

# **Black Rock Church Employee Handbook**

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# Section 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Welcome to Black Rock Church

We are pleased to welcome you to the Black Rock Church (BRC) staff. We work together to meet the mission and objectives outlined below helping people know and follow Christ. We recognize that each person brings his/her own gifts, abilities, experience and strengths to our team. We appreciate who you are and what you contribute. We expect each person to respect others' differences even though there may or may not be complete agreement. We are working for a common goal, and in the spirit of Philippians 2:3, we should, "in humility count others better than yourselves." Our intent is for the Holy Spirit to utilize your individual gifts to be blended into the common work of ministry to God through Black Rock Church.

#### History

Black Rock Church began in 1849 in the Black Rock section of what is now Bridgeport. The church was planted because people were unable to cross Ash Creek and attend First Congregational Church in Fairfield. Hundreds of years later, BRC continues to do everything we can to help as many people as possible come to a saving faith in Jesus Christ and live out the fullness of a wholehearted life following Jesus. In 1968, BRC took a major step of faith and moved into a new building on the outskirts of Fairfield CT where we remain to this day. In 2014, we opened a newly renovated and expanded building to increase our ability to help more people know and follow Jesus as stated in our vision and mission statements.

**Vision:** Our vision is to INSPIRE HOPE and IGNITE FAITH in every person we meet by connecting them to God through Jesus.

**Mission:** We seek to LOVE GOD, LOVE PEOPLE and SERVE OUR WORLD. We want to see people develop into mature disciples who are equipped to glorify God through membership in His family, ministry in the church mission to our community and beyond.

#### Serving on Church Staff

It is important to understand that being paid to serve as a church staff member is a privilege. Our congregation gives sacrificially so we are able to focus 100% of our work hours on ministry. Serving on staff at BRC is truly a blessing, but it also involves sacrifice. Staff members are expected to work, serve and minister at least as hard as our key lay volunteers. Our work is also our calling and not just a job. We maintain high standards of stewardship in all matters, especially with contributions entrusted to our care. We also commit to a high level of performance, setting appropriate goals and priorities. All staff should agree with our Doctrinal Statement and be committed to live out our Lifestyle Statement.

We are also committed to developing staff to reach their God-given potential. We are committed to helping every staff person develop skills and experience necessary to live out their calling to serve Christ. We also understand that the nature of ministry can be exhausting as much as rewarding. That is why we commit to growing ourselves spiritually and maintaining a strong relationship with God. As a staff, we are committed to soul care that allows us to minister out of an overflow of our joy in Christ.

We are so glad you have decided to join us on this journey. There is nothing greater than contributing to the salvation and discipleship of God's people and everyone on our staff gets to do that every day. If you have any questions or need any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact the Human Resources Manager or Executive Pastor.

## **1.2 Employee Handbook**

This Employee Handbook ("Handbook") is designed to summarize certain personnel policies and benefits of Black Rock Congregational Church (BRC) of 3685 Black Rock Tpke, Fairfield, Connecticut and to acquaint employees with many of the rules concerning employment with the church. This Handbook applies to all employees, and compliance with BRC's policies is a condition of employment. This Handbook supersedes all previous employment policies, written and oral, express and implied. BRC reserves the right to modify, rescind, delete, or add to the provisions of this Handbook from time to time in its sole and absolute discretion. This Employee Handbook is not a binding contract between Black Rock Church and its employees, nor is it intended to alter the at-will employment relationship between Black Rock Church and its employees. Black Rock Church reserves the right to interpret the policies in this Handbook and to deviate from them when, in its discretion, it determines it is appropriate.

## **1.3 Changes in Policy**

Our company strives to stay current with all federal, state and local laws in order to ensure a safe and productive environment for our employees and customers. Since our business is constantly changing, BRC expressly reserves the right to revise, modify, delete, or add to any and all policies, procedures, work rules, or benefits stated in this handbook or in any other document, except for the policy of at-will employment as described below. No oral statements or representations can in any way alter the provisions of this Handbook. Nothing in this employee handbook or in any other document, including benefit plan descriptions, creates or is intended to create a promise or representation of continued employment for any employee. Any changes to your at-will employment status, described below, must be in writing and must be signed by Black Rock Church.

When we add policies or change existing ones, you will have 48 hours to review new policies or changes to existing ones and either:

Sign an agreement that you will maintain compliance with said new policies or changes and continue your employment or

Refuse to sign the agreement and walk away from Black Rock Church without cause.

If you are uncertain about any policy or procedure, please check with your manager or Human Resources.

## **1.4 Employment-At-Will**

Employment with Black Rock Church is on an at-will basis, unless otherwise specified in a written employment agreement. You are free to resign at any time, for any reason, with or without notice. Similarly, BRC is free to conclude the employment relationship at any time for any lawful reason, with or without cause, and with or without notice.

Nothing in this Handbook will limit the right of either party to terminate an at-will employment. No section of this Handbook is meant to be construed, nor should be construed, as establishing anything other than an employment-at-will relationship. This Handbook does not limit management's discretion to make personnel decisions such as reassignment, change of wages and benefits, demotion, etc. No person other than the Executive Director has the authority to enter into an agreement for employment for any specified period or to make an agreement for employment other than at-will terms. Only the Executive Director of Black Rock Church has the authority to make any such agreement, which is only binding if it is in writing and signed by the Executive Director.

## Section 2

# Employment Policies

### 2.1 Employee Classifications

The following terms are used to describe employees and their employment status:

**Exempt Employees** - Employees whose positions meet specific tests established by the Federal Labor Standards Act ("FLSA") and Connecticut state law. In general, exempt employees are those engaged in executive, managerial, high-level administrative and professional jobs who are paid a fixed salary and perform certain duties. Exempt employees are not subject to the minimum wage and overtime laws.

**Nonexempt Employees** - Employees whose positions do not meet specific tests established by the FLSA and Connecticut state law. All employees who are covered by the federal or state minimum wage and overtime laws are considered nonexempt. Employees working in nonexempt jobs are entitled to be paid at least the minimum wage per hour and a premium for overtime.

**Full-Time Employees** - Employees who are not temporary employees, independent contractors, or independent consultants and who are regularly scheduled to work a schedule of 30 or more hours per work week.

**Part-Time Employees** - Employees who are not temporary employees, independent contractors, or independent consultants and who are regularly scheduled to work less than 30 hours per work week.

**Seasonal Employees** – Employees who are hired for a specific time frame and may be full-time or part-time.

**Temporary Employees** - Employees who are hired as interim replacements to temporarily supplement the workforce or to assist in the completion of a specific project. Employment assignments in this category are of limited duration and the temporary employee can be let go before the end of the defined period. Short term assignments generally are periods of three (3) months or less, however, such assignments may be extended. All Temporary employees are at-will regardless of the anticipated duration of the assignment (see Employment-at-Will Policy). Temporary employees retain that status unless and until notified in writing of a change.

**Independent Contractor or Consultant** - These individuals are not employees of Black Rock Church and are self-employed. An independent contractor or consultant is engaged to perform a task according to their own methods and is subject to control and direction only as to the results to be accomplished. Independent contractors or consultants are not entitled to benefits.

Each employee will be advised of their status at the time of hire and of any change in status. Regardless of the employee's status, the employee is employed at-will and the employment relationship can be terminated by Black Rock Church or the employee at any time, with or without cause and with or without notice.

