

# ST. ALBERT CATHOLIC SCHOOL

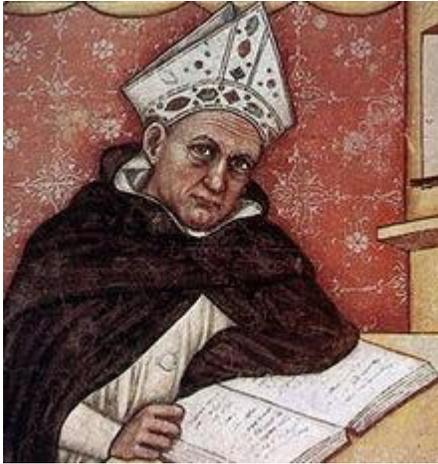


Doing good, because it's good to do.



# HOUSE SYSTEM

## Preface and Background



Saint Albertus Magnus, (1193 -1280), also known as Saint Albert the Great and Albert of Cologne, was a Dominican friar and bishop who achieved fame for his rather comprehensive knowledge of and advocacy for the peaceful coexistence of science and religion. He is considered to be the greatest German philosopher and theologian of the Middle-Ages. He was the first among medieval scholars to apply Aristotle's philosophy to Christian thought. The Roman Catholic Church honors him as a Doctor of the Church, one of only 33 persons with that honor. St. Albert's feast day is November 15.

All of the children and staff at St. Albert Catholic School are sorted a House. The Houses are named after some significant facts about Saint Albertus Magnus (Known in English as: St. Albert the Great). Each house is associated with a particular colour. The houses are:

- Padua House (green) ... St. Albert's Alma mater (University)
- Dominican House (red) ... St. Albert was a Priest (Dominican Friar)
- Bishop House (yellow) ... St. Albert was a Bishop (Regensburg)
- Magnus House (Orange) ... St. Albert is noted as "great" for his expertise
- Lauingen House (blue) .., St. Albert's Birthplace in (Germany)
- Aquinas House (Purple) ... Thomas Aquinas was a student of St. Albert



*Knowledge is Power*



*Seek the Truth*



*Keep the Faith*



*Strive to be Great*



*Build Community*



*Life is Work*

The St. Albert House System aims to bring together our school community and promote our ethos of 'Doing good because it is good to do'. It is designed to reinforce and reward desirable behaviours for learning and to engender a team spirit and feeling of community. The House System connects all year groups within the school, providing them with the opportunity to further develop skills and experiences in order to become confident individuals and outstanding members of the school community. The St. Albert House System gives the children the opportunity to:

- work to help each other build confidence through collaboration
- persevere through a task
- take risks as a group to achieve a common goal
- learn to be enquiring and creative in a safe environment

The school aims to achieve this through the House System by providing House members with enjoyable and competitive House events; thereby allowing the children to succeed both in and outside of the classroom. Each week the children collect house points for their respected house. Children earn house points in a variety of ways *e.g. fantastic work, amazing effort, positive behaviour choices, following the school rules and demonstrating the school values, and a commitment to serve and do good*. Every Friday the house points for the week are totaled and displayed on the Standings Wall for all to see. From time to time, all the children/staff in the school attend a House Meeting, which is a chance for each House to gather together to discuss events, activities, and to celebrate their successes.



At the end of each month, the children from the leading house are giving a non-school uniform day (Casual Day) on the first Monday of the next month as a reward for all of their hard work.

## The House System

The **HOUSE SYSTEM** is a traditional feature of many schools in the English-speaking world, particularly in [Commonwealth countries](#) (like Canada), and originated in [England](#). A school is divided into subunits called 'houses' and each student is allocated to one house upon enrolment. Houses may compete with one another at sports and maybe in other ways, thus providing a focus for group loyalty.

Different schools will have a different number of houses - some might have more than 10 houses or as few as four. Historically, the house system was associated with established public schools in England where a 'house' referred to a [boarding house](#) at the school. In modern times, in both day and boarding schools, the word 'house' may refer only to a grouping of pupils for a purpose, rather than to a particular building.

Houses may be named after [saints](#), famous historical alumni or notable facts or some sort of regional topic. Other more arbitrary names—animal names or colours, for example—are also often used. Each house will usually also be identified by its own symbol, logo, motto, or colour.

