

# Characteristics of effective teams

A quick search of the internet will reveal many taxonomies of the characteristics of effective teams. While they all differ slightly, they all tend to have the following features of teams that work well in common.

## **Clear purpose and goals**

The team agrees on where it is headed, and its members are fully supportive of its goals.

## **Defined roles and responsibilities**

Each team member understands their roles and responsibilities within the team and the school, and work is fairly distributed taking account of each member's skills and the contributions they can make.

## **Open and clear communication**

There is effective communication within the team, built on active listening and vigorous discussion of ideas.

## **Active and balanced participation**

All team members contribute to its deliberations without dominating discussion at any point. All views are welcomed, and people feel confident in voicing their ideas. Leadership is shared depending on the circumstances, relevant expertise and the needs of the team.

## **A comfortable, relaxed and trusting atmosphere**

Team discussions are conducted respectfully, in a relaxed, almost informal way free of obvious tensions or hidden agendas. Team members support and trust each other, invest in developing their relationships and have fun.

## **Constructive conflict**

Disagreement is seen as a positive and is dealt with openly and constructively to achieve the best outcome for the team and the school.

## **Effective decision making**

Decisions are made based on carefully weighing UP the pros and cons of each approach to deal with the issue at hand. It is not simply a matter of gaining a simple majority.

## **Acceptance of decisions**

All team members accept and implement the agreed decisions of the team, regardless of the stance they took when the issue was discussed.

## **Highly organised**

The team works efficiently and uses consistent procedures (e.g. agendas, minute keeping, follow-up protocols, etc.) to guide its operations.

## **Monitoring performance**

The team has clear targets and regularly assesses its progress towards these, as well as any changes that may be required to ensure they can be met.