### 2.2 Equal Employment Opportunity & Americans with Disabilities Act.

Providing equal employment opportunity is one of the most important personnel policies of BRC. It is the intention of Black Rock Church to provide equal employment opportunity to applicants and employees in all phases of our operation without regard to an individual's age, race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, physical or mental disability, genetic information, marital status, natural hair or any other classification protected by applicable local, state or federal laws. This policy prohibits unlawful discrimination based on the perception that anyone has any of those characteristics or is associated with a person who has or is perceived as having any of those characteristics. Functioning as a church (for related not-for-profit Christian ministries: as an integral part of the Church), we can and do discriminate on the basis of our religious beliefs. This policy applies to all aspects of employment, including, but not limited to, hiring, job assignment, working conditions, compensation,

promotion, benefits, scheduling, training, discipline and termination.

Black Rock Church expects all employees to support our equal employment opportunity policy, and to take all steps necessary to maintain a workplace free from unlawful discrimination and harassment and to accommodate others in line with this policy to the fullest extent required by law.

Moreover, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Black Rock Church provides reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with disabilities to the fullest extent required by law. BRC may require medical certification of both the disability and the need for accommodation. Keep in mind that BRC can only seek to accommodate the known physical or mental limitations of an otherwise qualified individual. Therefore, it is your responsibility to come forward if you need accommodation. Black Rock Church will engage in an interactive process with the employee to identify possible accommodations, if any will help the applicant or employee perform the job.

### **2.3 Confidentiality.**

During employment with Black Rock Church, employees may have access to "Confidential Information" regarding the Church, which may include future plans, financial information, contracts, suppliers, congregants, personnel information or other information that BRC considers proprietary and confidential.

This duty of confidentiality applies whether the employee is on or off the BRC's premises, and during and even after the end of the employee's employment with Black Rock Church. This duty of confidentiality also applies to communications transmitted by the BRC's electronic communications. See also Internet, Email and Computer Use policy, herein.

### **2.4 Employment of Minors.**

The FLSA's child labor provisions, which Black Rock Church strictly adheres to, are designed to protect the educational opportunities of youth and prohibit their employment in jobs that are detrimental to their health and safety. The FLSA sets the minimum age for employment (14 years for non-agricultural jobs), restricts the hours youth under the age of 16 may work, and prohibits youth under the age of 18 from being employed in hazardous occupations. In addition, the FLSA establishes subminimum wage standards for certain employees who are less than 20 years of age, full-time students, student learners, apprentices, and workers with disabilities. Employers generally must have authorization from the U.S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division (WHD) to pay sub-minimum wage rates.

### **2.5 Employment of Relatives.**

Black Rock Church recognizes that the employment of relatives in certain circumstances, such as when they will work in the same department, supervise or manage the other, or have access to confidential or sensitive information regarding the other, can cause problems related to supervision, safety, security or morale, or create conflicts of interest that materially and substantially disrupt the BRC's operations. When BRC determines any of these problems will be present, it will decline to hire an individual to work in the same department as a relative. Relatives subject to this policy include father, mother, sister, brother, current spouse, child (natural, foster, or adopted), current mother-in-law, current father-in-law, grandparent, or grandchild.

If present employees become relatives during employment, Human Resources should be notified so that we may determine whether a problem involving supervision, safety, security or morale, or a conflict of interest that would materially and substantially disrupt BRC's operations exists. If Black Rock Church determines that such a problem exists, the Executive Director will take appropriate steps to resolve the problem, which may include reassignment of one relative (if feasible) or asking for the resignation of one of the relatives.

## **2.6 Introductory Period.**

Benefits for eligible employees begin the first of the month following the first thirty days of employment. Vacation for eligible employees is prorated in the first year and can be used after the first 6 months of employment.

## **2.7 Personnel Records and Employee References.**

The Company maintains a personnel file and payroll records for each employee as required by law. Personnel files and payroll records are the property of Black Rock Church and may not be removed from the premises without written authorization. Because personnel files and payroll records are confidential, access to the records is restricted. Generally, only those who have a legitimate reason to review information in an employee's file are allowed to do so. Disclosure of personnel information to outside sources will be limited. However, Black Rock Church will cooperate with requests from authorized law enforcement or local, state, or federal agencies conducting official investigations and as otherwise legally required.

Employees may contact a Human Resources representative to request a time to review their payroll records and/or personnel file. With reasonable advance notice, an employee may review their own records in the Human Resource office during regular business hours and in the presence of an individual appointed by BRC to maintain the records. No copies of documents in your file may be made, except for documents that you have previously signed. You may add your comments to any disputed item in the file.

By policy, Black Rock Church will provide only the former or present employee's dates of employment, position(s) held with the BRC, and whether the former employee is eligible for rehire. Compensation information may also be verified if written authorization is provided by the employee.

## **2.8 Privacy.**

Black Rock Church is respectful of employee privacy. All employee demographics and personal information will be shared only as required in the normal course of business. Healthcare enrollment information is kept electronically with our current benefits provider. Workers' Compensation information is not considered private healthcare information; however, this information will be released only on a need-to-know basis.

Black Rock Church does not make or receive any private healthcare information through the course of normal work. If any employee voluntarily shares private healthcare information with a member of management, this information will be kept confidential. If applicable, BRC will set up guidelines for employees and management to follow to ensure that company employees conform to the requirements of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

## **2.9 Immigration Law Compliance.**

In compliance with the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, each new employee, as a condition of employment, must complete the Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9 on the date of hire and present documentation establishing identity and employment eligibility within three business days of date of hire. Former employees who are rehired must also complete an I-9 form if they have not completed an I-9 form with the Company within the past three years, or if their previous I-9 form is no longer retained or valid.



## **2.10 End of Employment**

Unless prohibited by statute or contract, employment with Black Rock Church is “at will” and may be terminated with or without cause or notice. Similarly, employees are free to resign at any time. We request two weeks’ written notice when an employee resigns from employment at Black Rock Church.

Resigning employees will receive their final paycheck on the next regular pay date. Final paychecks will include all wages accrued but not paid through the date of separation.

Prior to separation, all employees must return any BRC property in their possession. This includes, without limitation, all materials that contain proprietary or confidential information, keys, credit cards, ID badges, computers, vehicles, communication devices, tools, equipment, uniforms and any other property otherwise belonging to or lease by Black Rock Church. An employee’s final check may be held until the property is returned.

## Section 3

### Hours of Work and Payroll Practices

#### 3.1 Pay Periods and Paydays.

Because of the nature of our ministry, work schedules may vary depending on the job. The official office hours of BRC are Monday through Thursday, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. Employees may, however, be assigned to work hours outside the official office hours, including evenings and weekends. An employee's work schedule may be changed at any time by BRC.

All employees are paid by check or direct deposit on Fridays for the pay period Sunday through Saturday. If the regular payday falls on a weekend or holiday, employees will be paid on the last business day before the holiday and/or weekend.

#### 3.2 Overtime.

Nonexempt employees will be paid in accordance with federal and Connecticut state law. In Connecticut, with some exceptions, the standard work week for employees should not exceed 40 hours per week. Should BRC find it necessary to employ an employee in excess of these standards, overtime hours shall be compensated at the rate of one and one-half times the regular rate of pay.

All overtime work by non-exempt employees must be authorized in advance by their manager. Only hours actually worked will be used to calculate overtime pay. Time off for holidays, sick leave, vacation or personal time will not be factored in as hours worked for overtime.

If you work unauthorized overtime or don't properly record your time, you will be paid for the hours worked but you may be subject to disciplinary measures including termination.

