

SAN MATEO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
CODE OF CONDUCT

In adopting and adhering to this Code of Conduct (“Code”), the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors (“Board”) seeks to enhance public confidence in the integrity, effectiveness, respectfulness, and fairness of the Board and of San Mateo County government.

This Code provides a framework for Board members’ performance of their official duties and sets forth standards and practices that build trust and establish and sustain collegiality and positive relations among Board members and between Board members and staff.

This Code supplements, and does not supplant, other existing laws, policies, and procedures that apply to members of the Board of Supervisors.

The Code shall consist of the following components and principles and all Board members shall comply with them:

1. Board members are committed to the highest ideals of integrity and they recognize that advancing the public interest and betterment of the community are their primary concern. Board members use their public position to advance the interests of the County and its residents, and not for private or personal interest. Board members will not use public resources for private gain or personal purposes.
2. Board members will focus on what is best for San Mateo County as a whole and strive to represent the entire County, as well as their individual districts.
3. Board members will comply with all local, State and Federal laws and will support and model County policies. Likewise, Board member will strive to avoid even the appearance of impropriety. Board members will comply with the State-mandated gift reporting policies.
4. The Board is committed to maintaining a workplace and organization that is free from unlawful harassment, discrimination, and retaliation.
5. Board members’ conduct will further the ability of the Board and County to carry out business in an orderly and undisrupted manner. Board members will refrain from behavior that brings the County government or the Board into disrepute, including, but not limited to engaging in abusive conduct toward staff, the community or other Board members; leveling unsubstantiated personal charges or allegations; using inappropriate or abusive language during Board meetings; or engaging in unsubstantiated or intemperate verbal or written attacks on the character or motives of other Board members, staff, and members of the public.
6. Board members will respect the collective authority of the Board and will accurately represent the official policies and positions of San Mateo County and make clear the distinctions between such policies and positions and their individual positions and opinions. When stating their individual opinions and positions, Board members will explicitly state that they are not sharing the position of the entire Board.

7. Board members recognize their obligation to protect the confidential nature of information received in the course of their work, including confidential information provided in the closed session portions of Board meetings. Board members are also committed to compliance with the Brown Act, the Public Records Act and other applicable laws.
8. When working with the County Executive to set the agenda for Board meetings, the Board member serving as Board President will work collaboratively with other Board members to ensure that items within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Board that Board members seek to have included on the meeting agenda are agendaized at the earliest feasible time. Board members recognize their obligation to comply with standards and procedures set by the County Executive for Board meeting agenda items, including with respect to timeliness and formatting.
9. When bringing items for consideration at Board meetings, Board members will be prepared and will strive to be as concise as possible.
10. When communicating with staff, Board members recognize that the primary contacts for initial and significant interactions should be the County Executive, the County Executive's deputies, and department heads. Board members also recognize that conversations should focus on policy and refrain from direction regarding operations.

The Board may censure a Board member, or take any other actions within the Board's legal authority, in responding to a violation of this Code.