One of the main purposes of schools is to provide care for a child during the school day - The house system was originally established to provide [pastoral care](#) to the [students](#). With parents absent, children are likely to depend on the school to look after their basic physical, [social](#) and [emotional](#) needs throughout their stay at school. The Harry Potter books and subsequent movies have updated the boarding school model to modern times and in some schools has been made more appealing and noteworthy because of it.

## Competition between Houses

A secondary feature of house systems is the competition between houses. For example, the traditional school [sports day](#) is usually an inter-house competition. Friendly competitions, fundraisers, and charity drives are also often organized along House lines for the benefit of the whole school and/or the benefitting organization. Merit points for positive behavior in all areas of school life, participatory engagement in activities and demonstrating leadership are also be totaled up for comparison between houses. The culmination is the tallying of all house merit points in an effort for a particular house with the most points to win “The House Cup”.



## Student Leaders

Pupils are usually assigned to houses randomly (i.e., choosing a coloured marble from a sack), perhaps with the aim of balancing the houses in order to increase competition. Sometimes the assignment is based on the social and emotional needs of the student and to ensure proper [peer mentoring](#) is enhanced with the right fit of students within a house. Traditionally, however, once a pupil has been assigned to a house, any younger siblings he or she has may automatically become members of that house when they arrive at the school. Once a pupil has been allocated to a house they stay with that house as they move up through the year groups. One notable feature of the house system is the appointment of *House Captains* (e.g., at St. Albert there may be 2-grade 8 students per House assigned to be House Captains), who exercise limited authority within the house and assist in the organization of the house.



## Staff Leaders

The term “*House Mentor Leader*” is held by the members of staff responsible for pupils in a particular house. In some ways, staff members can be seen as “*Heads of the House*”.

However, both terms can be used at either style of school for the sake of formality.



## The St. Albert Houses

The House System provides the framework for pastoral care of students, encourages participation in sporting and cultural co-curricular activities, and promotes leadership development. The House System promotes a keen but good-natured rivalry between House teams to see who will win the House Cup at the end of each year. Points towards this prize accumulate from the various sporting and cultural, and other friendly competitions that are held throughout the year.

By establishing a House System, we believe that strong house loyalty and a sense of fun and friendly competition will continue to provide opportunities for personal growth and success, as well as create a fun-filled and positive school atmosphere.

**During the year, the Houses compete against each other in a number of activities which may change from year to year. Some of these activities are:**

- Physical activity competitions (Carnaval, Play Day, etc.)
- Organization of Sports Events (Soccer, Volleyball, Cricket, etc.)
- Participation in before and after school physical activities
- Community outreach programs and charities (ECO, Me-to-We)
- Contribution to school events (pizza days, fundraisers, etc.)
- Competitions (i.e., organize school events, initiatives, etc.)



**House groups can also be used to:**

- To welcome visitors to the school
- Represent the school at functions
- Co-ordinate activities around the school or sporting events
- Develop a sense of ownership
- Develop a sense of responsibility in the care of their school

The House System at St. Albert Catholic School is designed to encourage both community and friendly competition between students in a supportive and inclusive environment. At St. Albert, the house system has many benefits. This new system is part of our continued focus on whole-student success (i.e., Growth Mindset) and will encourage students to further form and strengthen positive relationships with fellow students at all grade levels.

Mixing the students from all grades in the house provides more opportunities for students to meet peers with whom they may not otherwise interact, and the youngest students feel more relaxed moving up to middle grades and likewise the junior students have improved relations with intermediate students. Staff and student relationships improve as a result of them interacting outside the classroom. Positive peer relations gets students involved in activities in order to support their house and students gain a sense of pride in being able to contribute. When all students feel they can make a difference it creates a climate where students and teachers want to be, making the House System a win-win situation!



St. Albert Catholic School recognizes the abilities of each student and works on developing, strengthening, and fostering growth in each student. Upon entering the school, students will feel a sense of belonging by becoming part of a House community all belonging to God's family.

The House system develops positive interaction among grade levels from Kindergarten through to Grade Eight. Students will have the opportunity to gain merit points, both individually and collectively for their House, through various activities/events held at the school. This in turn, will promote healthy competition and allow a sense of mentoring and leadership to build up between the older and the younger students.