#### 3.3 Rest and Meal Periods.

All rest and meal periods will be in accordance with Connecticut state law. To the extent Connecticut state law does not require rest and meal breaks, nonexempt employees will be provided a 10- minute rest break for every four-hour period of work. This time is counted and paid as time worked. Nonexempt employees scheduled to work more than a five-hour period will be provided with a 30-minute paid meal period in the middle of the work day. Working through the meal period does not permit you to leave 30 minutes early.

According to federal and state law, all employers must make a reasonable effort to provide their lactating employees with a private location to express milk. This location cannot be a toilet stall. Additionally, the employers should attempt to provide a cold storage where the employee can keep their expressed milk for the duration of the workday. If the employer cannot meet this condition, they must allow the employee to bring their own portable cold storage device for this purpose.

#### 3.4 Time Cards.

Nonexempt employees are required to keep an accurate and complete record of their attendance and hours worked through MinistryWorks. Entries should be made daily and saved. At the end of the work week, timesheets should be submitted, no later than noon on Sunday for the previous work week. Timecards are official business records and may not be altered without the employee's supervisor's approval and may not be falsified in any way. Hours should not be carried over from one week to the next. Your timecard should reflect the exact hours worked for each day.

BRC uses the 7/8 rule meaning your start and stop times will be rounded to the nearest quarter hour. For example, if you enter a start time of 11:07, your start time will be rounded to 11:00. If you start at 11:08, your start time will be rounded to 11:15.

### **3.5 Remote Work**

As of June 1, 2025, Black Rock remote work policy will be updated as follows:

Black Rock Church allows its employees to work remotely for up to 20% of their weekly hours. This means that for full-time employees, they may work remotely for up to 8 hours. Those who preach or prepare for teachings on a regular basis will be allowed more remote work time due to the need for more focused preparation time. If you do work remotely, you will be required to be available during normal working hours. This requires replying to emails and G-chats in a timely manner. BRC has the discretion to track your BRC computer's activity while working remotely. Working remotely requires your full attention on work duties. Supervisors reserve the right to rescind remote work if productivity decreases.

### **3.6 Payroll Deductions.**

Various payroll deductions are made each payday to comply with federal and state laws pertaining to taxes and insurance. Deductions will be made for the following: Federal and State Income Tax Withholding, Social Security, Medicare, CT Paid Leave, and other items designated by you or required by law (including a valid court order). You can adjust your federal and state income tax withholding by completing the proper federal or state form and submitting it to Human Resources. At the start of each calendar year, you will be supplied with your Wage and Tax Statement (W-2) form for the prior year. This statement summarizes your income and deductions for the year.

### **3.7 Wage Garnishment.**

A garnishment is a court order requiring an employer to remit part of an employee's wages to a third party to satisfy a just debt. Once Black Rock Church receives the legal papers ordering a garnishment, we are required by law to continue making deductions from your check until we have withheld the full amount or until we receive legal papers from the court to stop the garnishment. Even if you have already paid the debt, we still need the legal papers to stop the garnishment.

### **3.8 Direct Deposit**

All employees are encouraged, but not required, to use direct deposit and have their paychecks deposited into a bank account of an accredited participating bank or credit union.

### **3.9 Emergency Closings**

When emergencies such as severe weather, power failures, etc disrupt BRC operations, circumstances may require the closing of our offices. When operations are officially closed for the day due to emergency conditions, the time off from scheduled work will be unpaid for hourly employees. However, the employee may use available vacation time. If the office is closed early, hourly employees will be paid their normal work hours for that day.

In the event of an emergency closing, employees will be notified through the Realm staff group or by calling 203-255-3401 ext 333.

## Section 4

# Standards of Conduct and Employee Performance

### 4.1 Anti- Harassment and Discrimination.

#### Diversity & Inclusion Policy

The Company is dedicated to creating and maintaining an atmosphere of diversity and inclusion for all. Company values are important, and are only made better by gathering the experiences, knowledge, and perspectives of people from all walks of life. We celebrate differences in age, race, ethnicity, national origin, physical and mental ability, family and marital status, and all the various backgrounds that help shape us all.

Black Rock Church's commitment to diversity applies to hiring practices, promotions, pay and benefits, terminations, training, teambuilding, and more. Prospective employees and current employees alike are expected to treat each other, and be treated, with respect and dignity. We seek to foster an environment that promotes:

- A healthy, collaborative, and courteous atmosphere.
- Engagement from all employees that allows for more varied insights.
- Adjustability, where appropriate, that allows for an individual's personal needs.
- Initiatives from BRC and the employees that encourage growth in the community.

Black Rock Church is committed to providing a work environment free of sexual or any form of unlawful harassment or discrimination. Harassment or unlawful discrimination against individuals on the basis of race, religion, creed, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, ancestry, natural hair, order of protection status, marital status, physical or mental disability, genetic information, military status, unfavorable discharge from military service or any other classification protected by applicable local, state or federal laws. Such conduct by or towards any employee, contract worker, customer, vendor or anyone else who does business with BRC will not be tolerated. Any employee or contract worker who violates this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of their employment or engagement. To the extent a customer, vendor or other person with whom BRC does business engages in unlawful harassment or discrimination, Black Rock Church will take appropriate corrective action.

#### Prohibited Conduct:

Prohibited harassment or discrimination includes any verbal, physical or visual conduct based on sex, race, age, national origin, disability or any other legally protected basis if:

- a. submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or engagement;
- b. submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for decisions concerning that individual's employment or engagement; or
- c. it creates a hostile or offensive work environment.

Prohibited harassment includes (but is not limited to) unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and lewd, vulgar or obscene remarks, jokes, posters or cartoons, and any unwelcome touching, pinching or other physical contact. Other forms of unlawful harassment or discrimination may include racial epithets, slurs and derogatory remarks, antisemitism, hate speech, stereotypes, jokes, posters or cartoons based on race, national origin, age, disability, marital status or other legally protected categories. Prohibited harassment might also be transmitted using BRC's electronic communications system, or through other on-line conduct.

#### Complaint Procedure:

Employees or contract workers who feel that they have been harassed or discriminated against, or who witness any harassment or discrimination by an employee, contract worker, customer, vendor or anyone else who does business with Black Rock Church, should immediately report such conduct to their supervisor or any other member of management.

Do not allow an inappropriate situation to continue by not reporting it, regardless of who is creating the situation. No employee, contract worker, customer, vendor or other person who does business with this organization is exempt from the prohibitions in this policy. In response to every complaint, Black Rock Church will conduct an investigation which may involve interviewing witnesses if warranted and, if improper conduct is found, take appropriate corrective action.

To the extent that an employee or contract worker is not satisfied with BRC's handling of a harassment or discrimination complaint, they may also contact the appropriate state or federal enforcement agency for legal relief.

#### **4.2 Attendance.**

Punctuality and regular attendance are essential to the successful operation of Black Rock Church. If an employee is unable to report to work (or to report to work on time) for any reason, the employee must notify their supervisor before their starting time. If an employee desires to leave work for any reason during the workday, the employee must obtain the approval of their supervisor prior to leaving. If the employee fails to call their supervisor or report for work for 3 consecutive workdays, the employee will be deemed to have voluntarily resigned from their employment with Black Rock Church and will be removed from the payroll. Excessive absenteeism or tardiness may subject the employee to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Attendance at weekly staff meetings is mandatory for full-time employees. Meetings are held on Tuesdays from 9:30am to 11 am. Changes to the schedule will be announced and posted in the Realm staff group.

