

Vendor Relationship Guidelines for Doing Business with Sharyland Independent School Districts

Purpose

These guidelines are designed to help vendors understand the standards, laws, and expectations when conducting business with Sharyland Independent school districts. Vendors are expected to engage in ethical, transparent, and compliant business practices that uphold public trust and support fair competition.

1. Compliance with Laws and Policies

Vendors must comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, including but not limited to:

- Texas Education Code §44.031 – Governing school district purchasing and contracting.
 - Texas Government Code Chapters 2251–2254 – Covering payment, professional services, and competitive procurement.
 - Texas Local Government Code Chapter 176 – Disclosure of conflicts of interest.
 - Texas Penal Code Chapter 36 – Bribery and gifts to public servants.
 - All district-specific purchasing policies (e.g., CH Local, CAA Local).
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2. Ethical Conduct

Vendors must conduct all business with integrity and fairness.

Prohibited actions include:

- Offering, giving, or promising anything of value to district officials or employees in exchange for favorable treatment.
- Attempting to influence the outcome of a solicitation or contract award.
- Misrepresenting facts, products, services, or pricing during the procurement process.

District staff are prohibited from accepting personal gifts, favors, or gratuities from vendors. Vendors should avoid any activity that could create the appearance of impropriety or conflict of interest.

3. Conflict of Interest Disclosure

Vendors must:

- File a Conflict-of-Interest Questionnaire (Form CIQ) with the district if the vendor has a business relationship with the district and a family, employment, or financial relationship exists with a board member or certain administrators, as required by Texas Local Government Code Chapter 176.
- Update disclosure forms promptly if circumstances change.

Failure to file required disclosures may result in disqualification from current or future business opportunities.

4. Procurement Integrity

- Vendors must respond only to solicitations issued by the district's authorized procurement office.
 - Communication with district personnel other than designated contacts during a competitive procurement process is prohibited ("no contact rule").
 - All proposals, quotes, and pricing must be complete, accurate, and submitted within stated deadlines.
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5. Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination

Vendors must not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or any other protected characteristic. Compliance with Title VI, Title VII, ADA, and other civil rights laws is required.

6. Performance and Responsibility

Vendors are expected to:

- Deliver goods and services as specified in purchase orders or contracts.
- Maintain proper licenses, insurance, and certifications as required.
- Resolve disputes professionally and promptly.
- Provide warranties and after-sale support where applicable.

Failure to perform satisfactorily may result in removal from the district's approved vendor list.

7. Confidentiality and Data Security

If vendors have access to student, employee, or financial information, they must comply with:

- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
- Texas Education Code §26.0132 (student data privacy)
- District data protection and confidentiality requirements.

Vendors must protect all confidential information and use it solely for the purpose of fulfilling contractual obligations.

8. Gifts and Hospitality

District employees are public servants. Vendors shall not provide:

- Gifts, meals, entertainment, or travel valued at \$50 or more in a calendar year, in compliance with Texas Penal Code §36.10.
- Any benefit that could reasonably be perceived as intended to influence official action.

Violations may result in termination of business relationships and potential legal penalties.

9. Debarment and Vendor Suspension

Vendors may be disqualified or suspended for reasons including:

- Fraud or misrepresentation.
- Violation of contract terms.
- Failure to comply with laws or district policies.
- Ethical misconduct or poor performance.

10. Vendor Grievance Procedure

The district strives to ensure that all vendors are treated fairly and that procurement decisions are made transparently and in accordance with policy and law. Vendors who believe they have been treated unfairly or that a procurement process was conducted improperly may file a formal grievance.

Step 1 – Informal Resolution

Vendors are encouraged to first contact the Director of Purchasing to discuss and attempt to resolve the issue informally.

Step 2 – Formal Written Grievance

If the matter cannot be resolved informally, the vendor may submit a written grievance addressed to the Chief Financial Officer. The grievance must include:

- Vendor name and contact information
- Description of the issue or concern
- Identification of any solicitation, purchase order, or contract involved
- Documentation or evidence supporting the grievance
- Desired outcome or resolution

The grievance must be submitted within 10 business days of the event or notice giving rise to the concern.

Step 3 – Administrative Review

The Business Office will review the grievance, gather relevant information, and issue a written response within 15 business days. If further review is warranted, the matter may be referred to the Superintendent or designee.

Step 4 – Board Review (if applicable)

If the vendor remains dissatisfied after administrative review, the vendor may appeal the decision to the Board of Trustees in accordance with District Policy GF (Local) or the applicable local grievance policy. The Board's decision is final.

Note: Filing a grievance does not suspend ongoing procurement activities or contract performance unless specifically directed by the district.

11. Partnership and Communication

The district encourages open, professional communication with vendors.

Questions about procurement opportunities or vendor status should be directed only to the Purchasing Department. Vendors are encouraged to:

- Attend district vendor orientations or informational sessions.
 - Register as a vendor through the district's approved procurement platform.
 - Keep contact and business information current.
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