



# HOUSE HANDBOOK

**For Hawthorn Academy**

Fostering inclusion and  
engagement

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# PURPOSE



- **CULTURE OF BELONGING** Houses provide students with a culture of belonging. Some may feel out of place or unsure of where they fit in. But when they spin the wheel and are sorted into their Houses, they are greeted with a welcome into this new, special group. Throughout the year, each student's personal accomplishments are then rewarded with points that collectively count toward his/her House. That culture of belonging goes beyond just the students! Parents are encouraged to become part of their child's House as well. The House gives them the instant community of a slightly smaller group.
- **CHARACTER BUILDING** The House System builds character with a reward system that goes beyond something like earning a piece of candy from a candy jar for doing something good. Instead, each student's achievements add to a collective group, making the reward communal and social. We have seen this change the way that a student perceives points over time: what may start as extrinsic motivation in the beginning turns into intrinsic motivation as the student realizes the behavioral and academic traits and ethics that are valued by their peers.
- **SCHOOL-WIDE COMMUNITY** The House System is a unique and creative cross-age group approach to building a community that will strengthen the social and academic lives of students. Traditionally, schools are split up into grades, and students never interact with older or younger peers. In a House, students can interact with peers from other grade levels. With this, the older students become support systems to younger ones who are struggling or need advice, and they, in turn, grow as leaders themselves when they can pour into the younger ones in this way. And this mentoring community extends to the teachers and staff as well. Every adult in the school should be encouraged to participate in the House System because it instantly gives them an opportunity to form strong bonds with a smaller group of students in their House. Additionally, it enables a playful sense of competition with students of other Houses. This type of role modeling and mentorship, provided on a consistent basis to students as they go through each grade of the school, can be exponentially valuable to their growth!

# GOALS

- Generate a feeling of belonging among students and staff.
- Increase student achievement: academically, socially, and emotionally.
- Increase intrinsic motivation.
- Increase student and family engagement.
- Develop student efficacy in leadership.
- Develop school culture through unique traditions.



# 8 HOUSES - 1 FAMILY

- THE FIRST MONTH of the school year, incoming students spin a wheel to be sorted into a House at random.
- STUDENTS REMAIN IN THIS GROUP until they graduate.
- EACH HOUSE IS COMPOSED of every child in the school — teachers, faculty, and staff — allowing students to socialize with one another across grades and with positive adult role models beyond just the classroom setting.
- THROUGHOUT THE YEAR, the Houses compete against one another in a variety of competitions by accumulating House points. Individual students can also accumulate points for their House based on behavior and academic success.
- AT THE END OF THE YEAR, the House with the most points wins the House Championship — and all of the honor and glory that comes with it!



# ALTRUISMO™



Title:

## House of the Givers

Heritage:

Brazil

Language:

Portuguese

Power:

## The Power of Empowering Others

Symbolic Animal:

The Snake

**HOUSE HISTORY:** Altruismo traces its origins to the rainforests of the Amazon, where a group of powerful Brazilians were given the name because of the Portuguese meaning behind it: "the Givers."

This special group is known for striking a balance between bold strength and altruistic giving — a team that knows that real power comes not from looking out for yourself but from empowering others. They care deeply about lifting others up, but they also maintain a fiercely competitive spirit and pride. Historically, the House has been known for its smart and driven students, and Altruismo has produced more valedictorians per class to this day. Its members have been very involved in every club, committee, or activity that the school offers. Therefore, Altruismo takes great pride in being a cultivator of real leadership and instills a strong spirit within new members to grow into and live up to this legacy.

### Heart

*The heart sits at the top of the crest because the heart is where kindness, generosity, and purity are born.*

### Diamond + Shield

*The diamond on the shield, in the center of the crest, represents the importance of protecting others with unity and wisdom.*

### Giver

*"Altruismo" is Portuguese for "altruism," or "the givers" — and that is what we are known for being!*



ALTRUISMO™



THE QUIVERING SNAKE



THE DIAMOND

### Griffin

*With the head of an eagle and the courage of a lion, the griffin is one of the most powerful of all animals known for both strength and grace, fierceness and nurturing.*

### Black

*The color black represents prestige and an elite quality, just like our kids. We are a House filled with talent, and we like to win. Black is also the one color that contains all other colors — representing our goal of empowering all others.*