#### **4.3 Discipline and Standards of Conduct.**

As an at-will employer, Black Rock Church may impose discipline whenever it determines it is necessary or appropriate. Discipline may take various forms, including verbal counseling, written warnings, suspension, demotion, transfer, reassignment or termination. The discipline imposed will depend on the circumstances of each case; therefore, discipline will not necessarily be imposed in any particular sequence. Moreover, at any time Black Rock Church determines it is appropriate, an employee may be terminated immediately.

Every organization must have certain standards of conduct to guide the behavior of employees. Although there is no possible way to identify every rule of conduct, the following is an illustrative list (not intended to be comprehensive or to limit BRC's right to impose discipline for any other conduct it deems inappropriate). Keep in mind that these standards of conduct apply to all employees whenever they are on Black Rock Church property and/or conducting Black Rock Church business (on or off BRC property). Engaging in any conduct BRC deems inappropriate may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

- a. Dishonesty
- b. Falsification of records
- c. Unauthorized use or possession of property that belongs to Black Rock Church, a coworker, or of the public
- d. Possession or control of illegal drugs, weapons, explosives, or other dangerous or unauthorized materials
- e. Fighting, engaging in threats of violence or violence, use of vulgar or abusive language, horseplay, practical jokes or other disorderly conduct that may endanger others or damage property

- f. Insubordination, failure to perform assigned duties or failure to comply with BRC's health, safety or other rules
- g. Unauthorized or careless use of BRC's materials, equipment or property
- h. Unauthorized and/or excessive absenteeism or tardiness
- i. Lack of teamwork, poor communication, unsatisfactory performance, unprofessional conduct, or conduct improper for the workplace
- j. Sexual or other illegal harassment or discrimination
- k. Unauthorized use or disclosure of BRC's confidential information
- l. Violation of any Black Rock Church policy

#### **4.4 Dress Code.**

What we wear to work is a reflection of our role as Black Rock Church staff, in what we do, and in ourselves. Although dress code requirements will vary according to job responsibilities, we ask that you adhere to a business casual standard and that your appearance at all times shows discretion, good taste, and appropriateness for the safe performance of your job.

#### **4.5 Safety.**

Black Rock Church is committed to providing a safe workplace. Accordingly, BRC emphasizes "safety first." It is the employee's responsibility to take steps to promote safety in the workplace and work in a safe manner. By remaining safety conscious, employees can protect themselves and their coworkers. Employees are expected to promptly report all unsafe working conditions, accidents and injuries, regardless of how minor so that any potential hazards can be corrected.

#### **4.6 Substance Abuse.**

Black Rock Church is committed to providing its employees with a safe and productive work environment. In keeping with this commitment, it maintains a strict policy against the use of alcohol and the unlawful use of drugs in the workplace. Consequently, no employee may consume or possess alcohol, or use, possess, sell, purchase or transfer illegal drugs at any time while on our premises or while using church vehicles or equipment, or at any location during work time. No employee may report to work with illegal drugs (or their metabolites) or alcohol in his or her bodily system. 'Illegal drug' means any drug that is not legally obtainable or that is legally obtainable but has not been legally obtained. It includes prescription drugs not being used for prescribed purposes or by the person to whom it is prescribed or in prescribed amounts. It also includes any substance a person holds out to another as an illegal drug. Any violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Any employee who feels he or she has developed an addiction to, dependence upon, or problem with alcohol or drugs, legal or illegal, is strongly encouraged to seek assistance before a violation of this policy occurs. Any employee who requests time off to participate in a rehabilitation program will be reasonably accommodated. However, employees may not avoid disciplinary action, up to and including termination, by entering a rehabilitation program after a violation of this policy is suspected or discovered.

#### **4.7 Expectation of Privacy.**

Our professional ethics requires that each employee maintain the highest degree of confidentiality when handling the affairs of all who seek our services. Information is one of our most valuable resources and requires responsible management by all employees. In order to maintain this professional confidence, no employee shall disclose personal information whether communicated orally, in hard copy or electronically to anyone except on a need-to-know basis. It is therefore essential that no documents containing confidential information are to be left unattended on desks, on the copier or in the workroom, should be stored in locked files and should be shredded when no longer needed.

#### **4.8 Internet, Email and Computer Use Policy.**

The following rules apply to all forms of electronic communications and media that are: (1) accessed on or from BRC premises; (2) accessed using BRC computers or telecommunications equipment, or via Company-paid access methods; and/or (3) used in a manner which identifies Black Rock Church. The following list is not exhaustive, and Black Rock Church may implement additional rules from time to time. a. Electronic communication and media may not be used in any manner that would be discriminatory, harassing, or obscene, or for any other purpose that is illegal, against BRC policy, or not in the best interest of BRC. Employees who misuse electronic communications and engage in defamation, copyright or trademark infringement, misappropriation of trade secrets, discrimination, harassment, or related actions will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination. Employees may not install personal software on BRC computer systems. b. Employee's own electronic media may only be used during breaks. All other company policies, including the BRC's no tolerance for discrimination, harassment, or retaliation in the workplace apply. c. All electronic information created by any employee on BRC premises or transmitted to Black Rock Church property using any means of electronic communication is the property of BRC and remains the property of Black Rock Church. You should not assume that any electronic communications are private or confidential.

#### **4.9 Social Media Policy.**

Black Rock Church is committed to utilizing social media to maintain BRC's identity, integrity and reputation in a manner consistent with our values and policies. We encourage employees to support our activities through their personal social networking channels while adhering to the guidelines outlined in this section. For the purpose of this section, social media and networking refers to the use of web-based and mobile applications for social interaction and the exchange of user-generated content. Social media channels can include, but are not limited to: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, blogs, review sites, forums, online communities and any similar online platforms. Employees are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner and to respect the views and opinions of others. Black Rock Church and its employees are committed to conducting ourselves in accordance with best industry practices in social networking, to being responsible citizens and community members, to listening and responding to feedback, and to communicating in a courteous and professional manner. Behavior and content that may be deemed disrespectful, dishonest, offensive, harassing or damaging to BRC's interests or reputation are not permitted. The use of social media channels on company time for personal purposes is not allowed. Any social media contacts, including 'followers' or 'friends' that are acquired through accounts (including but not limited to email addresses, blogs, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, or other social media networks) created on behalf of Black Rock Church will be the property of the BRC. Employees must not disclose private or confidential information about Black Rock Church, its employees, clients, suppliers or congregants on social networks. Employees must respect trademarks, copyrights, intellectual property and proprietary information. No third-party content should be published without prior permission from the owner.

#### **4.10 Cell Phone Policy.**

BRC understands that cell phones, tablets and other hand-held devices are a convenience used with regularity by most employees. Employees are allowed to use communications devices for reasonable personal use with the expectation that such use will not affect their job performance.

Use of hand-held media devices at any time in the workplace is also subject to BRC's Internet, Email, Computer Use and Social Media policies, in that they are not to be used in any way that may be disruptive, offensive to others, harmful to morale or in any manner violates other BRC policies including but not limited to BRC's anti-harassment policy.

## **Section 5**

### **Employee Benefits and Services**

#### **5.1 Generally.**

Aside from those benefits required by state and federal regulations Black Rock Congregational Church also offers additional benefits for its Full-Time Employees. From time to time, benefits may be added or deleted from the benefits package. The Company reserves the right to make such changes.

