

**Procedure for Raising Questions and Points of Concern/Complaints**

**Raising Questions:**

We believe in close cooperation with everyone involved in the School Community and we aim to work through full and open discussion.

To this end we hold a number of Parents' Evenings – a minimum of one per class per term – in addition to occasional meetings called to discuss specific issues. Class Teachers also aim to make themselves available so that matters can be raised with them.

There are also certain groups that enable points of view to be considered. The Village College Management Group deals with use and resources of the Village College. The Coordinators' Group coordinates work in support of the School, including blitz cleans and fundraising, and works with the teachers to plan and organise Meetings of School Parents, Teachers and Friends where a range of issues can be discussed freely and informally. The Eskdale Community Trust Council carries the legal responsibility for the School and delegates educational and most management matters to the College of Teachers, which meets weekly during term time.

**Concerns and Complaints:**

**General**

We aim to provide good quality teaching and pastoral care, but if you have a concern or complaint you can expect it to be dealt with as follows. We will try to resolve matters quickly and informally. We will seek to learn from the process and to avoid any possibility of any discrimination being associated with making a complaint. All concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as disclosure is required by law or required in the course of the school's inspection. Written records will be kept of all formal complaints showing at which stage of the procedure they were resolved. In practice it can sometimes be difficult to distinguish the expression of a concern from a more general point being made in conversation or from a subject being suggested as suitable for discussion at one of the meetings referred to above; please therefore, if you are expressing a concern or making a complaint, try to avoid any ambiguity about this.

**First Point of Contact**

If you have a concern or complaint, please make initial contact with the school as follows:

Subject Teachers – Matters concerning specific subjects taught

Class Teachers – Matters concerning

- a teaching carried out by the Class Teacher
- b the Class generally
- c individual children in the Class

Administrator – Matters relating to Finance, Maintenance, Health and Safety

Village College Management Group – Matters concerning use of the Village College

College Chair – Matters concerning decisions of the College of Teachers

- Educational Policies
- Communications Matters

The Eskdale Trust Council Chair – Matters concerning decisions of the Council

## **The Path for Concerns and Complaints**

**Stage One – Informal Resolution** - It is hoped that a matter will be resolved informally with the first point of contact indicated above, by discussion on a one to one basis or by calling an informal meeting involving a third person to act as an objective listening ear. The first point of contact will be responsible for making a brief, agreed written record of the concern/complaint, and the date it was received, and for showing the record to all the people involved. If the matter is not resolved within seven days, then the complainant(s) will be advised to proceed in accordance with Stage Two below.

**Stage Two – Formal Resolution** – The complainant(s) should put the complaint in writing to the College of Teachers via the College Chair. The complaint will be read out to the College of Teachers, which will treat the matter as confidential and will decide the most appropriate course of action. In most cases the College of Teachers will organise a meeting with the complainant(s) within seven days of hearing the complaint. The complainant(s) will be encouraged to bring a companion to the meeting for support. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage. It may be necessary for the College of Teachers to carry out further investigations and to call further meetings. The Chair of College will be responsible for ensuring that dated written records are made of all meetings and interviews held concerning the complaint and shown to all the people involved. When the College of Teachers is satisfied that, as far as practicable, all relevant facts have been established, the College will make a decision and inform the complainant(s) of the decision, and the reasons for it, in writing. If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision or feels that Stage Two is unreasonably protracted, then the complainant should invoke Stage Three as follows.

**Stage Three – Mediation Group Hearing** – The Chair of the Eskdale Community Trust Council will be informed and the matter will be referred to the Mediation Group appointed by the Eskdale Community Trust Council. The Mediation Group will consist of at least three persons not directly involved in matters detailed in the complaint, at least one of whom will be independent of the management and running of the school. The Mediation Group will acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as possible, normally within seven days. If the Mediation Group deems it necessary, it may require further particulars of the complaint or any related matters to be supplied to all parties in writing no later than three days prior to the hearing. One other person, a relative, teacher or friend, may accompany the complainant(s) to the hearing, but legal representation will not normally be appropriate. If possible the Mediation Group will resolve the complaint immediately, but if the Mediation Group decides to carry out further investigations, it will make a decision (and may make recommendations) within seven days of the hearing. The Mediation Group will write to the complainant(s) giving details of the decision and the reasons for it. The decision of the Mediation Group will be final. The Mediation Group's findings and any recommendations it makes will be communicated in writing to the College of Teachers, to the Eskdale Community Trust Council and, if relevant, to the person(s) at whom the complaint was directed; a copy will be available for inspection on the school premises by the Chair of the Eskdale Trust Council and the Chair of the College of Teachers. Where necessary, the Mediation Group will make reference to the school's disciplinary procedure.

***One formal complaint was received in 0809; it was resolved at Stage Two.***