With the exception of Administration, each staff member belongs to a particular House. The even distribution of staff will allow students to become more familiar with those staff members they rarely have a chance to interact with, or turn to for support. The House system dovetails nicely into our existing Virtues of the Month, Catholic Graduate Expectations, Catholic Social Teachings, and our continued emphasis on Growth Mindset and Rigour in our school.



The further purpose of each house is to guide and support the academic, social, emotional, spiritual, and personal development of each student during their time at school. House Leaders (Grade 8 students) will build strong partnerships with student to help each student relate in a more positive way to life in school. This concept is akin to fostering a 'Family Unit' and is further reinforced by the fact that we all belong and all of us are welcome in God's family. The sense of "family" in each of the houses will promote a feeling of identity and belonging and of self-worth.

**We believe that the House System will support our students by achieving the following:**

- *Student Centered Focus:* Each student will be treated as an individual.
- *A caring, supportive environment:* Each student will be a valued member of a small 'family unit' within a larger 'family' within the whole school ... and foster a "Growth Mindset".
- *Respect, consideration and courtesy.*
- *A well-ordered, stimulating and enjoyable atmosphere* in which deep learning and effective teaching can flourish ... a school with rigour and relevance
- *Support for each of our students* who already want to learn (do well in school) and serve (do good because it's good to do)
- *Positive self-esteem amongst students* and value of the ethos of the school community.
- The opportunity to *obtain the essential learning skills* necessary for a rapidly changing society.
- Equal opportunity and encouragement to *achieve a student's full potential.*
- *Building of interpersonal skills* within groups of students of all ages.
- *Peer support* to prevent bullying and stop it when necessary.
- Promotion of *Student Responsibility, Team skills, Leadership skills and Cooperation.*
- *Extra-Curricular activities* which will *enhance each student's school experience.*
- *Development of personal and social skills and well-being.*
- *A school in which Students, Parents, Staff, Administrators and the wider School community be justly proud.*



Throughout the year, students earn **House Points** for their positive engagement and participation in class, during assemblies, during events/activities, at recess, on the bus, and on the playground. *House Points* are given for positive comportment such as co-operation, kindness,

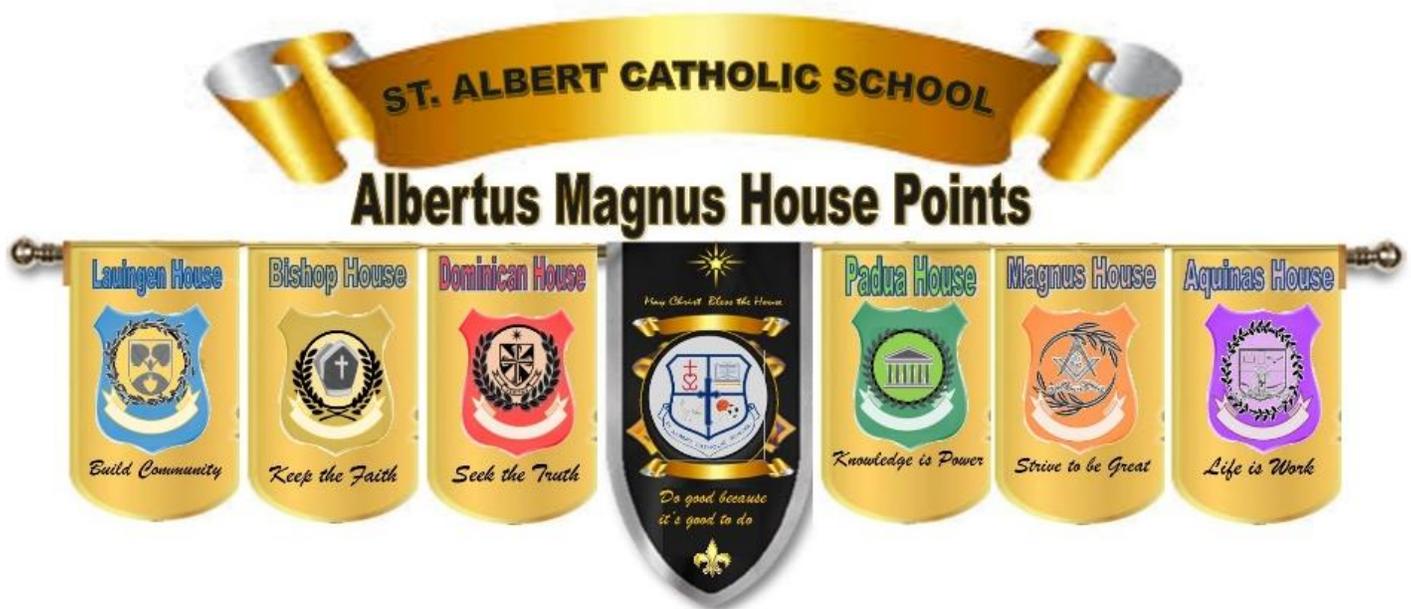
good sportsmanship, tolerance, respect, and effort. The Houses provide not only an increased feeling of identity and belonging, but they also provide students with a sense of tradition and leadership opportunities.