#### **5.2 Group Health / Dental / Vision Insurance.**

Eligible employees may elect coverage for themselves and any qualified dependents. Coverage begins on the first of the month following the first 30 days of employment. BRC shares the cost of health insurance. Employees are responsible for paying their portion of the insurance through payroll deduction. Employees will be informed of the cost sharing formula each year during open enrollment.

#### **5.3 Group Life Insurance.**

The Company offers a group life insurance plan for eligible employees, including accidental death and dismemberment coverage. For more information, refer to the plan documents.

#### **5.4 Health Reimbursement Arrangement and Health Savings Accounts.**

Black Rock Church offers two different plans to assist with deductible payments. Depending on which health insurance plan is chosen, employees can sign up for the HRA or HSA. See Human Resources for more information.

#### **5.5 Flexible Spending Account (FSA).**

Under Section 125 of the IRS Code, Black Rock Church offers a flexible spending account for employees who wish to take advantage of this provision through our benefits provider. This plan allows employees to withhold a portion of their salary on a pre-tax basis to cover the cost of qualifying insurance premiums, out of pocket medical expenses and dependent care expenses (child and/or elder care) such as day care expenses and in-home dependent care. The amount selected by the employee is deducted on a pre-tax basis to cover these expenses. Any unused amounts in the medical and dependent care account will be forfeited after the end of the plan year.

#### **5.6 403(b) Plan.**

Black Rock Church makes available a 403(b) Retirement Savings Plan to all eligible employees. This plan is designed to be used in combination with social security benefits and any personal resources to provide an income at retirement. BRC matches 50 cents on the dollar up to 3% of an employee's salary after an employee has worked at the church for 6 months. Eligible employees may start contributing to the plan through payroll deduction upon hire. Complete details of the plan can be found in the Summary Plan Description.

#### **5.7 Employee Assistance Program.**

Employee Assistance is offered through our Soul Care Crisis Care Team. If an employee is experiencing a spiritual, physical, emotional, psychological or mental crisis, they should reach out to their direct manager or a member of the Crisis Care Team. More information is available on the Staff Info page.



## **5.8 COBRA.**

Under our current provider, our medical plans are exempt from COBRA.

## **5.9 Worker's Compensation.**

All states have Workers' Compensation laws whose purpose is to promote the general welfare of people by providing compensation for accidental injuries or death suffered in the course of employment. These laws are designed to provide protection to workers suffering occupational disabilities through accidents arising out of, and in the course of employment. Black Rock Church carries Workers' Compensation Insurance for all employees and pays the entire cost of the insurance program. An employee who suffers an injury or illness in connection with the job is usually eligible to receive payment through the insurance company for lost wages. In addition to disability payments, necessary hospital, medical and surgical expenses are covered under Workers' Compensation, with payments being made directly to the hospital or physician. Workers' Compensation benefits to injured workers also include assistance to help qualified injured employees return to suitable employment.

## **5.10 Unemployment Insurance.**

Because churches are exempt from participation in state and federal unemployment insurance programs, Black Rock Church does not provide unemployment insurance as an employee benefit.

## **5.11 Educational Assistance**

BRC may, subject to securing approvals in accordance with the process outlined below, provide educational assistance to regular full-time employees with at least two years of service. Eligible employees may be reimbursed only for courses of study which BRC determines are directly related to the employee's present job. We strongly encourage staff to get a theological degree from a seminary but will approve other requests based on an interview with the Elders. In addition, to be eligible for reimbursement, courses or programs must be offered by accredited institutions of learning. Employees seeking tuition assistance must have the prior approval of the Board of Elders before enrollment. Employee reimbursement for eligible tuition assistance will normally be based upon the grade received for the course as follows:

- A. For a grade of "A" or "B", 100% reimbursable costs
- B. For a grade of "C", 50% of reimbursable costs
- C. No reimbursement for a grade lower than "C"
- D. For passing a "pass-fail" course, 75% of reimbursable costs

No student work (class/academic study/homework) shall be conducted during the employee's normal work schedule except in rare cases and with a supervisor's expressed permission. Employees will be expected to use vacation time to attend classes that include away travel during the work week.

Employees seeking reimbursement for tuition expenses must submit to the Executive Director a certified transcript of their grades and receipts for the expenses incurred. BRC will reimburse the employee the cost of tuition up to the maximum allowed of \$6,000 per fiscal year. Due to limited funding for BRC's Educational Assistance Program, applications must be submitted one year prior to matriculation, and in the event of multiple applications, employees with the longest tenure at Black Rock Church will receive priority. After having first secured approval, employees seeking reimbursement for educational expenses must agree in writing to repay BRC in full if they leave BRC voluntarily within three years from the date of reimbursement.

According to current IRS regulations, up to \$5,250 of tuition assistance is excludable from taxable wages. Any assistance in excess of that amount will be included as taxable wages on the W-2.

### **5.12 Accountable Reimbursement Plan**

Black Rock Church has adopted a reimbursement policy pursuant to federal income tax regulations 1.162-17 and 1.274-5(e). This policy makes it legally possible for Black Rock Church to reimburse legitimate expenses without having to show them as taxable income to the employee. Pastoral Staff and Directors who have been granted a personal expense account will receive a hard copy of the policy and will sign an acknowledgement form that the policy has been read and will be followed.

### **5.13 Church Vehicles**

Black Rock Church vehicles are not to be used for personal use unless authorized by the Executive Director. You must also be cleared as an approved driver for insurance purposes.

### **5.14 Staff Attendance at BRC Events Reimbursement**

Black Rock Staff and their families are eligible for reimbursement for costs that are paid for most BRC events and retreats. Please see the current policy posted on the staff website page ([www.blackrock.org/staff-info](http://www.blackrock.org/staff-info)) for eligibility and reimbursement cap.

## **Section 6**

### **Employee Leaves of Absence and Time Off**

#### **6.1 Generally.**

While regular attendance is crucial to maintain business operations, Black Rock Church recognizes that, for a variety of reasons, employees may need time off from work. BRC has available a number of types of leaves of absence. Some are governed by law and others are discretionary. For all planned leaves, however, employees must submit a request at least 10 Days in advance; in case of emergencies, employees should submit the request as soon as they become aware of the need for leave. All leaves must have the approval of BRC management. If, during a leave, an employee accepts another job or engages in other employment or consulting outside of Black Rock Church, or applies for unemployment insurance benefits, the employee may be considered to have voluntarily resigned from employment with Black Rock Church.

All requests for a leave of absence will be considered in light of their effect on Black Rock Church and its work requirements, as determined by your supervisor, which reserves the right to approve or deny such requests in its sole discretion, unless otherwise required by law. For disability-related leave requests, BRC will engage in an interactive process with the employee to determine if a leave is the most appropriate accommodation. The employee must provide a certification from their health care provider to Black Rock Church to support a leave for medical reasons.

Failure to provide the required certification to Black Rock Church in a timely manner will result in delay or denial of leave. If an employee requires an extension of leave, the employee must request such extension, and have it approved before the expiration of the currently approved leave.

While Black Rock Church will make a reasonable effort to return the employee to their former position or a comparable position following an approved leave of absence, there is no guarantee that the employee will be reinstated to their position, or any position, except as required by law.

Requests for time off for sick time, vacation, personal days or floating holidays must be submitted through MinistryWorks. Requests for other time off (ie: Leaves of Absence, bereavement leave, jury duty) must be made in writing to your supervisor and the Executive Director.

#### **6.2 Sick Days.**

Eligible employees are entitled to accrue up to 40 paid sick hours per year. When employees eligible for paid sick days do not take the full amount of sick time they could have taken in a year, up to 40 hours will be carried over to the following year.

