



# THE HOUSES OF CHESTERTON ACADEMY

**The House System**

# Table of Contents

<b>I.</b>	<b>OVERVIEW .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>II.</b>	<b>HOUSE POINTS.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>III.</b>	<b>HOUSE PREFECTS.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>IV.</b>	<b>HOUSE CAPTAINS.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>V.</b>	<b>FACULTY ADVISORS .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>VI.</b>	<b>HOUSE PARENTS .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>VII.</b>	<b>FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS .....</b>	<b>11</b>



# I. Overview

We make it our mission to prepare our students to triumph over the materialism and despair that pervade our culture and to accept our Lord's offer to have life and have it abundantly. Through the Chesterton Schools Network's Three Pillars model, we form our students in intellect, character, and spirituality.

The Pillar of character formation focuses on forming habits of virtue, in particular, the Cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance—the foundation of leadership. All four are necessary to prepare the students to lead their families, communities, and country to Christ.

All of the Cardinal virtues find expression through relationships in community. To aid the building of meaningful relationships between the faculty and students at Chesterton, we draw on the House system. This is part of the 1,000-year-old tradition of Christian education, exemplified in the colleges at Oxford and Cambridge.

On their first day at a Chesterton Academy, a student is sorted into one of four Houses: Ambrose, Athanasius, Augustine, or Chrysostom. They have the opportunity to earn or lose House points through merits and demerits and remain in this House for their tenure at Chesterton.

The Houses at Chesterton Academy provide real, tangible community within the larger school, giving students the opportunity to take ownership, fulfill the call to leadership, and to cultivate the ideal conditions for virtue. Within the Houses, students build meaningful relationships through service projects, competitions, celebrations, and prayer. Houses are led by Prefects, who are nominated by their peers.

Because the Chesterton Schools Network uses the same House System across its schools, students can find other House members at CSN meet-ups such as Zoom meetings, the March for Life, annual conferences, and more.

## A. HOUSE NAMES

The Houses of Chesterton Academy are named for the four saints (two from the West, two from the East) who support the Chair of Peter in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome.

**SAINT AMBROSE** (c. 338 – April 4, 397) was the bishop of Milan who became one of the most influential ecclesiastical figures of the fourth century. He promoted the rights of the Church in relation to the imperial state and is counted as one of the four original Doctors of the Church. He was also the teacher of Saint Augustine.

**SAINT ATHANASIUS** (c. 293 – May 2, 373), also known as Saint Athanasius the Great, was a theologian who later became the patriarch of Alexandria, a leader of immense significance in the theological battles of the fourth century. He is best remembered for his role in the conflict with Arianism, although his influence covers a vast array of theological topics.

**SAINT AUGUSTINE** (November 13, 354 – August 28, 430), the bishop of Hippo, was both a philosopher and theologian, as well as an influential church leader in north Africa. He framed the concept of original sin and related teachings on divine grace, free will, and predestination, as well as the theory of the just war. His works remain among the most influential in Christian history.

**SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM** (c. 347 – 407), archbishop of Constantinople, is known for his eloquence in preaching and public speaking, his denunciation of the abuse of authority by both ecclesiastical and political leaders, the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, his ascetic sensibilities, and his violent opposition to paganism. He is particularly honored in the Eastern Orthodox Church.

### B. HOUSE IDENTITIES

Each House has its own shield and colors, displayed below. Spirit wear, locker stickers, signs, lapel pins, and more can be used to show House spirit. The distinguishing colors of the four Houses are: Ambrose - Joyful Blue; Athanasius - Joyful Red; Augustine - Joyful Yellow, and Chrysostom - Joyful Green.

