

St Andrew's College

Makhanda, South Africa



On the Eastern Cape frontier since 1855, house tradition and shared classes with a sister school shape a distinct boarding life.

RANKING DIMENSIONS

Overall	71/100
Academic outcomes	73/100
University placement	71/100
Prestige & heritage	76/100
Alumni network	75/100
Facilities	78/100
Transparency	65/100

EDITOR'S VERDICT

What sets St Andrew’s College apart is not a glossy international-school formula but a very specific South African boarding tradition: an Anglican boys’ school in Makhanda, founded in 1855, with a sister-school relationship that shapes daily life as much as the timetable. The school covers ages 11 to 18, runs as a boarding school, and declares the IB, with Cambridge also listed among its accreditations. That combination matters. Parents are not buying a generic “global” product here; they are choosing a school with **deep institutional memory**, a strong house culture and a social life built around boarding routines, fixtures, chapel tradition and shared activities with a neighbouring girls’ school. In a market crowded with new-build campuses and interchangeable language, St Andrew’s has a **clearer identity** than most.

Its market position sits in the serious-but-not-stratospheric bracket. The average annual day fee is **\$9,902** and the average annual boarding fee is **\$22,152** across the full age range, which places it as an accessible full-boarding proposition by international standards and a distinct alternative to far pricier British-style boarding imports elsewhere on the continent. The draw here is not luxury; it is *structure, continuity and belonging*. Parents who want a highly curated cosmopolitan day school with multiple pathways and glossy facilities front and centre will find stronger options elsewhere. Parents who value boarding as a formative education in itself, and who want English-medium schooling with recognised international accreditation, will find a school with a *sharply defined character*.

The right pupil for St Andrew's is one who will thrive in a traditional setting with rules, ritual and communal expectations. This is a school for boys who want the full boarding experience rather than a loose day-school add-on, and for families comfortable with an Anglican foundation and the cultural weight that comes with a school founded in **1855**. It suits students who gain from team structures, inter-house loyalty and a busy collective life. It does not suit children who need anonymity, constant flexibility or a broad à la carte menu of school identities. Put plainly: St Andrew's belongs on a shortlist for parents seeking *old-school boarding substance* in South Africa, not for those shopping for a frictionless international brand.

STRENGTHS

- Founded in 1855 by the Right Reverend John Armstrong, the first Bishop of Grahamstown, making it one of South Africa's oldest independent schools, with a Herbert Baker-designed chapel at its heart.
- In 2019 the school also implemented the Cambridge Assessment International Education A-Level curriculum as an alternative syllabus to the IEB, giving families a choice between a South African and an internationally portable exit qualification.
- St Andrew's College enjoys a unique co-ordinate relationship with its neighbouring sister school, the Diocesan School for Girls (DSG), with classes shared by boys and girls from Grade 10-12, softening the single-sex boarding experience for older pupils.
- The teacher:pupil ratio is about 1:10 which enables both a range of subjects and individual aspirations to flourish in classes which are usually upwards of 20, within a boarding community of roughly 450-480 boys.
- Intake includes the Eastern Cape, the rest of South Africa, and the world, including Kenya, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Zambia, the United Kingdom, and Hong Kong, giving genuine international breadth despite the rural setting.

TRADE-OFFS

- In Grades 8 and 9, most of the classes are single-gender, so families wanting full coeducation from the outset of secondary school will not find it here.
- The school is widely searched for its IB credentials due to naming overlap with unrelated 'St Andrew's' schools abroad, but its actual exit qualifications are the IEB National Senior Certificate and Cambridge International A-Levels, not the IB Diploma.
- Makhanda (Grahamstown) is a small Eastern Cape university town well away from a major international gateway airport, meaning longer transfer connections for overseas boarding families.
- School fees: R 340 064 p.a. (boarding); R 143 064 p.a. (day scholars), a substantial outlay by South African standards, and figures should be reconfirmed directly with the school as they date quickly.

ADMISSIONS

Main entry points are Grade 8 and Grade 10, with occasional openings elsewhere subject to space. Applications go directly to the school and typically involve a report, references and an interview. No separate admission fee is charged, though an entrance deposit is requested once a boy is accepted, usually the year before entry. International boarders form a visible share of intake, drawn from across Southern and East Africa, the UK and Hong Kong. As a long-established, well-regarded boys' boarding school, popular entry years can be competitive, and early application is advised.

WTS RATING 

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