Employees accrue one hour of paid sick leave for every 40 hours of work during any 365-day period. Employees may carry over up to 40 hours of paid leave into the next calendar year. Employees become entitled to paid sick leave after working 680 hours, and an average of at least 10 hours a week during the most recently completed calendar quarter.

Requests for sick leave are to be made through MinistryWorks and should be made on the day requested but no later than the end of the pay period. For exempt employees, sick time must be requested for all hours that you are not working. For example, if you do work for 1 hour while sick, you need to request 7 hours of sick time for that day.

Employees who terminate aren't entitled to be cashed out for their accrued sick leave. Employees may take paid sick leave for their own illness, injury, health condition, or that of their spouses or children; or to seek medical care or psychological or other counseling if they are victims of family violence or sexual assault, to relocate due to family violence or sexual assault, or to participate in related court proceedings. Employers may discipline employees who take paid leave for other reasons.

Employers may require that employees provide them with seven days' notice prior to taking leave, if the need for leave is foreseeable. If the need for leave isn't foreseeable, employees may be required to provide notice as soon as practicable. Employers may also require that employees provide reasonable documentation of the need for leave, if employees take at least three consecutive days off. Doctors' notes or documentation signed by a representative of a victim's services organization, attorney, police office, or other counsel is considered reasonable.

Employers cannot retaliate or discriminate against employees who request or take any paid sick leave, including paid sick leave provided under company policy. Employees have the right to file complaints with the state Labor Commissioner.

### **6.3 Personal Days.**

Full-time employees are entitled to 2 days (16 hours) paid personal days per year. Personal Days cannot be carried over to the next benefit year. Personal Days may not be used on Sundays.

### **6.4 Vacation Days.**

Black Rock Church grants annual vacations with pay to regular full-time and regular part-time (15 hours a week or more). Employees may not receive vacation pay in lieu of time off. The vacation year follows the fiscal year, June 1 through May 31. Full-time employees will receive paid vacation time according to the following schedule:

#### **Pastoral Staff**

**Senior Pastor:** 6 weeks

#### **Ordained Pastors:**

0-10 years: 4 weeks

11+ years: 5 weeks

#### **Directors, Associate Directors & Managers**

6 mos – 5 years: 2 weeks

6-10 years: 3 weeks

11+ years: 4 weeks

#### **Non-Exempt Employees working 15 hours per week or more**

6 mos-1 year: 1 week

1-5 years: 2 weeks

6-10 years: 3 weeks

11+ years: 4 weeks

One week of vacation may be carried over in the following year but must be used within the first three months of the new fiscal year.

Eligible part-time employees are entitled to vacation on a pro-rata basis. The length of the vacation will be determined on the same basis as for full-time employees but pay will be based on the employees' average number of part-time hours per week based on the previous year. Seasonal employees receive no vacation benefit.

Because of the importance of Sundays, ministry staff should plan their vacation so each week of vacation includes no more than one Sunday. Also, the maximum number of Sundays to be taken in a year as vacation corresponds to the number of weeks of vacation earned.

Newly hired employees are eligible to use vacation after six full months of employment. The allowable vacation prior to the start of the next fiscal year will be prorated at 1/12 of the allowable vacation per each full month of time remaining in the fiscal year.

The employee's supervisor and the Executive Pastor must approve all vacation time. Vacation time should be scheduled with at least one week's notice. Vacations should not be scheduled during church-wide events including Christmas, Easter week, Missions week and the Annual Meeting.

If a paid holiday falls within an employee's vacation period, the holiday will not be charged as a vacation day. No allowance will be made for sickness or other compensable type of absence occurring during a scheduled vacation unless approved by the employee's supervisor and the Executive Director.

## Payment of Accrued but Unused Vacation Time Upon Separation

Upon separation of employment, accrued but unused vacation time will be paid out on a pro-rata basis.

### 6.5 Holidays.

Full and Part-time employees are eligible for the following paid holidays:

New Year's (2 days)	Labor Day
Martin Luther King Day	Thanksgiving (2 days)
Memorial Day	Christmas (2 days)
Independence Day	

In addition, you may choose to take off one of the following holidays:

President's Day	Columbus Day
Juneteenth	Veteran's Day

Holiday time is calculated based on the employee's straight time pay rate times the number of hours the employee would have otherwise worked on that day.

For full-time employees, if the holiday falls on your day off, you can shift your responsibilities within that week and with supervisor approval, you may take a different day off within that week. You cannot carry over holiday time to the next week.

**Birthday holiday:** Employees may take an additional paid holiday on their birthday. The birthday holiday must be approved in advance by the employee's supervisor and must be taken in the month in which it occurs but need not be on the actual birth date. The eligibility and calculation for holidays will apply to birthdays. Birthday holidays may not be used on Sundays.

### 6.6 Pregnancy-Disability Leave and Paid Family and Medical Leave in Connecticut

Eligible employees who are disabled on account of pregnancy, childbirth, or a related medical condition may request Paid Family Medical Leave. Such leave will be granted for the period of disability, up to a maximum of 12 weeks.

Time off may be requested for prenatal care, severe morning sickness, doctor-ordered bed rest, childbirth, and recovery from childbirth or other covered conditions as per CT state law.

CT PFMLA may also be used for uncomplicated childbirth and bonding time for both parents.

The first 12 workweeks of any leave related to pregnancy disability or CT PFMLA leave will be treated concurrently as a leave pursuant to the federal Family and Medical Leave Act ("FMLA") for all eligible employees.

Employees who wish to take pregnancy disability leave or PFMLA must notify Human Resources of the date the leave is expected to commence and the estimated duration of the leave. A 30-day notice should be given when possible. The employee must also provide a medical certification of disability or need for PFMLA to the Company.

Failure to provide the required medical certification to Black Rock Church in a timely manner will result in delay or denial of leave. Before returning to work, the employee must provide a medical certification that she is able to resume her original job duties. Appropriate forms may be obtained from Human Resources.

Employees who return to work immediately following the expiration of an approved PD or PFMLA leave will generally be reemployed in their former position or a comparable job, as required by law.

Employees who are affected by pregnancy may also be eligible to transfer to a less strenuous or hazardous position or duties, provided certain pre-requisites are met. Reasonable accommodation may be requested with the advice of the employee's health care provider. In addition, lactation accommodation is also available, upon request. For more information on pregnancy disability leave or transfer and its effect on the terms, conditions or benefits of employment, please contact Human Resources.

## **6.7 Family and Medical Leave (FMLA).**

Eligible employees may request a family and medical leave of absence under the federal Family Medical Leave Act ("FMLA") in the circumstances described below. Eligible employees are those who have been employed by the Company for at least 12 months (not necessarily consecutive), have worked at least 1,250 hours during the 12 months immediately prior to the family and medical leave of absence and are employed at a worksite where there are 50 or more employees of the Company within 75 miles.

Employees must request a planned family and medical leave at least 30 days before the leave begins. If the need for the leave is not foreseeable, employees must request the leave as soon as they become aware of the need for leave. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in a delay of the start of the leave.

Family and medical leave may be taken for the following reasons:

- a. the birth of an employee's child or the placement of a child with the employee for foster care or adoption, so long as the leave is
- b. completed within 2 months of the birth or placement of the child;
- c. the care of the employee's spouse or registered domestic partner, child, or parent with a "serious health condition";
- d. the "serious health condition" of the employee;
- e. because of any qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that the employee's spouse, child, or parent is on active duty or has been notified of an impending call or order to active duty, in the Armed Forces in support of a contingency operation; or
- f. to care for a covered service member (who is the employee's spouse, child, parent or next of kin) with a serious illness or injury.