## CSN House Colors



HEX: #34668b  
RGB: 51 101 139  
CMYK: 85 57 27 07  
PANTONE: 7682 C

HEX: #CF3927  
RGB: 207 55 39  
CMYK: 13 92 100 03  
PANTONE: 2347 C

HEX: #E8B221  
RGB: 232 178 33  
CMYK: 09 30 100 00  
PANTONE: 124 C

HEX: #87A44C  
RGB: 135 164 78  
CMYK: 52 20 89 02  
PANTONE: 368 C

### **C. THE WHITE HORSE CUP**

The Houses compete annually for the White Horse Cup, which is awarded to the House with the most points at the end of the year. The White Horse Cup is proudly displayed in the school. The winning House's name is engraved on the cup each year to keep a record for posterity. Other prizes are awarded to Houses throughout the year to recognize achievement and progress.

## **II. House Points**

House Points are awarded both to Houses and to individuals through merits, demonstrating excellence both in formal competitions (sports, field-day events, art competition, science fair, etc.) and in virtue by going above and beyond the call of duty towards their fellow students and society. House Points awarded to an individual accrue to their House total. House Points are earned through merits and lost through demerits.

### **A. MERITS**

Merits are awarded by faculty and staff to students for exhibiting behaviors deemed meritorious. Examples may include: holding a door, excellence on a paper, great response in class, displaying great virtue, etc.

### **B. DEMERITS**

Points may be taken from the students' House for actions such as: being late to class, using their phone in school, violating uniform code etc. (Depending on the severity of the act for which a student has been given a demerit, in addition to causing their House to lose points, there may be detention, suspension or expulsion, up to the discretion of the headmaster).

### **C. TRACKING AND VERIFYING POINTS**

Although there can be individual school variations, generally merits and demerits are awarded by teachers and staff. The prefects may recommend awarding merits, (they may not recommend demerits) but they have to bring their recommendation of a merit to a Dean, who then approves or denies it.

The staff who awarded the points then records the merit and point value into a system of records, as the school's Learning Management System (LMS). A message or alert should be sent to the student and their parents to notify them of the merit or demerit and why it was awarded. This also allows merits and demerits to contribute as a means of communicating to parents what teachers and staff are seeing from the student. To maintain consistency, both the Dean of Women and Dean of Men verify and adjust the points awarded to the house for each merit.

### **D. HOUSE POINTS SCALE**

The faculty should agree upon roughly how many points to award for different kinds of merit worthy acts. For consistency across the Chesterton Schools Network, we have developed this suggested system of awarding points:

**1-2 POINTS**

- Picking up someone's' dropped books
- Holding doors
- Graciously helping teachers when they ask for it

**3-5 POINTS**

- Sacrificing free time in order to help staff. (i.e. helping during scheduled free periods/Lyceum)

**10 POINTS**

- Aiding the school with a task that is deemed a large time commitment. (i.e. cleaning school outside of school hours, setting up for a play, preparing for an open house, helping host an open house)

**20-25 POINTS**

- House events/competitions (i.e. a game night where prefects chose to assign 25 points for the house that had the most house members attending the event and 25 points for the house that won the most games.)

Another way to keep track of House Points is to use a Google sheet that lists all the students, merits and demerits, and points gained and lost per merit and demerit, in respective columns. Both the Headmaster and faculty would have access to this Google sheet so every faculty member can input the merits/points as well as demerits.

Be sure to display the total House Points in your school!

## III. House Prefects

The role of the Prefects is to lead the House to virtue and victory by persuading and encouraging House members to contribute their time and talent to the efforts of the House. They are servant leaders to both their Houses and to the school as a whole.

Prefects serve by building community, school spirit, and good character. They are attentive and considerate of all school rules and act as an advocate for their House and the larger Chesterton student body. Through hospitality, leadership, and initiative in House and school functions, Prefects are actively building community.

They build school spirit through friendly House competitions, all while exhibiting and encouraging good sportsmanship and inviting their fellow students to maintain an active and joyful presence.

Though they are not enforcers of the rules, Prefects strive to follow and show the worth and reasoning behind school rules and the benefits that come with respecting and following them.

As a leader of their House, they serve as an advocate and voice to their House members. This helps the school administration to maintain a deeper and more personal relationship to the student body.

In summary, a Prefect is a servant leader, a representative of their House, and a model of good character and leadership skills.

