanksgiving (Wed – Fri)
- Christmas (Week between Christmas and New Year)

Other days may be added at the discretion of the Lead Pastor.

Leave Policies

Jury or Witness Duty

St. John’s encourages its employees to fulfill this civic responsibility by serving on jury duty when required. St. John’s will also provide witness duty time off to employees who receive a subpoena or summons to testify in court.

- The jury/witness summons should be shown to the Lead Pastor as soon as possible so that arrangements can be made to accommodate your possible absence from work.
- Employees are expected to report for work whenever the court schedule permits.
- If summoned by St. John’s to testify, the employee will receive time off for the period of witness duty.

Military Leave

St. John’s complies with applicable state and federal law concerning leaves for military service. Absences should be discussed with the Lead Pastor well in advance of leaving for training or active duty.

Sick Leave

It is the policy of St. John’s that sick leave requiring an extended absence of longer than one week must be reviewed and approved by the Lead Pastor and/or Executive Team. The employee must inform the Lead Pastor of the need for sick leave.

Long-Term Leave

When an employee can no longer perform their employment duties at St. John’s due to a medical illness or other life event, the following progression will be in effect.

- If the employee is absent from work for an illness or life event, they will continue to receive full compensation for the first three months of their absence from work.
- After three months have passed and the employee can still not return to work, their compensation will be reduced by fifty percent for months four through six.
- At the end of six months, if the employee is unable to return to work, their employment at St. John’s will be terminated. It is the employee’s responsibility to keep the Lead Pastor updated on their situation, including providing medical documentation of their health status.

Parental Leave

When an employee is blessed with the birth or adoption of a new child into their family, they will be given 8 weeks leave with full pay and benefits.

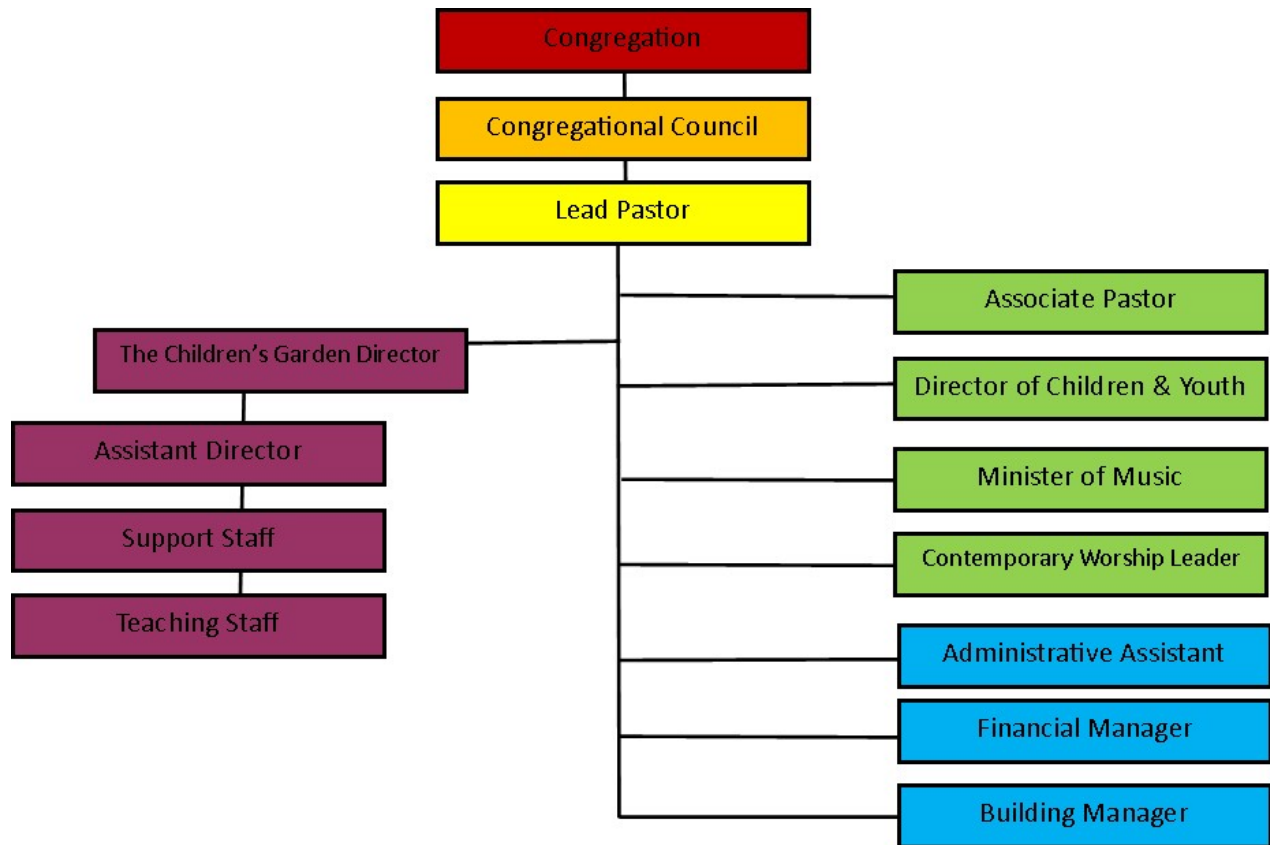
EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

