San Mateo
Public Library

Policy for Community Bulletin Boards & Distribution of Free Materials/Community Information at the San Mateo Public Library

[Adopted by the Library Board of Trustees 6-25-07, renewed 9-23-19]

The San Mateo Public Library is a civic resource that provides informational materials about community-based events and services. The Library displays such materials on the community bulletin boards and organizes free materials for public distribution in the literature racks.

Statement of Purpose

1. To provide a limited forum for displaying community-based information
2. To provide a location where library users have access to these materials
3. To provide guidelines for posting and distribution of these materials

Library Will Display and Distribute the Following Materials:

Priority is given to information pertaining to services provided by the Library, City of San Mateo, other government agencies, schools and nonprofit organizations. Additional handouts, flyers, notices and posters about events and activities that benefit the neighborhood and materials of civic, cultural, recreational and educational nature will be displayed if space is available. Some space is designated for official government notices, such as public meetings, job postings or other legal notices. Due to limited space, preference is given to local San Mateo area information. To enhance access to as much community information as possible, material is displayed for a limited time not to exceed one month in advance of the event (provided space is available). The Library's bulletin boards and literature racks will be maintained regularly to conserve space. Library staff shall determine a schedule for removing materials and post the time period limit.

Library Approval is Required:

All items for posting or distribution must be approved and displayed by Library staff. The posting must be of a size which fits on the bulletin board and allows space for other postings. At the Main Library, items may be brought to the Business Office located on the 3rd floor. During evenings and weekends, items may be submitted at the 2nd floor Information Desk. At the Branches, items may be submitted at the Accounts Desk. All approved items will be dated. Items posted or displayed without Library staff approval will be removed. This policy will be posted.

Library Cannot Display nor Distribute the Following Materials:

a. Literature related to political campaigns for public office. The Main Library is an official polling place and cannot post any campaign materials anywhere on Library property.
b. Notices reflecting personal opinion; political debate; philosophies; and religious doctrine.
c. Services or products for sale or rent
d. Solicitations for memberships
e. Solicitations for fundraising
f. Notices exceeding 11"x14"; and posters exceeding 11"x17"

Distribution of Literature in Libraries

Distribution of items by members of the public is not allowed inside library buildings. Such activity outside of the Library cannot block public access to the building nor interfere with normal library use.

Multiple Copies

The Library reserves the right to limit multiple copies of publications intended for free public distribution.

Branch Libraries

The same policy and guidelines apply at the Hillsdale and Marina branch libraries.