Altruismo's Hand signals

# AMISTAD™



Title:

## House of Friendship

Heritage:  
**Mexico**

Language:  
**Spanish**

Power:

## Kindness of Heart, Strength of a True Warrior

Symbolic Animal:

## The Immortal Peacock

**HOUSE HISTORY:** Amistad is the House that originates from Mexico. A group of individuals who are quiet but powerful, they are known most for their kindness of heart. This is why, in the language of their ancestry, their name means “friendship.” Incoming members are often a mix of extremes — our students can be extremely intelligent, creative, friendly, and competitive; Amistad is a very diverse group! The House takes great inspiration from its symbolic animal, the peacock, and the leaders always remind the members of this saying: “Once the peacock finds its feathers, it discovers who it really is.” The encouragement is for each student to find his or her own feathers and discover their brilliance. While students may enter timidly, they learn to become brave as they find their true selves.

### Crossed Arms (The Keys)

The crossed arms symbolize the keys to unlock the gateway to friendship.

### The Castle

Anchoring the center of the shield, the castle represents our foundation of power and protection through comradery.

### Friendship

The name “Amistad” is Spanish for “friendship.” We are the House of Friendship!



THE HEART



THE CROSSED KEYS

Amistad's Hand signals

### The Peacock

The peacock is our symbolic animal — a creature representing the heart's desire to love and protect a friend. The peacock has a preserving spirit that never quits and never dies, just like us!

### The Knight

The Knight is the symbol of the protector. While the peacock sits quietly on top, the knight shows that a fierceness lies within.

### Red

Amistad is the red house, because red is the color that embodies the kindness of heart.

# ISIBINDI™



Title:

## House of Courage

Heritage:

**South Africa**

Language:

**Zulu**

Power:

## The Strength and Courage of a Lion

Symbolic Animal:

## The Mute Swan and the Lion

**HOUSE HISTORY:** Isibindi is a tight-knit group of individuals, like a pride of African lions, where family means everything. The House's symbolic animals, the mute swan and the lion, serve to empower incoming members. While new students might be quiet or shy at first, the longer they are in the House, the more they begin to display the characteristics of strength and bravery. In Zulu, Isibindi means "courage."

The dichotomy of sharing symbolic animals between the gentle and beautiful swan and the proud and courageous lion is what makes Isibindi so unique. It is a House that inherits the legend and influence of both Shaka Zulu as well as Nelson Mandela. It is a House that knows when to be strategic and creative, or when to pull back and be reserved, but also when to go full force with power and strength. This is why Isibindi welcomes creative and quiet kids and turns them into leaders over time. They learn that, like the mute swan, their quiet creativity can be harnessed to speak volumes in its own way.

### The Mute Swan

At the top of our crest is the Mute Swan, its beauty speaking volumes and its discernment a reflection of the storied tradition of Zulu leadership — astute, compelling and unwavering.

### The Ebony Tree

The African ebony tree pays homage to the awe-inspiring beauty of the continent of our heritage.

### Courage

"Isibindi" means "courage" in the language of Zulu.



Isibindi's Hand signals

### The Zulu Axe

The ancient Zulu axe, hewn in the time of Shaka Zulu, pairs shrewd thought with the power to stand firm in the name of protecting land, people, and spirit.

### The Lion

At the center of the crest is the lion. Living in a pride, dedicated to family, he is revered throughout the world for his enviable strength and courage.

### Green

The color green reminds us of the rich and abundant resources of Africa.

# RÊVEUR™



Title:

## House of Dreamers

Heritage:

France

Language:

French

Power:

## Confident, Passionate, Dreamers

Symbolic Animal:

The Wolf

**HOUSE HISTORY:** Rêveur is a royal House whose name in French means “dreamers” or “idealists” — because the members who fill this group are students filled with freedom and wild abandon who recognize their dreams and will let nothing stand in the way of achieving them. This can be seen in the unicorn, which is at the center of the House’s crest, a powerful creature that is almost impossible to tame.

Members of this House are very ambitious. They believe that anything is possible and that they are worthy of achieving it. This House takes great inspiration from its other symbolic animal, the wolf. Wolves are known for their strength, resilience, and loyalty to their family members. While some students may enter this House being fearful to go after their dream, they quickly learn how to embrace their own confidence and lean on others in their wolf pack to support them. Rêveurians know that the size of the House is not as important as the size of the hearts and efforts of its members. They work together and know how to be adaptive and resourceful to accomplish their goals.

