

Department of Purchasing Services – Spring Branch ISD
Purchasing Department Code of Ethics

The mission of the Department of Purchasing Services is to provide direct support to the educational mission of Spring Branch ISD by collaborating and assisting the Faculty, Staff, and Business Community with all of their procurement needs in a manner that is ethical, impartial, open, fair and honest and supports a continuous and measurable improvement in student performance.

Our office directly contributes to the delivery of a cost efficient education by endeavoring to ensure that Spring Branch ISD and the taxpayers receive full value through our procurement expertise to assure the timely acquisition, and distribution of goods and services at the best possible price on the basis of a competitive solicitation process from the most responsive and responsible bidders considering cost, quality, suitability, service and delivery.

We are responsible for the coordinating and issuing of all solicitations for commodities, construction and renovations, equipment, furnishings, instructional materials, and services in compliance with all applicable federal and state statutory regulations, Board of Education policies, procedures and rules. We ensure that all bid specifications and contract documents are designed to optimize the quality of goods and services while at the same time minimizing the financial risk to the school system and increasing public trust in the procurement process.

The Department of Purchasing Services acts in accordance with the highest standards of ethics, and is accountable for the quality of their technical assistance, exceptional service, and continuous improvement in their process.

Purchasing will operate every day with the highest level of ethical standards as defined in National Institute of Governmental Purchasing and The Texas Association of School Business Officials (TASBO) Code of Ethics Statements. Purchasing will stay focused on SBISD's most precious customer – the Student – by lowering costs to make education affordable and contributing to growth and success by gaining increased value for dollars spent and returning as many resources to the classroom as possible.

PROCEDURE:

1. Credibility and public confidence are vital throughout the purchasing and contracting process. If any involved party displays a lack of honesty, integrity or openness, the entire program is injured. Even the shadow of doubt can be as harmful as the conduct itself.
2. For the purpose of protecting both the integrity and objectivity of its employees in the performance of their obligations to SBISD it is the policy of the Department of Purchasing Services that conflicts of interest should be avoided where possible or otherwise disclosed and managed.
3. Public service is a public trust. For the individual public servant, at all levels of government from the senior executive leadership to the most junior staff person, that means placing professional and job-related responsibilities before personal gain and individual interest. SBISD employees may neither engage in, nor give the appearance of engaging in, dishonest or unethical actions. Both are injurious to the public's perception of honest government. Our suppliers should expect from our employees in the context of county contracting, that they will not:

3.1 Show favoritism, and instead must take actions and make decisions based upon merit in accordance with requirements of established laws, rules, policies, and procedures;

3.2 Accept a gift worth \$25 or more from any person or firm doing or intending to do business with SBISD (a gift includes cash, goods, meals, travel, sporting event tickets,

3.3 entertainment, loans, services, or anything else of value; separate gifts within a 12-month period from the same person or firm or from related persons or firms (for example, from two employees of a single supplier are grouped together);

3.4 Work for any supplier that has a contract or other business dealings with SBISD or have an ownership interest in any supplier that has a contract or other business dealing with SBISD;

3.5 Accept a gift of any kind, regardless of the value thereof, under circumstances in which it could be reasonably inferred that the gift was intended (or could be reasonably expected) to influence the performance of official duties or serve as a reward for any official action;

3.6 Disclose for private use, including personal or family gain, any confidential information learned as a result of employment with SBISD, nor;

3.7 Discuss prospects of employment with any supplier seeking or doing business with SBISD as long as the employee remains involved in business dealings with that supplier.

4. SBISD personnel have an affirmative obligation to report known or suspected wrongdoing, including supplier offers to engage in the above-described conduct, to the Director of Purchasing Services. On the other hand, if a supplier knows or suspects that another supplier or a SBISD employee is involved in questionable activity, the supplier should inform Director of Purchasing Services. SBISD senior executive leadership strictly enforces these obligations against both SBISD employees and those who would induce them to violate their public trust.

5. SBISD employees responsible for procurement actions are obligated, under requirements of law and policy, to obtain the best price or value for the expenditure of public funds. Generally, this is accomplished through full and open competition, which requires that:

6. District contracts are made accessible to a wide number of prospective suppliers through the Internet by visiting the Department of Purchasing Services web site at <https://www.springbranchisd.com/about/departments/finance/purchasing/vendor-registration>;

6.1 Requirements, designs, work plans, and specifications are not tailored to favor a particular supplier; and

6.2 No competitor is permitted an advantage by the premature disclosure of contract details or the disclosure of competitors' confidential information.

7. Therefore, any SBISD employee involved in any form of procurement or the procurement process may not:

7.1 participate or work on a contract by taking action as an employee through decision, approval, disapproval, recommendation, giving advice, investigation or similar action knowing that the employee, or any person or entity with whom the employee has a Family Relationship, Financial Relationship or Personal Relation, has an actual or potential financial interest in the contract, including prospective employment;

7.2 solicit or accept gifts or gratuities which might tend to influence purchasing decisions;

7.3 be employed by, or agree to work for, a vendor or potential vendor;

7.4 knowingly disclose confidential information for actual or anticipated personal gain, or for the actual or anticipated gain of another person.

8. The Director of Purchasing Services and Purchasing Agents will be required to annually file a Disclosure Statement identifying any possible conflict of interest situations that may arise in regard to any type of procurement process, including but not limited to p-card, purchase requisition, purchase order or purchase solicitation. The Disclosure Statement must be completed no later January 31 of each year for the calendar year and shall be completed during the year as needed to identify applicable changes. The information provided in the annual disclosure will be retained in Purchasing Services, will be considered confidential information and will be released only to those individuals involved in purchasing decisions and only as needed.

9. Specific rules apply to purchases from a SBISD employee or any person or entity with which the employee has a Family, Financial or Personal Relationship.

10. If not related to a particular transaction, SBISD employees may accept from vendors and others: (1) unsolicited advertising or promotional material such as pens, pencils, scratch pads, and calendars; (2) occasional business lunches or food and refreshments of insignificant value; and (3) other items of nominal or minor value (i.e., a box of candy or fruitcake, etc.) that are merely tokens of appreciation.

11. A wide range of criminal, civil, administrative, and contractual sanctions are available to address procurement fraud or misconduct. These include, but are not limited to, filing of State and Federal criminal charges; civil contract remedies, including treble damages; assessment of liquidated damages; voiding or rescinding a contract; finding a contractor non-responsible; and debarment.

12. When an actual violation of any of these standards is discovered, the person involved shall promptly file a written statement concerning the matter with the Director of Purchasing Services. If an actual violation occurs or is not disclosed and remedied, the employee involved may be reprimanded, suspended, or dismissed. The vendor or potential vendor may be barred from receiving future contracts and/or have an existing contract canceled.