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says she, "Got carried away" and spent \$315,000 in tuition money and cash over six years on her bills, clothing and jewelry, state police said.

Mar. 28, 2013

A former secretary and bookkeeper at a Holy Sepulcher Catholic School in Middlesex, Pennsylvania says she, "Got carried away" and spent \$315,000 in tuition money and cash over six years on her bills, clothing and jewelry, state police said.

Lynn Tomlinson, 43, of Penn admitted the thefts last year when school officials confronted her, police said. She did not return phone messages.

"I'm shocked. I can't just look at her as a person who did something so extreme, because she's a person I've known for years," said Anne Revitsky, 54, of Jefferson, a parent at the school. "We built a good friendship."

Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh officials said auditors and investigators spent months combing financial records when Tomlinson confessed and they told state police.

"The figures kept increasing, up to what she's been charged with now," said the Rev. Ron Lengwin, diocesan spokesman. "We're waiting to see what the final number is."

Lengwin said parishes should have policies to prevent embezzlement.

"It's just an unfortunate situation," said the Rev. John Gizler, pastor of Holy Sepulcher. "We're just praying for her and her family. That's all we can do."

In a letter to parishioners, Gizler said officials believe Tomlinson, who had two children at the school, acted alone. The diocese is awaiting word whether insurance will cover the losses.

“It’s sad when these kinds of things happen,” said Bishop David Zubik. “I hope it

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the school in exchange for gift cards at businesses.

The program administrator, Great Lakes Scrip Center, gives the school money to participate. Tomlinson was the only person handling the checks and money, Black said.

She told police she deposited tuition checks into the scrip account and took gift cards – sometimes for the full amount of the checks. If someone paid in cash, Black said, Tomlinson pocketed the money.

She mostly used the money to pay credit-card bills and utilities, Black said, but Tomlinson told him she “got carried away with the spending and would purchase items such as clothes and jewelry.”

Gizler said when he came to Holy Sepulcher in early 2011, he “knew right away there was an issue. I sensed something wasn’t right” with school finances. The school hired a business manager that year and spent more than six months reviewing finances with a district auditor. Tomlinson quit that year.

In May, school officials confronted Tomlinson, who confessed to the thefts, Black said. The school no longer runs a scrip program and changed other financial procedures and policies, Gizler said.

The school has about 160 students in preschool through eighth grade. Pupils live in Mars Area, South Butler, Butler, Seneca Valley, Pine-Richland and Deer Lakes school districts. Annual tuition is just over \$3,000, Gizler said.

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