

Certificated, Classified, and Management Personnel

AR 4119.21(a)

4219.21(a)

4319.21(a)

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

This Code of Ethics presents expectations and guidance to Santee School District employees for maintaining the highest ethical standards in their official activities and relationships. This Code supports the mission of the District by promoting trust, commitment, and teamwork within the organization and between the Santee School District and its clients, partners, and the greater community.

All official conduct should be well above the minimum standards required by law. Accordingly, employees must ensure that their actions can withstand the closest possible public scrutiny and can, in no way, be interpreted as being in contravention of the laws and regulations governing the Santee School District Board of Education, the Santee Superintendent of Schools, and the schools, programs, and operations of the Santee School District.

The Santee School District is committed to ensuring that the conduct of its business and activities is free from misconduct or illegality. Employees are expected to disclose any improper governmental activity on the part of the Santee School District or its employees. Employees should immediately report any evidence of such activity to their immediate supervisor or the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources. Employees may use the WeTip toll-free hotline to submit an anonymous report of criminal activity.

General Employee Conduct

It is expected that employees will be proactive in creating a positive work environment in which the inherent worth of each person is recognized and colleagues, students, clients, business associates, and members of the public are treated with fairness, dignity, and respect. Employee conduct is expected to be professional, businesslike, and in accordance with high standards of decorum.

The Santee School District is dedicated to maintaining a culture in which employees adhere to the highest ethical standards. It is expected that employees will demonstrate ethical conduct in the performance of their duties by acting, at all times, responsibly and conscientiously, with honesty and integrity. All official actions must reflect employees' use of good judgment, due care, competence, and diligence.

Conflicts of Interest

State law requires that Santee School District employees refrain from engaging in any employment, activity, or enterprise for compensation that is inconsistent, incompatible, or in conflict with their duties, functions, or responsibilities as employees of a local agency. The Conflict of Interest Code adopted by the Santee Board of Education specifies positions and disclosure categories for individual employees who are required, by law, to disclose their personal financial interests by filing annual statements of economic interest (SEIs).

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Employees must avoid actual or apparent conflicts of interest in their personal and professional relationships. It is expected that employees will perform their duties in an impartial manner, using independent judgment that is free from the influence of personal considerations and in accordance with the best interests of the Santee School District. Employees must not make, participate in making, or use their official position to influence any decision that has a reasonably foreseeable material financial effect on their personal financial interests.

I. Relationships with Clients and Suppliers

Employees may not enter into any contract on behalf of the Santee School District in which they have a financial interest. Employees should avoid investing in or acquiring a financial interest in any business that has a contractual relationship with, or provides goods or services to, the District, if such investment or interest could influence or create the impression of influencing their decisions in the performance of their duties.

2. Gifts, Entertainment, and Favors

Employees must refrain from accepting gifts, entertainment, or personal favors that could in any way influence, or appear to influence, official decisions in favor of any person or organization with whom or with which the Santee School District has, or is likely to have, dealings.

In connection with Santee School District business activities, employees may not receive payment or compensation of any kind, except as authorized under Santee School District remuneration policies. In particular, the acceptance of kickbacks and secret commissions from suppliers or others is strictly prohibited.

All employees share a responsibility for the Santee School District's good public relations, especially at the community level. Their willingness to support religious, charitable, educational, and civic activities brings credit to the Santee School District and is encouraged. Employees must, however, avoid acquiring any business interest or participating in any other activity, enterprise, or employment outside the Santee School District that would, or might appear to:

1. Create an excessive demand upon their time and attention and thus cause the performance of their duties to be less efficient.
2. Involve the performance of an act that may later come under the review or enforcement of the Santee School District.
3. Involve the use of the assets, influence, or prestige of the Santee School District for private gain or advantage.

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Regardless of the circumstances, if employees sense that a course of action they have pursued, are presently pursuing, or are contemplating pursuing may involve them in a conflict of interest with their employer, they should immediately communicate all the facts to their immediate supervisor.

Santee School District Funds and Other Assets

As an organization that serves the public and uses public funds to do so, the Santee School District takes very seriously its responsibility for safeguarding and ensuring responsible use of its assets and the funds under its control.