Job Descriptions

St. John's makes every effort to create and maintain accurate job descriptions for all positions within the organization. Each description includes sections for position type and expectation of hours worked per week, a job summary, essential duties and responsibilities, required skills and qualifications (including education and/or experience, any certification required, musical, technical, or leadership skills required).

Job descriptions are used to help new employees understand their job duties and to set standards for employee performance evaluations. Job descriptions are also used to identify the requirements of each position, establish hiring criteria, and establish a basis for making reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities. The Council and Executive Team prepare job descriptions when new positions are created. Existing job descriptions are also reviewed and revised in order to ensure they are up to date. Job descriptions may also be rewritten periodically to reflect any changes in the position's duties and responsibilities. Employees can be helpful by making sure that their job description accurately reflect the work that is done. Job descriptions do not necessarily cover every task or duty that the employee may be assigned to and that additional responsibilities may be assigned as necessary. Please contact the Executive Team or the Lead Pastor if there are questions or concerns about a job description.

Staff Reporting Lines



Introductory Period

All new employees of St. John's will meet with the Lead Pastor at the 30, 60 and 90 day points to review their job description and reflect on their beginning at St. John's.

Performance Evaluation

The best communications about job performance happen on an informal, day-to-day basis. Employees are encouraged to talk about performance regularly.

In addition, St. John's wants to ensure that employees have scheduled, formal performance evaluations. These discussions are the opportunity to discuss job responsibilities and goals, encourage and recognize strengths, identify and correct any weaknesses, develop plans for dealing with any obstacles, and plan for the future. Formal performance evaluations are scheduled annually and will be performed by the Executive Team. The Team will meet with each employee to review the annual evaluation.

Copies of the annual evaluation will be given to the employee and also kept in the employee's file.

Confidentiality of Employee Personnel Files

Employee records are maintained in the church office. Individual files will contain employee information as well as performance evaluations.

When an employee of St. John's is required to manage various church records and files that include personal information regarding congregational members, privacy and confidentiality of such records are to be maintained at all times. Any breach of the privacy and confidentiality of records and files will be addressed with the employee and will involve the employee, the Lead Pastor and the Executive Team.

Requests for a reference from entities such as a credit agency, prospective landlord, prospective employer, etc., concerning employment at St. John's will be limited to the following information. The information provided will only verify the dates of employment, salary and the position(s) the employee has held.

WORKPLACE SAFETY

It is the policy of St. John's to make every effort to maintain a safe and healthy working environment. Employee concerns about safety or working conditions should be forwarded to the Lead Pastor or the Council President.

Building Access Employees having keys to St. John's facilities are expected to use them in a responsible manner. While St. John's encourages an "open door" policy to its congregation and members of the community, every effort must be made to ensure the safety and security of employees on the church and school premises at all times. During school hours, building security is a priority and the policies of The Children's Garden should be followed at all times. Any lost keys need to be reported immediately to the Lead Pastor and the church secretary, and all keys must be returned when your employment with St. John's ends.

Smoking/Vaping Policy

St. John's maintains a smoke/vape-free environment in all buildings and facilities for employees, members, and visitors.

Drug and Alcohol-Free Workplace

It is the policy of St. John's to provide employees with a safe and healthy working environment, one that is free from the problems associated with the use and abuse of alcohol and illegal drugs (including abuse of prescription medication). The abuse, sale, unlawful possession, distribution, transfer or manufacture of drugs, intoxicants or a controlled substance on church property or other work sites where employees may be assigned or elsewhere during working hours is strictly prohibited. Employees are also expected to report to work and conduct all work-related activities free from the effects of alcohol. Employees who violate the drug and alcohol policy will be removed from the workplace immediately and face disciplinary action up to and including termination. However, an employee voluntarily admitting alcohol and/or drug dependency may, at the church's discretion, be given a leave of absence for substance abuse assistance or to attend a rehabilitation program.

Workers' Compensation

Workers' compensation covers injuries or illnesses sustained in the course of employment that require medical, surgical, or hospital treatment. Subject to the applicable legal requirements, this program provides benefits after a short waiting period or in the event of hospitalization, immediately.

- It is critical that the employee informs the pastor(s) immediately about any work-related injury or illness, regardless of how minor it may appear at the time. Submit the "Report of Work-Related Injury Form" (Appendix C.6) as soon as possible to the pastor. Immediate reporting ensures that, if eligible, the employee qualifies for workers' compensation benefits as quickly as possible and also allows St. John's to investigate the matter promptly.

