

Rondebosch Boys' High School

Cape Town, South Africa



Below Table Mountain, this 1897 Cape day school helps keep alive the country's longest-running interschool athletics meet, since 1934.

RANKING DIMENSIONS

Overall	70/100
Academic outcomes	72/100
University placement	69/100
Prestige & heritage	72/100
Alumni network	71/100
Facilities	69/100
Transparency	62/100

EDITOR'S VERDICT

Rondebosch Boys' High School sits in the top tier of Cape Town’s established boys’ schools: old, public, academically serious and culturally entrenched. Founded in ****1897****, it carries the weight of history without needing to advertise it. This is a non-religious English-medium day school for boys aged 5–18, running the IEB curriculum and doing so at scale, with an average class size of ****28**** and a student–teacher ratio of ****14:1****. The distinction here is not novelty but continuity: **institutional confidence**, **deep-rooted tradition** and a school identity tied tightly to Cape Town itself. The reference to the country’s longest-running interschool athletics meet, sustained since ****1934****, tells you a great deal. Rondebosch values ritual, rivalry and belonging.

What puts it on a shortlist is the combination of public-school heritage and a broad, disciplined education in a major city setting. Parents looking for glossy reinvention will not find it here; parents looking for a school with **serious academic intent**, a settled culture and a strong extra-curricular backbone will. The all-boys format remains a decisive factor. For the right family, that brings focus, camaraderie and a clear sense of identity. For others, it will rule the school out immediately. That is not a weakness; it is a precise market position. Rondebosch also carries genuine intellectual cachet: it counts Allan M. Cormack, Nobel laureate in Physiology and Medicine, among its former pupils. That matters less as a marketing line than as evidence of **long memory** and **academic ambition**.

The student who thrives here is not chasing experimentation or a progressive educational philosophy. He wants structure, competition and a school with **backbone**. He will value sport, house spirit and tradition, and he will not be intimidated by an environment shaped by more than a century of precedent. Boys who enjoy being part of something bigger than themselves, and who respond well to **high expectations** and visible standards, will fit. Families who want extensive public disclosure on outcomes will find some opacity; the school does not publish the kind of headline performance data that international parents now expect as routine. Even so, for parents seeking a respected Cape Town day school with stature, continuity and **earned local standing**, Rondebosch warrants close attention.

STRENGTHS

- Rondebosch is one of the oldest schools in the country, having been established in 1897, and is the only school in the Western Cape to have a Nobel Prize laureate, Allan M. Cormack in Physiology and Medicine.
- The 2024 matric cohort achieved a Bachelor pass rate of 92.8% while 98% of this group qualify for tertiary study, with 99.4% of the Rondebosch group passing the examination and the 167 candidates achieving 391 A symbols.
- Rondebosch is the traditional rival of the nearby school Diocesan College (Bishops) as well as SACS and WBHS, with derby matches played almost every weekend during the winter sports season, giving pupils a strong co-curricular sporting culture.
- The boarding houses at Rondebosch can accommodate 120 boys, so relocating families outside the immediate catchment have a residential option alongside the main day intake.
- The Old Boys' Union was established in 1909 and is one of the strongest of its kind in South Africa, reflecting a long-standing alumni network that can support networking and mentorship.

TRADE-OFFS

- Rondebosch is a public English medium high school for boys, so it is not an option for families seeking co-education.
- Public school admissions prioritize applicants based on proximity to the school and the availability of space, rather than academic prowess, which can disadvantage relocating expat families without an established local address.
- As a WCED-accredited public school, Rondebosch follows the National Senior Certificate pathway rather than the IEB curriculum sometimes preferred by internationally-mobile families, and cohorts are sizeable — 167 candidates sat matric finals in 2024.
- The boarding houses at Rondebosch can accommodate 120 boys, a modest capacity that limits full-boarding options for the majority of families arriving from outside Cape Town.

ADMISSIONS

Rondebosch Boys' High is a Western Cape Education Department (WCED) public school; Grade 8 applications are submitted online via the WCED portal, with the window typically opening in March and closing in April for the following academic year. There is no formal academic entrance exam, and public-school policy prioritises geographic proximity and sibling links over academic selection, though demand for places is high given the school's reputation. A limited boarding house (120 places) admits boys from further afield. Fees are payable over ten months with an early-settlement discount; families should confirm current tuition and boarding costs directly with the admissions office.

WTS RATING 

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