A "serious health condition" is one that requires inpatient care in a hospital or other medical care facility or continuing treatment or supervision by a health care provider. A "covered service member" is a member of the Armed Forces (including National Guard or Reserves) who is the employee's spouse, child, parent or next of kin, and is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation or therapy, is otherwise in outpatient status, or is otherwise on the temporary disability retired list, for a serious injury or illness incurred in the line of duty. A "serious illness or injury" is an injury or illness incurred in the line of duty while on active duty in the Armed Forces that may render the member medically unfit to perform the duties of the member's office, grade, rank or rating.

Medical Certification: When leave is requested for medical reasons, the employee must submit a medical certification from the health care provider that establishes the employee is eligible for family and medical leave. The certification must be provided as soon as is reasonably practical, and not later than the date leave begins or within 15 days of the Company's request, whichever is later. When the leave is requested because of the employee's own serious health condition, the certification must include: (1) the date the serious health condition commenced, (2) the probable duration of the serious health condition, and (3) a statement that, because of the serious health condition, the employee is unable to work or needs medical treatment.

When leave is requested to care for a family member who is ill or injured, the certification must contain: (1) verification the family member has a serious health condition or serious injury or illness, as defined above, and the date such condition began, (2) the probable duration of the condition, (3) an estimate of the amount of time the health care provider believes the employee will be needed to care for the family member or covered service member, and (4) a statement that the condition warrants the participation of the employee to provide care. The Company reserves the right to contact the health care provider to seek clarification of information in the certification, as needed, and may require recertification, as appropriate.

Before returning to work at the conclusion of a leave due to the employee's own serious health condition, the employee is required to provide a certification from their health care provider regarding the employee's fitness for duty. The employee must provide the required medical certification to the Company in a timely manner to avoid a delay or denial of leave.

Family and medical leave may be taken for up to 12 workweeks during the designated 12-month period for the purposes described in (a)-(d), above. The 12-month period will be calculated based on a calendar year. Leave for the purpose described in (e), above (to care for a covered service member), may be taken for up to twenty-six (26) workweeks in a single 12-month period. During the single 12-month period, an eligible employee shall be entitled to a combined total of 26 workweeks of leave for the reasons specified in paragraphs (a)-(d) and (e) above. In other words, any family and medical leave taken for reasons specified in paragraphs (a)-(d) above (up to 12 weeks), will be counted towards the total 26-week entitlement permitted for leave to care for a covered service member with a serious illness or injury during the single 12-month period. All time off that qualifies as family and medical leave will be counted against the employees federal and, if applicable, state family and medical leave entitlement to the fullest extent permitted by law.

During family and medical leave, group benefits will be maintained for up to 12 workweeks (or up to 26 weeks when leave is for the purpose of caring for a covered service member), as if the employee was continuously employed.

If the employee does not return to work on the first workday following the expiration of an approved family and medical leave, the employee will be deemed to have resigned from their employment. Upon returning from such a leave the employee will normally be reinstated to their original or equivalent position and will receive pay and benefits equivalent to those the employee received prior to the leave, as required by law. In certain circumstances, "key" employees may not be eligible for reinstatement following family and medical leave. The Company will provide written notice to any "key" employee who is not eligible for reinstatement.

If you and your spouse both work for our Company, the two of you will be entitled to a combined total of 12 weeks of leave to care weeks of leave for this purpose, as well as to care for a newborn, newly adopted child, or recently placed foster child, or to care for a parent with a serious health condition.

#### **CT Family Medical Leave (CTFMLA):**

The CTFMLA provides eligible employees, after 3 consecutive months of employment, up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave during a 12-month period for qualifying family or medical leave reasons. Employees are entitled to return to their same job at the end of the leave. The CT Paid Leave program provides income replacement benefits to eligible employees who are unable to work for the same leave reasons. These leave options may run at the same time.

Qualifying reasons for leave include:

- a. The birth of a child and care within the first year after birth;
- b. The placement of a child with an employee for adoption or foster care and care for a child within the first year after placement;
- c. To care for a family member with a serious health condition. Family includes spouse, sibling, child, grandparent, grandchild or parent, or an individual related to the employee by blood or affinity;
- d. Because of an employee's own serious health condition;
- e. To serve as an organ or bone marrow donor;
- f. To address qualifying exigencies arising from a spouse, child or parent's active-duty service in the Armed Forces; or
- g. To care for a spouse, child, parent or next of kin with a serious injury or illness incurred on active duty in the Armed Forces.

It also allows eligible employees to receive two extra weeks of leave (up to a total of 14 weeks) in connection with an incapacity that occurs during pregnancy. CTFMLA further allows eligible employees to take up to 26 weeks of leave in a single 12-month period to care for a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness.

More information on the FMLA and CT FMLA is available in the HR office.

## **CT Paid Family and Medical Leave:**

Eligible employees can take PFMLA leave under a broad range of circumstances, including:

- Experiencing a serious health condition
- Caring for a family member experiencing a serious health condition
- Caring for a new child (by birth or adoption)
- Experiencing an exigency arising out of a family member being on active duty
- Serving as an organ or bone marrow donor
- Being a victim of family violence

To be eligible to receive benefits, you must have \$2,325 in wages in the first 4 of the last 5 quarters and fit into one of the following categories:

- Currently employed in CT
- Currently unemployed but had been employed and working in CT in the past 12 weeks
- A sole proprietor or self-employed individual, and a resident of CT who chooses to participate and remains in the program for three years.

Contact Human Resources for more information regarding eligibility and benefits or to submit a request for Paid Family Medical Leave.

### **A Note About Leave**

There are three laws affecting leave: Federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), CT Family and Medical Leave Act (CT FMLA) and Paid Family and Medical Leave Act (PFMLA). The FMLA and CT FMLA are job protection leaves only and are unpaid. The PFMLA supports the CT Paid Leave (CTPL) program and is administered by the CT Paid Leave Authority. Application for paid leave is made directly through them using their online portal ([www.ctpaidleave.org](http://www.ctpaidleave.org)). These leaves run concurrently.

To request leave for a qualifying event:

- 1) Notify your supervisor and HR of your intent to request leave at least 30 days prior to the start of your leave for foreseen circumstances, and as soon as practicable for unforeseen circumstances.
- 2) Apply for CTPL, if qualified, through the web portal listed above, by phone (877-499-8606) or email (CTPFL@Aflac.com)

### **6.8 Workers' Compensation Leave.**

Any employee who is unable to work due to a work-related injury or illness and who is eligible for Workers' Compensation benefits will be provided an unpaid leave for the period required. The first 12 weeks will be treated concurrently as a family and medical leave under the federal Family Medical Leave Act ("FMLA") if employees are eligible for FMLA leave.

### **6.9 Bereavement Leave.**

In the event of a death in the immediate family, employees may have up to 5 days for full time, prorated for part-time working days, with pay, at their regular straight time rate or base salary, to handle family affairs and attend the funeral. "Immediate family" is defined as: parents, siblings, children and grandparents.

### **6.10 Jury Duty.**



U.S. citizens have a civic obligation to provide jury duty service when called. Employees are entitled up to 5 days working days, with pay, at their regular straight time or base salary for jury duty.