- While on an approved leave due to a work-related injury or illness, the employee's position may or may not continue to be held open for the employee. This decision will be made on a case-by-case basis by the pastor(s) upon recommendation from the supervising committee chair. The employee may be eligible for paid leave through the Long-Term Leave Policy.

Visitors to the Church Grounds

It is the policy of St. John's to provide for the safety and security of employees and members and also to practice good stewardship of the facilities at St. John's. As such, care must be taken regarding the flow of visitors throughout the church building, the church office building and The Children's Garden. Controlling unauthorized visitors helps maintain safety standards, protects against theft, ensures security of equipment, protects confidential information, safeguards employee welfare and avoids potential distractions and disturbances.

During the school day, the safety and security of our school is of highest importance. All outside doors should remain locked except for the outer church office entrance (unless the school is placed on a lockdown, then all entrances shall be locked until the lockdown is lifted). Employees are not to place themselves in peril. If employees sense a problem with a stranger, they should excuse themselves immediately and seek a safe place from which to call for help.

WORKING TOGETHER

We consider all people to be God's valuable assets. Every employee represents St. John's to our membership and the public. The way we do our jobs presents an image of our church and our Lord. People judge all of us by how they are treated with each employee contact. Therefore, one of our first priorities is to assist any person. Nothing is more important than being courteous, friendly, helpful, and prompt in the attention you give to those who approach us with questions or needs.

Standards of Conduct

All employee contacts with the public and all communications sent to the congregation and/or the public should reflect the highest level of professionalism. Positive relations not only enhance the public's perception or image of St. John's, but also demonstrate our love for God and all people. St. John's expects all employees to perform their job duties in a satisfactory manner. Employees are to conduct themselves in an appropriate, professional manner, both in the church building itself and in situations

outside of church while acting as its representative. In general, the use of good judgment, based on high ethical and biblical principles, will guide employees with respect to lines of acceptable conduct.

If a situation arises where it is difficult to determine the proper course of action, the matter should be discussed openly with the pastor(s) and, if necessary, with the Executive Team.

Workplace Etiquette

It is the policy of St. John's to maintain a positive work environment where employees treat each other with respect and courtesy. When an employee's behavior in the workplace is disruptive or annoying to others it should be addressed by politely talking with the co-worker to bring the perceived problem to their attention. St. John's encourages all employees to keep an open mind and graciously accept constructive feedback or a request to change behavior that may be affecting another employee's ability to concentrate and be productive. Disputes should be handled using biblical principles, bringing the problem to the attention of the individual first. If necessary, employees will meet with the pastor(s) and/or the Executive Team for conflict resolution.

In the event that the problem is not resolved after meeting with the pastor(s) and/or the Executive Team, disciplinary action may be taken.

Inappropriate Conduct

If employees fail to perform their job duties or conducts themselves in an unacceptable or inappropriate manner, they are subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment. The following are some specific examples of inappropriate conduct. This list is not, however, all inclusive:

1. Using, possessing, distributing, or coming to work under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
2. Possession of firearms or weapons of any kind while at work unless authorized by Congregation Council.
3. Theft, misappropriation, misuse, unauthorized disclosure, or other abuse of the property or confidential information of the church, its members, vendors, or employees.
4. Acting in a discourteous, threatening, abusive, or harassing manner against church employees, members, or vendors.
5. Insubordination, including failure to follow appropriate instructions regarding job-related matters.
6. Excessive, unexplained, or unauthorized absenteeism or tardiness.
7. Illegal gambling or solicitation of illegal gambling on church property.
8. Dishonesty, including but not limited to verbal dishonesty, falsification of business or employment-related records, misuse of funds, and unauthorized use or taking of resources or property of the church.

Resolving Problems

We encourage prompt and fair resolution of employees' work-related concerns or problems and recognize the value of open communications in which any problem, complaint, suggestion, or question receives a timely response. If an employee disagrees with established rules of conduct, policies, or practices, they can express their concern through the problem resolution procedure described below. No employee will be penalized, formally or informally, for voicing a complaint with St. John's in a reasonable and professional manner.

1. If an employee faces a work-related problem, raise the initially issue with the Lead Pastor or the Council President.

2. If the employee is unable to resolve the issue with the Lead Pastor or the Council President, the employee may raise the issue with the Executive Team.

3. If the employee believes the problem or issue has still not been effectively resolved, the Executive Team may refer the situation in writing to the Congregation Council.

If an employee disagrees with or has a suggestion regarding any employment policies at St. John's, the employee is to discuss the issue(s) with the Lead Pastor or the Executive Team. If a policy change appears warranted, the Executive Team will submit a written recommendation to the Congregation Council.

