

## **Lessons from Geese**

### ***Leadership from Geese***

As leaders, we learn a lot from geese. Geese are intriguing creatures and while considered pests in some situations, they have an incredibly strong sense of family and group loyalty. Phenomenally, they return to their birthplace every year, flying up to 30000 miles to get there. Applying lessons from geese behaviour to our own development and leadership whilst creating our unique school type, we recognise the importance of:

- Sharing common goals – as each goose flaps its wings it creates uplift that reduces friction for the birds that are following. By flying in a V-formation, the whole flock achieves a 70% greater flying range than if each bird flew alone. The lesson we learn is that people who share a common direction and goal can get where they're going quicker and with less effort because they benefit from the momentum of the group around them.
- Increasing visibility – flying in a V-formation increases the visibility as every goose can see what's happening in front of them. The lesson is to make our school teams visible in both directions. Having top-down visibility enables leaders to stay connected with the edges of the school to make better informed decisions. Bottom-up visibility enables staff to see the bigger picture, engaging and empowering them to better align themselves with the school's objectives.
- Having humility to seek help – when a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the friction of flying alone. It then quickly adjusts its mistake and moves back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird immediately in front of it. The lesson we learn is to be humble, to admit the challenges we face, and to seek help as soon as we get stuck. This humility will enable all of us to move faster and achieve more.
- Empowering others to lead – When the lead goose in the front gets tired, it rotates back into the formation and allows another goose to take the leadership position. Here we learn to empower others to lead. Micro-managing and keeping tight control will burn you out. You burning out will disengage and demotivate others. People have unique skills and capabilities and gifts to offer. Giving autonomy, trust, and a chance to shine surprises everyone with the outcomes.
- Always recognise great work – The geese honk to recognise each other and encourage those up the front to keep up their speed. Our lesson is to make sure we praise and give recognition.
- Offering support in challenging times – When a goose gets sick or wounded, two geese drop out of formation and follow it down to help and protect it. They stay with it until it dies or can fly again. Then they launch out with another formation or catch up with their own flock. Our lesson here is to stand by each other in difficult times. It is easy to always be part of winning teams, but when things get difficult and people are facing challenges, that's when your teammates need you most.
- Staying committed to core values and purpose – The geese migration routes never vary. These routes are the same every year. Even when flock members change, the young learn the route from their parents. The lesson for us to learn is to stay true to our core values and purpose. Strategies, tactics, and products may change for us to remain agile, but great schools always stick to their core purpose and values and preserve them with vigour.

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## 5 Lessons in Teamwork from Geese



### Supporting Each Other

Geese fly in a V formation, providing lift for those behind them



### You Can't Succeed Alone

If a goose falls out of formation, it works hard to get back into position



### Understanding Your Role

When the lead goose gets tired, it falls to the back, and another takes over



### Providing Encouragement

The geese at the back honk to encourage those up front to keep going



### Protecting Each Other

If a goose gets sick or wounded, 2 others follow it to the ground and stays until it can fly again