### **The Knight**

*The open-visored helmet facing forward is typically reserved for the highest ranks of nobility. The knight is facing forward to symbolize having dreams and letting nothing stand in your way!*

### **The Unicorn**

*A symbol of freedom, healing and beauty, the unicorn’s powers are both magical and mystical. Known for its freedom and wild abandon, the unicorn is extremely difficult to tame.*



### *Reveur's Hand signals*

### **Crescent Moon**

The crescent moon symbolizes new beginnings and the making of dreams into reality. The moon also represents our symbolic animal, the wolf — because when the moon comes out, the wolves come out!

### **Blue**

The color blue instills confidence and passion while releasing all fears and anxiety.

### **Dreamer**

Our name, “rêveur,” comes from the French for “dreamer or idealist.”

# NUKUMORI™



Title:

## House of Kindness

Heritage:  
**Japan**

Language:  
**Japanese**

Power:

## Kind, Fierce, Renewal

Symbolic Animal:  
**The Dragon**

**HOUSE HISTORY:** Nukumori is the House that originates from Japan. A group of individuals who understand that kindness is the true strength that will build their character, the members of the House of Nukumori are known for the friendship that they extend to everyone around them. They treat others with respect, and in doing so, they earn the respect of all others.

Incoming members have a heart of kindness — even if they do not see it within themselves in the beginning! That is because they learn that the great level of kindness that they must extend to all others grows over time to become a fuller and beautiful character trait. This is why they take great inspiration from the symbol of the cherry blossom: it reminds the members of the House that kindness must be grown and cared for like a delicate flower, until it blossoms into the most beautiful flower in the entire garden.

### ***The Samurai***

*We are kind, but strong, and know when to strike!*

### ***The Dragon***

*Represents balance and freedom, as well as ancient power and wisdom. It has a fierceness that can be unleashed when necessary!*

### ***The Cherry Blossom***

*Known as "sakura" in Japan, the flowers represent renewal and remind us that kindness toward others is our tool to renew and succeed.*



*Nukumori's Hand signals*

### ***The Sun***

The sun over the horizon is a symbol of the nature of our kindness: it is perpetual and continual.

### **Purple**

Associated with benevolent royalty, purple is our House color because it reminds us that we are kings and queens!

# ONRAKA™



Title:

## House of Unity

Heritage:

**India**

Language:

**Tamil**

Power:

## Togetherness, Willpower, Peace

Symbolic Animal:

## The Bengal Tiger and Emerald Dove

**HOUSE HISTORY:** Onraka traces its origins to the land beyond the Himalayan mountains, where a group of powerful Indians were given the name because of the Tamil meaning behind it: the House of Unity.

This group of very special individuals is known for the way that they stick together through any challenges. They always behave as a team—like a family—that knows that any obstacle in front of them will not be able to hold them back if they deal with it together. If they all work together to lift each other up, then the whole team will be able to rise to new heights as one.

The House does not believe, however, that being unified means being the same as everyone around them. Instead, the history of the land of their heritage, India, reminds them that unity in diversity is the true strength of the House. Each member is unique and different, and these differences are appreciated and even celebrated. They choose unity over everything, even with differences put aside.

The Bengal tiger is the symbolic animal of the house, which is a quiet and consistent strength. It exercises great restraint in using its power until the time is right. Much like the tiger, Onraka earns its stripes by showing self-control in everything they do. This is balanced by the emerald dove, who reminds them that peace is a great strength as well.

### **The Top**

*The ancient chain mail helmet, called a "top," is worn by brave Indian warriors.*

### **The Bengal Tiger**

*Symbolizing willpower and personal strength, the bengal tiger is the spirit of our fierceness.*



Onraka's Hand signals



### **The Scales**

*The scales which weigh our actions and values represents perfect balance and unity.*

### **Orange**

*Our House color, Orange, represents enthusiasm, energy, and happiness.*

### **The Emerald Dove**

*Native to the land of our heritage, India, the emerald dove symbolizes a pure spirit and deep peace.*

# PROTOS™



Title:

## House of Success

Heritage:

**Greece**

Language:

**Greek**

Power:

## Wisdom, Patience, Quiet Strength

Symbolic Animal:

**The Bear**

**HOUSE HISTORY:** Protos is an ancient House of wisdom whose name reflects the Greek root word meaning “first” — the House whose destiny is defined by striving for excellence.

