



The EFCL Query ... Providing Accountability and Transparency

The Education Facilities Company Ltd (EFCL) viewed with some alarm the Afra Raymond article published on page A25 of the Sunday Guardian of July 10th 2011.

In that article, the writer, Mr. Raymond, expressed concern about a new confidentiality agreement between EFCL and its employees which seeks to regulate the dissemination of information to external parties.

The writer clearly appeared to have misunderstood the company's intent to protect not only its propriety information but that of our other stakeholders, including our contractors, many of whom are members of the JCC.

The EFCL has always ensured its reputation by operating in an open and transparent manner in all our operations. Our new confidentiality agreement seeks to cement that operating policy by ensuring that information such as client lists, property records and other confidential business information handled during the normal course of operations are not utilised for personal benefit but rather, for the benefit of the Company, the Government and the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago

As improper as it is for an employee, with no ill will, to inappropriately disseminate client lists, to third parties it will be even more improper to disseminate information related to suppliers quotations to competitors.

It was to preempt such situations that the confidentiality agreement was implemented. It is consistent with what obtains in many companies and does not in any way infringe on the employee's rights and freedoms.

The EFCL has an obligation to protect confidential information submitted by service providers and to prevent such information from being wrongfully disseminated in the public domain.

Employees were not asked to sign under threat of dismissal and information is being provided to employees utilising two mechanisms.

Firstly, since its distribution to staff in early June, meetings have been held on a department by department basis to discuss the agreement and other supporting policies to ensure that staff fully understand the agreement. Secondly, one and one questions about the agreement have been answered by the Human Resources Department that is charged with implementing the policy.

Staff who asked for time to get external advice, were allowed to. Their agreements returned signed.

The confidentiality agreement must not however be viewed in isolation. Other improvements on our Human Resource Management practice include the implementation of a Code of Business Conduct which includes a "speak out" component; a Whistle Blowing Policy and Procedure as well as a Fraud Policy.

As such on receipt of the writer's query via email, we sought to have consultation with him. We remain open to dialogue on this and any other matter.

Education Facilities Company Limited
Tuesday, July 12, 2011