### **A. WHAT DOES AN IDEAL PREFECT LOOK LIKE?**

An ideal Prefect is a servant to his fellow students and the school as a whole. They are exemplars of magnanimity. They are humble yet confident. They seek others first and do their best to understand all sides of an issue or idea in pursuit of the truth.

The Prefect is not expected to be perfect. The Prefect does not have to be an excellent public speaker, always engaging, confident and bold. Rather, he should be a simple, honest, and humble friend. If the Prefect is true to his character and genuinely seeks the truth, he or she will be a natural leader.

There is not a single student at school who could not perform the job of a Prefect. But to be a good Prefect—a true servant leader—the Prefect must make the choice to be one and stick by it. Daily recommitment to the role and the support of the whole school will aid each Prefect as he carries out his mission.

Finally, a good leader delegates: the Faculty Advisor, the Director of Student Life, and all House members are available to help with the initiatives the Prefect undertakes. A good Prefect in the end is easy to define: he or she is a magnanimous servant leader.

### **B. WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF A PREFECT?**

#### **COMMUNITY BUILDER**

- Prefects inspire their House to find creative ways to get to know each other and keep the House united with the help of the Faculty Advisor.
- Prefects help run and host weekly House lunches, yearly events, and service projects in conjunction with the Student Life Director.
- Prefects are always ready to rally the House if help is needed.
- Prefects take time to get to know every House member on a basic level.
- Prefects are ready to rock the Gala assignments.

#### **SCHOOL SPIRIT**

- The Prefect is a champion of enthusiasm no matter what the situation.
- The Prefect is an exemplar of good leadership and sportsmanship.
- The Prefect is a challenger: they challenge the House to be better than they were yesterday.
- The Prefect is the captain of the team: they show their House the way with their actions.
- The Prefect is an ambassador of joy: they are affable with fellow students and with teachers and staff.

#### **GOOD CHARACTER**



- Prefects keep Christ at the center and bring Him everywhere.
- Prefects maintain a firm but considerate attitude when assigning jobs to their House.
- Prefects are ready to do any task they would give a House member.
- Prefects show integrity in all they do; consistency in character is key.
- Prefects remember that each student is just as important as the next, and do not show favoritism.
- Prefects are honest in all their dealings.

### **ATTENTION AND CONSIDERATION TO ALL SCHOOL RULES**

- A Prefect is not the police, but should pay attention to whether or not their House members are following the rules.
- Prefects don't seek out flaws in people, but don't ignore habitual errors either. Prefects are willing to charitably call out behavior that will ultimately hurt a fellow student and their House.
- Prefects teach without preaching, not by words but by example.
- Prefects do their best to study the rules to understand why they are in place and be ready to explain them.

### **STUDENT BODY REPRESENTATIVE**

- Prefects are the voice of the student body. If others have unresolved opportunities and ideas, they should present them to the Prefect, who takes them to the House teacher. House teachers are there to help you.
- Prefects maintain a humble and approachable demeanor so that students feel comfortable coming to them with their ideas and unresolved opportunities.
- Prefects meet with their fellow Prefects and get an idea of how the school as a whole is doing.
- Prefects are aware and attentive in situations where there seems to be unrest.
- Prefects try to see and solve problems before they arise.

### **C. THE PREFECT SELECTION PROCESS**

Candidates for the position of House Prefect will be nominated by House members or any faculty member. The candidates may be chosen from either the rising junior or senior class. All nominees should read and reflect on the Prefect description. They will be contacted and given the requirements for the selection process.

Prefect nominees must prepare a cover letter and a resume. These must be submitted during the summer, before the start of the school year. Prefect Interviews are held in person or via video conference call.

All nominees will be thoroughly reviewed and considered by the Prefect Advisory Board (Executive Director, Headmaster, Director of Student Life, and Faculty Advisors). House Prefects should be announced before the start of the term.

## **IV. House Captains**



The role of a House Captain is to assist House Prefects in all that they do. They are leaders in their own right and can be from any grade. House Captains are chosen by the Prefects and Prefect Advisory Board.

