

Protecting Confidential Information

Many NC Department of Public Instruction employees, as part of their job responsibilities, have access to and knowledge of information that is deemed confidential. Protecting this data/information as confidential is critical to the Department's mission and for compliance with federal and state laws. Information deemed confidential includes, but is not limited to, any information that personally identifies a particular employee or individual, particular student, or professional educator, or individual account information with a financial institution with whom a professional educator, employee, or other individual may transact business.

Each Department employee, who has access to or knowledge of information that is confidential, must read and sign a confidentiality agreement. A Division Director or Area Superintendent determines when an employee is subject to the confidentiality agreement. It has been developed for each employee whose assigned duties and responsibilities provides access to and use of department data, local school district data, and/or other information deemed confidential. Each supervisor must review this with each designated employee. (1) The agreement is to be signed, (2) a signed copy is to be kept by the employee and (3) the original is to be attached to the employee's Performance Evaluation when submitted to Human Resources on an annual basis. Each new employee, whether Probationary, Permanent, Temporary or Contractual, is subject to this policy and the new employee's supervisor is responsible for covering this as part of new employee's orientation. In other words, each supervisor is to review at least annually the department's policy on protecting confidential information and each employee subject to this policy is to sign annually the confidentiality agreement.

The signed confidentiality agreement becomes a part of the employee's Personnel file. For any temporary or contract employee subject to this Confidentiality agreement, the signed original should be submitted to Human Resources when submitting a Form 210 for hiring such employee. This will become part of the temporary or contract employee's Personnel file.

Any employee who violates the Department's policy on protecting confidential data/information will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, without prior warning. Further, each employee must understand that a violation of this policy and the confidentiality agreement could lead to additional legal liability.