Negotiation

Most conflict, most of the time, is settled by negotiation. We do it every day of our lives and sometimes so quickly and painlessly that we are not even aware that we have negotiated. Every time we discuss a decision with a spouse, child, friend or colleague, we are negotiating. The process of negotiation may involve the following steps.

- One person voices a preference or point of view.
- Others put forward their point of view.
- Reasons for each proposal are discussed (pros and cons).
- Some ideas gain support, others lose support.
- People trade one option for another.
- The final outcome is decided.

McCarthy (1992) outlines five stages of negotiation. You may find it useful to read this theory of negotiation.