Protos knows that wisdom and knowledge will be the strength that will guide them towards academic success. They pursue wisdom in everything that they do. This is why the scroll is on top of a shield in the center of the House crest: wisdom coupled with patience is a catalyst through which those who have mastered it have attained scholarship.

The ancient Greek laurel represents peace and patience. It reminds the members of the House that they must seek to become the types of scholars who earned a crown through peaceful greatness. The Corinthian soldier, whose helmet is at the top of the crest, was an ancient warrior who was both a citizen and a soldier. The House of Protos knows that it defends its House best by being the most upstanding citizens of their school and community overall.

### The Corinthian Helmet

*Ancient Corinthians were both citizens and soldiers, always ready to protect their own House and society. An ancient symbol of family, as the powerful protector of family.*

### The Bear

*This sleeping giant hibernates to recharge but then becomes one of the most powerful creatures of all!*



Protos's Hand signals

### The Scroll on the Shield

Represents that knowledge is something both to be fiercely defended, as well as something that will defend us.

### The Laurel

The leaves in ancient Greece represent success (a crown) but also represent peace — that we must work to achieve greatness, but always do so through peace and patience.

### Turquoise

Calm energy and serenity, patience, and loyalty.

# SOLLEVARE™



Title:

**House of Uplifting**

Heritage:

**Italy**

Language:

**Italian**

Power:

**Uplifting Others, Undefeatable, Creativity**

Symbolic Animal:

**The Phoenix**

**HOUSE HISTORY:** Sollevare is the House that originates from Italy. It was formed by a group who understood that the true strength of being undefeated warriors lies in always getting back up, no matter how many times they may be knocked down. The members of the House of Sollevare are known for their uplifting nature, always rising above and helping others do the same. This is where their name comes from in Latin, meaning to "lift" up.

New members have a spark of creativity — even if it is only a dim spark in the beginning, they will grow to have a great fire of creativity as they continue on! This is because it takes great creativity to see the ability to rise above in any circumstance; being able to lift others up means seeing past the current problem and thinking ahead about the next step. All of these things together are why the House of Sollevare takes inspiration from the Phoenix as their symbolic animal. The Phoenix is a powerful creature that is able to rise up from the fire and ashes, reborn into an even greater being because it has learned from its mistakes or sacrifices. Full of ancient power and wisdom, the Phoenix reminds the members of the House not only that they must rise from the ashes, but also to help others do the same. Because when we uplift everyone around us, we uplift and create a better world for us all.

## ***The Roman Galea (A.K.A. "the Spartan helmet")***

A fierce warrior, reminding us that our House is something to be fought for and protected.

## ***The Rose***

The most delicate and beautiful of all of the flowers — but don't underestimate it! It also is lined with thorns in order to protect itself and its beauty when necessary.



## ***The Phoenix***

The phoenix is a great and powerful animal that is reborn from fire. It reminds us of the meaning of our name, "the House of Uplifting": not only do we uplift others, but we uplift ourselves—even if we are knocked down, we always get back up. This is why we will be undefeated!

## ***Gold***

The brightest color, representing creativity.

*Sollevare's Hand signals*

# HOUSE SORTING



The first month of the school year, sorting begins! Incoming students in your class, school, or district spin a wheel to be sorted into a House at random. The random nature of the wheel is by design: we believe that this process has to be left to fate. Students shouldn't feel 'assigned' to a House, but 'chosen' by one. It might create an imbalance in House sizes, and that is okay! This can be a reminder to students that the world is not always fair, but that they have to learn how to adapt and push through with whatever they are given.

The wheel is designed with the eight Houses evenly divided around it, and a series of pegs on the outer edge to stop and select the House that the student will be sorted into. Spinning the wheel is a huge moment for the new students, and they should be surrounded by all of the older students and the staff from each of the Houses; the current House members should get excited and cheer the spinning student on, encouraging them as they spin the wheel, and hoping that the wheel places more students in their own House too! We also believe it is important to assign mentors for all of the incoming students after they are sorted into their Houses.