The Santee School District imposes strict standards to prevent fraud and dishonesty. Employees who have access to school or district funds, charter school funds, or other assets in cash or non-cash form must follow prescribed procedures for recording, handling, and protecting public funds, as detailed in applicable accounting manuals or other regulatory materials.

It is expected that funds and all other assets of the Santee School District will be used only for official business and not for personal benefit. Employees must refrain from the improper use of Santee School District resources, such as fleet vehicles, supplies, and equipment.

When an employee's position requires spending Santee School District funds or incurring reimbursable personal expenses, that individual is expected to use good judgment on behalf of the Santee School District to ensure that good value is received for the funds expended.

Ownership of intellectual property created by employees under specified circumstances is held by the Santee School District. Employees must maintain the highest ethical standards in the use and protection of materials copyrighted, trademarked, or otherwise owned by the Santee School District.

Records and Communications

Comprehensive, reliable records are necessary to meet the District's legal and financial obligations and to manage the business of the Santee School District. The Santee School District's financial records must reflect all business transactions in an accurate and timely manner. Employees responsible for accounting and record keeping must fully disclose and record all assets, liabilities, or both, and must exercise diligence in enforcing these requirements.

Employees must not make or be a party to any false record or communication of any kind, whether internal or external, including but not limited to: false expense, attendance, financial, or similar reports and statements; and false advertising, deceptive marketing practices, or other misleading representations.

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When communicating publicly on official business, employees must take care to protect the integrity and reputation of the Santee School District, the Superintendent, and the Santee Board of Education. Employees must not presume to speak for the Santee School District on any topic, unless they are certain that the views they express are those of the Santee School District and that it is the Superintendent's desire that such views be publicly disseminated. Under all circumstances, employees must clearly distinguish official statements from the expressions of their private views.

Employees must ensure that the Santee School District letterhead, logo, and any other representations identified with the Santee School District are used only for official business and not for personal, political, or other inappropriate purposes.

In all matters related to clients, students, suppliers, government authorities, the public, and others within the Santee School District, employees must make every effort to ensure that communications are complete, accurate, objective, relevant and timely. All proper requests for information are expected to be handled with courtesy and professionalism.

Privacy and Confidentiality

The Santee School District is committed to abiding by all state and federal laws and Santee School District policies and administrative regulations concerning confidential information, including student records, personnel files, and records of the District and the Board of Education that are exempt from disclosure.

It is expected that employees who have access to confidential information in the course of their work assignments will use that information only for legitimate business purposes of the Santee School District and will be diligent in protecting privacy rights. Employees must ensure that confidential records are managed, retained, and stored in a safe and secure manner and are reviewed by, or released to, only those individuals with proper authority.

Making Ethical Decisions

While this Code of Ethics describes general guidelines, it is not intended to be a complete listing or to provide a definitive answer to every ethical dilemma that could arise in the workplace. When making decisions, employees must use good judgment to adhere to both the letter and the spirit of this Code of Ethics.

Employees who are uncertain about the application or interpretation of this Code of Ethics or any related legal requirements should refer the matter to their supervisor, who, if necessary, should follow established procedures for seeking the advice of legal counsel.

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Application and Enforceability

This Code of Ethics applies to all Santee School District employees. Its provisions are supported by State and Federal law and regulations and the policies and administrative regulations that govern this agency. Violations may result in administrative or disciplinary action under applicable laws, policies, and regulations.

Board Bylaw: 9270-Conflict of Interest Code

Board Policy; 2122, 2301, 3310, 4004

Administrative Regulations: 2300, 3310, 3460, 3512, 3513.2, 3542, 3643, 3660, 3600,
4008, 4020, 4021, 4024

Legal references: Education Code

1054, 44110-441 14, 44932, 44933, 49073-49079

Government Code

1090, 1098, 1125-1126, 8547, 63296-53299, 61100, 67103, 87302, 89500 et
seq.

Labor Code

1102.5, 1106

Management Resources:

California Fair Political Practices Commission: www.fppc.ca.gov

WeTip crime hotline: 1-800-78-CRIME; WeTip Website: www.wetip.com