Individual students earn points for their house by participating in school events, community service projects and extracurricular activities. Students keep track of their own involvement on sheets and must get signatures from adults who sponsor/supervise each event or activity they participate in. What constitutes an activity that will earn House Points and how they are awarded and how many will no doubt evolve and change over time and as tradition will dictate – With the coming and going of new students, new teachers and new administration will come change and growth.

In short, House Points can be earned based on one's demonstration of positive participation, positive development and demonstration of work habits and learning skills leadership skills, and personal engagement in activities/events within the school and in the community.

## Point Sheet System

Students can be given an individual *Point Sheet* each month. Staff also have Point Sheets (i.e., each classroom teacher, coach of a team or club, organizer of a fundraiser, or community outreach even) that they can award points to houses based on the merit of a member of that house. Point sheets are handed in to Principal by all students and staff.



## **Individual Points and Staff Points**

Students have the opportunity to earn points for their house through a series of activities, events, participation in co-curricular activities and good deeds, with the winning house ultimately receiving a trophy at the end of the year. Houses may accumulate points through events and competitions such as Sports Days, Fun Day, Carnaval de Quebec, Talent Show, and other friendly competitions. House achievement will be celebrated at our monthly assembly when a House Standings and at the Principal's discretion some incentives may be provided. The goal of this activity is to give focus and motivation to students both as individuals and a collective and encourage positive behavior and engagement in the culture and spirit of the school.

House Points are awarded to each student for the following (examples only):

- Participation in School Lunches
- Participation in purchase of House Shirt
- Participation in School Nights (i.e., Christmas Concert, Spring Concert, etc.)
- School Team Sports or Club: Trying-out and making a team
- Co-curricular or Intramural Sports or Clubs
- Classroom Comportment (Work Habits/Learning Skills)
- Hosting Virtue/Rosary/Mass at school
- Participation in School Fundraisers / Initiatives
- Participation in Community Fundraisers (e.g., Terry Fox Run)
- "Gotcha - Caught you doing good" Points

## **The House Team**

The House team will consist of:

1. House Mentor Leaders (Staff), who take a leadership role
2. House Captains or Leaders (Typically Grade 8 students) who show leadership and guidance in the House
3. All staff members are assigned to a House (Exception: Principal)
4. All students from JK - Gr.8 will be assigned in a House [Siblings are in the same House]

## **House Sporting or Special Days**

**Term 1** (September to January) ... Houses can get together to plan a day of Activities that all students engage in (i.e., Four Events to choose from and all students/staff choose to partake in one)

**Term 2** (February to June) ... Houses get together to plan a day of Activities that all students engage in (i.e., Four Events to choose from and all students/staff choose to partake in one).

**Principal's Challenge:** At any time during the year there will be a number of “challenges” for students and Houses to participate in for a particular purpose (and House Points will be earned).

### **“Gotcha doing good”**

We honour students whom have been caught demonstrating Christian Values. There is no award and there is not even a certificate of any kind - Nothing of the sort! There's only one thing that comes with the “Gotcha” Programme - The knowledge that somebody has done something good that someone noticed – and that's called “***Doing good, because it's good to do!***”

### **End of Year Awards: The House Cup**

In June, during the final Gathering of the year, we will have a ceremony to award The House Cup to the House with the most accumulated points over the year.

**Winning House:** The House with the most accumulated points for the year wins!

### **The House Cup**

#### ***The Albertus Magnus House Cup***

This award is proudly presented to the St. Albert Catholic School House that accumulates the most points during the academic year.