Leading a successful event or service project is a lot of work; just as Prefects must delegate, so must Captains find others willing to share the load. A Captain's job is to motivate and organize the members of their House in each of the five arenas of leadership: **scholarship, social, service, spiritual, and sportsmanship**.

The purpose of this role is to cultivate servant leaders throughout all of the grades at Chesterton. This fosters a greater sense of teamwork across the House.

## V. Faculty Advisors

Faculty Advisors serve as a mentor, liaison, and advocate for their House. They should be the first contact for the Prefects when it comes to ideas and unresolved opportunities. In a Chesterton Academy that has an enrollment over 80, two Faculty Advisors are recommended for each House. Smaller schools should strive for a minimum of one Faculty Advisor for the East Houses (Athanasius and Chrysostom) and for the West Houses (Ambrose and Augustine).

The Faculty Advisor should take active part in the House life. They should be present at House lunches, House events, and anything their House takes a larger role in.

The Advisors should not take a leadership role within the House. That is the job of the Prefects and the Captains. Rather, they should serve as an advocate for the House and encourage the members to actively participate in House life.

## VI. House Parents

When each student is sorted into a House, their whole family becomes a part of that House, too. Each family should do their best to take an active role in their House. Their role, however, will be to a much lesser extent than their students.

House Parents assist in planning House events, House feasts, and aiding their House in Gala efforts. At least twice a year, House Parents are encouraged to come together for a House Supper to get to know each other and build community.

A team of House Parents is a powerful resource for the school. They can be used to help fill gaps in event planning, support the front office with administrative tasks, and line up volunteers for the school's needs. During your large fundraisers, these parents can be leads to achieve fundraising goals.

House Parents should be directed by the executive leadership of the school. This can be under the Executive Director or the Headmaster. As the school grows, the House

Parents can report to other school leadership. A House Parent is only effective as the delegation and communication of the school leadership.

## VII. Frequently Asked Questions

Here are some frequently asked questions from CSN schools as they worked to implement the House System in their community. Don't see an answer to your question here? Email [csn@chesterton.org](mailto:csn@chesterton.org) with your questions or ideas.

### 1. CAN WE CHOOSE OUR OWN HOUSES?

Because the House System unifies the individual school communities across the CSN, all member schools have the same four Houses. Chesterton students and alumni can immediately find connection with each other at CSN events.

### 2. DO WE START WITH TWO OR FOUR HOUSES?

Schools beginning with a small student body should still split the students evenly across the Houses. When it comes time for House competitions, have the Houses band together as East (Athanasius and Chrysostom) versus West (Augustine and Ambrose). Once the school reaches an enrollment of 40 students, separate competitions into the four individual Houses.

### 3. IS THE HOUSE SORTING PROCESS RANDOM?

Consider your incoming class and transfer students. Because families are sorted into Houses, siblings are automatically in the same House. After this, evenly divide available spots across the four Houses, then allow new students to randomly draw their House out of the White Horse Cup or similar item.

### 4. CAN UNDERCLASSMEN BE HOUSE PREFECTS?

Typically, your choice for Prefect is either a junior and/or a senior. However, if the House is void of leadership at those levels or your school does not have those classes, then you may have to choose an underclassman as a Prefect. This is more common in schools in their first three years. Keep in mind, younger students need a lot more mentoring in fostering the school and House cultures.

### 5. CAN A STUDENT SERVE AS A PREFECT MORE THAN ONCE?

Yes, a Prefect can serve more than one term. If, during the nomination and application process, a student continues to exhibit servant leadership skills, the Prefect Advisory Council may choose them again to serve.

### 6. WHEN SHOULD A SCHOOL USE CAPTAINS?

When a school reaches an enrollment of 80 students, begin implementing House Captains. This will help a school's culture and student life, as well as provide more leadership opportunities across the grades.

### 7. DOES OUR SCHOOL NEED A PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION (PTA)?

No, a Chesterton Academy does not need a PTA. With the House Parents working closely with school leadership and having effective communication, the school is supported, fundraising goals are more easily met, and events have robust support.