# HOUSE POINTS



**Giving Points:** The RCA House System is supported by the point system — both work together to create a fun and healthy competitive spirit amongst the Houses. Points are collected throughout the year by each student, counting toward their overall House's score, to help determine the champions at the end of the year.

First, and maybe most importantly, points must be earned, not given. A child should not receive a point for doing just anything. This helps establish expectations that points are valuable and shouldn't be expected every day for regular or expected tasks. Instead, points should be seen as something for when a child goes above and beyond. Examples of this include stopping to help an underclassman or asking a staff member how they can help with something, even if they haven't been asked to help. Points should be given when students demonstrate character.

Second, receiving one point alone for something should be seen as a standard reward for a great action. To receive two points for something would be above and beyond. Receiving twenty-five points for something, on the other hand, would be an extraordinary reward and not something that happens often. This keeps each point feeling very valuable.

Third, students can never ask for points in exchange for doing something they're told.

And fourth and finally, points are never taken away. They belong to the student once they are earned. This is incredibly important!

# POINT DISTRIBUTION



## Standard Points **1 POINT**

Getting a difficult question correct, picking up trash without being asked, being the first one to clap for another, etc.

## Above and Beyond Points **2-4 POINTS**

Winning a class competition, such as a game of trivia, selling the most raffle tickets in a school fundraiser, befriending a new student, cleaning up the class without being asked, and improving behavior.

## **5-7 POINTS**

Making a perfect score on a *major* test, showing up to a community service project, working extremely hard all day, and demonstrating an overwhelming display of good character.

## Special Points **8-9 POINTS**

Best performance on a class project, being named MVP of a school team or club.

## **10 POINTS**

Highest grade on a final exam, winning a school-wide competition, demonstrating an iconic display of character, or having no behavior referrals (for a quarter).

## **Ultra Points! 15 POINTS**

A-B Honor Roll.

## **25 POINTS**

ALL A Honor Roll.

## **Spirit Day Points (awarded to the house)**

25 POINTS Best Costume.

25 POINTS Best House Costumes.

25 POINTS Best Spirit Day Cheer.

# HOUSE CHAMPION



*The house Champions will be awarded the GOAT award and get a plaque or banner that will hang in the gym for all future houses celebrate!*



*AT THE END OF THE YEAR, the House with the most points wins the House Championship — and all of the honor and glory that comes with it!*



*They will be honored with a Parade of Champions around the school where they will be cheered by the entire student body wearing the color of the winning house. They will also go to celebrate at a house party.*

# HOUSE MEETINGS



*The purpose of our house meetings is to build community and develop relationships among members of the house.*

- Meetings are planned by the Head of Houses for each house under the guidance of the Staff House Leaders.
- Students lead the house meetings.
- High point earners are celebrated in house meetings.
- Students practice and create house cheers.
- Student shout-outs to celebrate each other's accomplishments.
- Leadership opportunities should be provided during meetings, and each house is free to define what that looks like in their house.
- Students will work in committees to help build up their houses and take an active role in their houses.
- Meetings are held from 12:15-12:45 pm on every 2nd and 4th Friday.
- House Assemblies will be held on the 3rd Friday of every month.
- Meetings are where Houses maintain traditions, create cheers, plan celebrations, recognize and support House members, and more.



# HOUSE LEADERSHIP

“Head of House” - President - is selected from the 4th and 5th grades to lead each House. Students submit applications and go through an interview process to be chosen as Head of House.

Students chosen must demonstrate strong character, integrity, and responsibility. They show honesty, respect, kindness, and perseverance in their actions. They stand against bullying, encourage inclusivity, and ensure a safe environment for all students. They take their education seriously, show dedication to learning, and help others succeed.

Other student leadership roles include Vice President and Spirit Squad.

The new House leaders are announced at the Championship Celebration at the end of each year. This gives the new student leader the entire summer to prepare for the upcoming school year.

Leaders who do not adhere to the strict character, behavior, and academic criteria may be put on probation until leaders meet the required standards in character, conduct, and academics.

## Responsibilities:

- Host school announcements
- Lead house chants
- Develop Community Service Projects
- Welcome Guests for School Events
- Host Assemblies
- Meet 2-3 times a month to plan assemblies, House Meetings, and events.