Statements to the Media All external or news media inquiries regarding the position of St. John's as to any issues must be referred to the Lead Pastor, Council President or the Congregational Council. Only the Church Council, pastor(s), or designee is authorized to make or approve public statements on behalf of St. John's. No employees, unless specifically designated, are authorized to make statements on behalf of St. John's. Any employee wishing to write and/or publish an article, paper, or other publication on behalf of St. John's must first obtain approval from the Church Council or Lead Pastor.

Use of Equipment

Equipment essential in accomplishing job duties is often expensive and may be difficult to replace. When using St. John's property, you are expected to exercise care, perform required maintenance, and follow all operating instructions, safety standards, and guidelines. St. John's equipment should not be borrowed for personnel use without permission from the pastor(s). If individuals use their own equipment for the work of the church, neither St. John's nor its members are responsible for any damage that may occur.

You should notify the pastor(s) if any equipment, machines or tools appear to be damaged, defective, or in need of repair. Prompt reporting of damages and the need for repairs could prevent deterioration of equipment and possible injury to employees or others. The improper, careless, negligent, destructive, or unsafe use or operation of equipment may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Electronic Media Policy

This policy, which applies to all St. John's employees, is intended to assist employees in making responsible decisions about use of electronic media. Employees are responsible for ensuring that all

information they share in work-related Internet discussion groups, chat rooms, blogs, or social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.) is accurate, and that any personal opinions they express are clearly identified as personal and not attributed to St. John's.

Our Electronic Media Policy includes the following:

1. St. John's will not list the private addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, social media accounts, or other personal accounts of our members and staff on our electronic media, unless publication of that information is requested by the individual(s) in question.

2. Staff members may have church domain-based email provided to them so they may conduct church business while respecting their privacy. St. John's IT will provide those when requested.

3. Minors appearing in any pictures, graphics, or other images, will not be identified by name. In addition, minor(s) and their parents/legal guardians may request that the images be removed at any time by making the request to the church office and we will seek to comply with that request within 72 hours of receiving notification.

4. Adults who appear in images will not be identified by name, unless verbal permission has been given to include their name. If any adult chooses to have his or her image removed, they may request that the image(s) be removed at any time by making the request to the church office. We will seek to comply with that request within 72 hours of receiving notification. Adults who prefer their photos not to be used on electronic media should make their request in writing to the church office.

5. This policy applies only to St. John's electronic media. Electronic media may contain hyperlinks to electronic media that are not managed by St. John's. These links are for your reference and convenience and are not run by St. John's. St. John's is not responsible for the data practices of electronic media not operated by St. John's.

Guidelines for Employees' use of Electronic Media include the following:

1. The public in general, and St. John's employees and members, reflect a diverse set of customs, values and points of view. Don't say anything contradictory or in conflict with the St. John's website. Don't be afraid to be yourself, but do so respectfully. Always be fair and courteous. This includes not only the obvious (no ethnic slurs, offensive comments, defamatory comments, personal insults, obscenity, etc.) but also proper consideration of privacy and of topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory - such as politics. Use your best judgment and be sure to make it clear that the views and opinions expressed are yours alone and do not represent the official views of St. John's unless you are commenting or posting in an official capacity as a spokesman for the congregation.

2. Do not post anything that would be considered embarrassing, objectionable or hurtful to anyone in the post.

3. Maintain confidentiality. Never divulge information that would be considered confidential. This includes names, addresses, and contact information for individuals unless written permission is on file.

4. Be honest and accurate. Make sure that posted information or news is honest and accurate, and if a mistake is made, make sure that it is corrected quickly. Be open about any previous posts that have been altered.

5. The speed of being able to publish your thoughts is both a great feature and a great downfall of social media. The time to edit or reflect must be self-imposed. If in doubt over a post, or if something does not feel right, either let it sit and look at it again before publishing it, or ask someone else to look at it first. Quality matters.

ENDING THE EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIP

The reasons for ending the employment relationship are often routine. These are some common circumstances for ending employment:

- Resignation – voluntary termination of employment initiated by an employee
- Discharge – involuntary termination of employment initiated by St. John’s
- Layoff – involuntary employment termination initiated by St. John’s for non-disciplinary reasons
- Retirement – voluntary termination of employment initiated by the employee meeting age, length of service, and any other criteria for retirement.

Since employment with TLC is based on mutual consent, either you or TLC have the right to terminate the employment relationship at will, with or without cause or advance notice at any time. Employees who choose to resign are requested to give at least two weeks' notice. We will generally schedule an exit interview with a member of the Executive Team. This is an opportunity for the employee to share any suggestions, complaints or questions. This is also the time to return any keys or St. John’s-owned property if it hasn’t already been done.

Unemployment Compensation

St. John’s employees are not covered by unemployment compensation insurance. Therefore, upon termination of their employment, they are not eligible to collect unemployment insurance benefits.