House Groups FAQs

**What are House Groups?**

Where students are in caregroup (not subject classes) in groups based on their house instead of their year level. For Samaritan in 2017, these will be house groups from yr 8/9 and yr 10/11/12.

i.e. one class in Year 8/9 will have around 25 students in it all from Rice House

**Why do this?**

It attempts to create a genuine ‘family spirit’.

Instead of big brother/sister, little brother/sister for our Year 8s and Year 12s that we currently do, it does this for all year levels.

Adolescents need for a sense of ‘belonging’ and a House provides consistency of belonging across their journey. Our teachers remain in the same House for their whole time at SJC but could change year levels every year. Having students in Housegroups creates some consistency.

The development of a strong relationship with a Home Room Teacher and Head of House will increase over their time at SJC.

House identity built around a patron e.g. Mary MacKillop, Edmund Rice or Benedict. House focus that is more than Sports Day i.e. charitable causes, community service, feast day etc are shown to increase in those schools that have this system.

Other benefits include:

- Develops peer-support structures for students.
- Encourages leadership within the student community.
- Highlights our Christian calling and vocation to love our neighbour as ourselves. (*Mark 12:31*)
- Ensures greater student participation in College events.
The House system allows students to experience the support and friendship of their peers through engagement in a variety of activities that incorporate students from all year levels. This in turn, creates smaller communities within the larger College community. Upon enrolment, a student becomes a member of one of our three Houses.

**Are they called other names in other schools?**

They are sometimes called Vertical Caregroups.

**What will the students actually do in caregroup / housegroup time?**

For the morning and afternoon caregroup it will be mainly business as usual. i.e. morning notices, absentees, planning housegroup events, checking diaries, clean up, etc

What will also happen is a stronger induction to their House Patron and activities for House spirit.

There will also be activities in this time with other caregroups from the same house.

Plus activities where younger students interact with older students in the same house (similar to our current Big Brother Big Sister program).

Students can still “sit” with friends in housegroups or the teacher may have a seating plan – all the same as now.

Yr 10s won’t be ‘made’ to sit with Year 12s in caregroup etc

**If caregroup/housegroup is not changing too much, aside from the structure, then when will all these ‘house’ things take place?**

Some will simply be on our existing days of fun/celebration/sport etc i.e. Sports Day, cheerleading, Patrons Day, Masses, Assemblies, Charity Days, food stalls at recess, can drives, coloured clothes days etc

All of these will now be house based. Currently some were house based, some were year level based, some were SRC committees etc. Most will now purely be housed based.

Each House Patrons has a different day to acknowledge during the year.

Each House will take on a different charity.

Each House leader will develop their own activities to promote spirit, student development etc i.e. Rice House Leader may be so impressed with how Rice have embraced a local charity that he/she arranges a breakfast for Rice students before school.

**Does this mean my child will do subjects with other year levels?**

No. They may have some general information or pastoral care sessions with other year levels i.e. listening to a talk from SAPOL, although that happens now.
The actual structural change is only for caregroup time. The long term social benefits come over time from how they students develop a sense of team (house) together with the consistency of having the same staff mentor them over 5-6 years.

**What if I don’t want my child ‘mixing’ with older children and their language/conversation?**

No real change here from how things are done now. Students have lots of contact with older students if they choose or none if they choose to.

We also find in country schools that students mix, out of school, with other year groups anyway (sports, dance, arts etc).

Ultimately students can mix with older students currently in the library, oval, grandstand, courts etc. Plus the age on their ID card doesn’t always relate to their current maturity or social interests.

But no requirement for Year 8 Mackillop students to mix with Year 12 Mackillop students.

Year levels will still have their own areas within the yard i.e. Year 12s in CBC or Science

Most students coming into the college at Year 7 and 8 already come from classes of mixed ages i.e. Year 6/7 class.

**Are Year 7s part of this change?**

No. Not at this stage. We are keen to ensure the change for Year 7s moving to a secondary setting is done without any additional changes. However, it would be expected that in the coming years, that one set of house groups are made up of Years 7-9 and the other Year 10-12.

R-6 is not part of this at all.

**Do year levels keep their various areas within the yard?**

We still have some areas that are normally ‘reserved’ for specific age groups i.e. Year 8/9s have the Xavier courtyard/grass, Year 11/12 the Piazza etc

**What do we call the groups?**

We are asking the staff and students that question now i.e. Rice A or Benedict C, or using the teacher name i.e. MacKillop Baker or where their home room is located i.e. Benedict 03 or something else??

**How will SRC look next year?**

Similar to how it is now. There will be House Leaders instead of SRC reps from each year level. So it won’t be that the House Leaders are all Year 11 and 12. Currently we have 2 separate sets of students who are SRC leaders and House leaders. This is one of the reasons we are looking at changing to the new structure. We will now have one set of college leaders, called House Leaders.

**College Photos?**

Will be done in their House Groups with a separate Year 12 photo.
How will caregroup reports be constructed?
Similar to how they are now. Your child will get a housegroup report comment outlining how they are doing at school in general, participating, uniform, socialising, punctuality etc. No change.

Will students still have retreats, camps etc in year levels?
Yes. No change.
We may look at some retreats being in house groups in the future but for these standalone events, year levels are fine.

Sports Day?
No change. Is already a house event anyway that is done in age groups not year level groups.

Will current students remain in the same house?
Yes. Students stay in their current house they were allocated when they enrolled at Samaritan.

Where will the caregroups be located?
Yet to be formally decided but each house will have its own distinct area with Saint John’s. For example, all the Rice house groups may be in Xavier, all of Benedict might be in Saint John’s Wing, Design Centre & Library and all of the MacKillop might be in CBC.

PE uniform has house colours on it but normal uniform doesn’t. Will there be any changes to the normal uniform to show house team?
We are looking at how best to proudly display the students’ house on their normal uniform but for the near future, there will be no change to the normal uniform nor will students wear PE uniform whenever they choose.

What transition measures are in place to help students/staff with this change?
Staff have already begun sessions in after school meetings about what this would look like and the changes to be expected plus looking at the myths and what isn’t changing. Staff who have taught in vertical caregroup schools or who were students in these schools, have spoken to the staff.
Students have also already begun discussing this in class. Further information and activities will come later in the term.