## HOUSE LEADERS 2024-25



# HOUSE ADVISORS



Each house has faculty members who serve as the adult leaders of the house. This team is comprised of members from all teams within the school. The house advisors represent the needs of their teams to the house system and represent the house system on their teams. All personnel will be sorted into houses and will serve as a house team to support students, contribute to house initiatives, help build a positive culture, and attend all house meetings and events.

Advisors work together to interview prospective new Head of House student leaders. They meet regularly with student house leaders to guide the planning of intentional, purposeful house meetings.

Adult leaders work on committees to mentor students in their leadership roles, build strong relationships among house members, promote teamwork, and respect.



# CELEBRATIONS



*In addition to the end of year house championship, throughout the year houses will be recognized and celebrated for high quarterly point earners.*



*Houses will compete in a monthly house challenge. Winning houses will be recognized in the house assemblies.*



*Houses will organize and plan house events throughout the year to build relationships and positive culture.*

# STUDENT RECOGNITION



*Weekly top house point earners will be recognized and celebrated in their weekly house meetings. Students will shout out each other's accomplishments in house meetings to celebrate together.*



*Students will be nominated by house team members to be recognized for their achievements and successes in monthly house assemblies!*



*Students can redeem their house points to purchase items from the school store.*

# ESSENTIAL 55



- 1 If someone bumps into you, say excuse me, even if it wasn't your fault.
- 2 Make eye contact when you are speaking with others.
- 3 Congratulate and uplift classmates.
- 4 Respect other students' comments, opinions and ideas.
- 5 If you win.. Do not brag. If you lose... do not show anger.
- 6 If you are asked a question, ask a question in return.
- 7 Cover your mouth when you sneeze and cough. Say "Excuse me."
- 8 Do not show disrespect with gestures.
- 9 Always say "thank you" when given something.
- 10 When you receive something, don't insult the gift or giver.
- 11 Surprise others by performing random acts of kindness.
- 12 When grading others' papers, give only the correct grade.
- 13 Follow along when we read together in class.
- 14 Answer all questions with a complete sentence.
- 15 Do not ask for a reward.
- 16 You must complete your homework every day.
- 17 Subject transitions will be swift, quiet, and orderly.
- 18 Be as organized as possible.
- 19 When homework is assigned, have a good attitude.
- 20 When a substitute teacher is present, all classroom rules still apply.
21. Follow the specific classroom protocols.
- 22 Go out of your way to make others feel special.
- 23 Know other teachers' names and greet them in the hall by name.
- 24 Keep yourself and the bathrooms clean and germ-free.
- 25 Greet visitors and make them feel welcome.
- 26 Do not save seats in the lunchroom.
- 27 Do not stare at a student who is being reprimanded.
- 28 Email if you have a question about homework and leave a message once.
- 29 Follow the ABC's of etiquette.
- 30 After dining, be responsible for your trash.
- 31 If someone looks you in the eye, especially if you don't know them, smile.
- 32 On a bus, van, or plane, always face forward.
- 33 When meeting new people, shake hands and repeat their name.
- 34 When offered food, take only your fair share.
- 35 If someone drops something, pick it up for them.
- 36 Hold the door for people rather than letting it close on them.
- 37 Be a good listener.
- 38 On a field trip, enter a public building quietly.
- 39 Be a good guest.
- 40 During an assembly, do not speak or call out to friends.
- 41 Use appropriate phone etiquette at all times.
- 42 When returning from a field trip, shake the hand of every chaperone.
- 43 When walking in the halls, walk on the right side.
- 44 When walking in line, keep your arms at your side sides and move quietly.
- 45 Take schoolwide drills and procedures seriously.
- 46 No talking in a movie theater during the movie.
- 47 You may bring a water bottle to class, or you may not leave for a drink of water.
- 48 If anyone is bullying you, let an adult know, and do not bully others.
- 49 Stand up for what you believe in.
- 50 Be positive and enjoy life.
- 51 Live so that you will never have regrets.
- 52 Learn from your mistakes and move on.
- 53 No matter what the circumstances, always be honest.
- 54 Respond when spoken to.
- 55 **Be the BEST person you can be!**



# Hawthorn Academy

## House System



## CONTACT US

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