By state law, full-time employees will receive their regular wages for the first five days of jury duty. After five days, the state will pay up to \$50 per day. The employee must bring in the jury duty notice as soon as it is received so that appropriate arrangements can be made to cover their duties. Employees are required to call in or report for work on those days or parts of days when their presence in court is not required.

#### **6.11 Voting Time.**

Employees who are registered voters and who lack two nonwork hours when polls are open to vote in any local, state, and national election may take up to two hours off work without pay at the beginning or end of their shift if the employee requests, or at a time decided by the employer, for this purpose. Employees must request leave prior to election day.

#### **6.12. Military Leave.**

Military leaves are available to eligible employees who enter the Uniformed Services of the United States, including the National Guard and the Commissioned Corps of the Public Health Service, or the state military forces, or the reserve components of the same, to participate in active or inactive duty or training. Time off is also permitted for an examination to determine one's fitness for duty in any of the federal military forces. Such leave will be granted in accordance with the Connecticut state and federal laws, provided all legal requirements are satisfied and the employee returns to work or applies for reemployment within the time prescribed by law. The employee must provide advance notice of the need for leave whenever possible. The employee should give the employee's supervisor as much advance notice as possible to allow Black Rock Church time to make arrangements to cover their position. Employees on federal military leave may be entitled to continue health insurance benefits, at the employee's expense, for up to twenty-four months from the date of military departure.

#### **6.13. Military Family Leave.**

Employees with a spouse serving in the United States Armed Forces, National Guard or Reserves, may take up to ten (10) days of unpaid leave when their spouse is on a leave from deployment during a military conflict. In order to be eligible for this leave, the employee must work an average of at least 20 hours per week and have a spouse who is either (1) a member of the United States Armed Forces deployed during a military conflict to a designated combat theatre or combat zone; or (2) a member of the National Guard who has been deployed during a period of military conflict; or (3) a member of the Military Reserves who has been deployed during a period of military conflict.

Eligible employees are required to notify Black Rock Church of their intention to take such leave within 2 days of receiving official notice that the spouse will be on qualified leave and provide documentation certifying that the spouse will be on leave from deployment during the time the leave is requested.

#### **6.14 Domestic Violence Leave.**

Employers with **three or more** employees must permit an employee who is a victim of family violence to take paid or unpaid leave to:

- seek medical or psychological or other counseling for physical or psychological injury or disability for the victim;
- obtain services from a victim services organization;
- relocate due to such family violence; or
- participate in any civil or criminal proceeding related to or resulting from such family violence.

Employers may limit unpaid leave to 12 days during any calendar year. Employees may be required to provide seven days' advance notice for foreseeable absences. Upon an employer's request, an employee shall provide the employer with a signed written statement certifying that the leave is for a purpose listed above. The employer may also, but need not, request that the employee provide a police or court record related to the family violence or a signed written statement that the employee is a victim of family violence, provided such statement is from an employee or agent of a victim services organization, an attorney, an employee of the Judicial Branch's Office of Victim Services or the Office of the Victim advocate, or a licensed medical professional or other licensed professional from whom the employee has sought assistance with respect to the

family violence. In addition, employers are prohibited from depriving an employee of employment, or penalizing, threatening, or otherwise coercing an employee with respect to employment, because the employee is a victim of family violence.

All employers must report assaults and related offenses to the police within 24 hours. Assaults committed by individuals with disabilities need not be reported. Employers must maintain records of workplace violence. Records must include the specific area or department where the incident occurred. Upon request, records must be available to the Department of Public Health.

### **6.15 Ministry Time**

Pastoral Staff, Directors, Associate Directors and Managers can apply for up to 1 week per year for ministry time. Ministry time includes speaking engagements and mission trips. Requests for ministry time must be made in writing and submitted to the Executive Director at least three months in advance.

Black Rock places a high value on the opportunities to support local and global missions. While we encourage participation in short term mission trips, the trips are not considered work time unless leading a trip is part of your job description. If you are interested in participating in a trip, you should plan on using vacation time or taking the time as unpaid time off. Talk to your supervisor and the Missions Pastor for more details or to get approval for paid time off.

### **6.16 Pastoral Sabbatical**

Full-time ordained pastors are eligible for paid sabbatical leave with supplemental study assistance every seven years of complete full-time pastoral staff employment. Sabbatical leave is for spiritual refreshment and to further ministry expertise.

Sabbatical leave will accrue at the rate of one week for each complete year of full-time ministry employment at Black Rock Church. After 7 years of accrued leave, an extra week is given (7 years = 8 weeks, 8 years = 9 weeks). The maximum that can be accrued is 12 weeks. Generally, unless otherwise approved by the Board of Elders, sabbatical leave must be taken all at once and not split into separate leaves. If a full-time pastoral staff member leaves Black Rock Church before taking all accrued sabbatical leave, there will be no compensation for unused sabbatical leave.

Sabbatical leave proposals should be submitted to the Board of Elders at least 120 days in advance. Keeping in mind the production and service needs of Black Rock Church, the Board of Elders will approve proposed sabbatical leave according to the following guidelines:

- 1) Only one full-time pastoral staff person may be on sabbatical leave at a time; and
- 2) Those with the greatest tenure have first priority.

### **6.17 Director & Manager Refreshment Leave**

Full-time Directors and Managers are eligible for paid refreshment leave every 10 years of complete full-time staff employment. Refreshment leave is for spiritual refreshment and rest.

Refreshment leave will be for four weeks in a row following 10 years of full-time employment and can be requested every 10 years. Vacation time can be added to refreshment leave. If a full-time director or manager leaves Black Rock Church before taking the refreshment leave, there will be no compensation for unused refreshment leave.

Refreshment leave proposals should be submitted to the Board of Elders at least 120 days in advance. Keeping in mind the production and service needs of Black Rock Church, the Board of Elders will approve proposed refreshment leave according to the following guidelines:

- 1) Only one full-time director or manager per department may be on refreshment leave at a time; and
- 2) Those with the greatest tenure have first priority.

## **At-Will Employment Agreement and Acknowledgement of Receipt of Employee Handbook**

**Employee:** \_\_\_\_\_

I acknowledge that I have been provided with a copy of the Black Rock Congregational Church (the "Company") Employee Handbook, which contains important information on the Company's policies, procedures and benefits, including but not limited to, the policies on Anti-Harassment/Discrimination, Substance Use and Abuse and Confidentiality. I understand that I am responsible for familiarizing myself with the policies in this handbook and agree to comply with all rules applicable to me.

I understand and agree that the policies described in the handbook are intended as a guide only and do not constitute a contract of employment. I specifically understand and agree that the employment relationship between the Company and me is at-will and can be terminated by the Company or me at any time, with or without cause or notice. Furthermore, the Company has the right to modify or alter my position or impose any form of discipline it deems appropriate at any time. Nothing in this handbook is intended to modify the Company's policy of at-will employment. The at-will employment relationship may not be modified except by a specific written agreement signed by me and an authorized representative of the Company. This is the entire agreement between the Company and me regarding this subject. All prior or contemporaneous inconsistent agreements are superseded.

I understand that the Company reserves the right to make changes to its policies, procedures or benefits at any time at its discretion. However, the at-will employment agreement can be modified only in the manner specified above. I further understand that the Company reserves the right to interpret its policies or to vary its procedures as it deems necessary or appropriate.

I have received the Company Employee Handbook. I have read and agree to abide by the policies and procedures contained in the Handbook.

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

PRINTED NAME \_\_\_\_\_