

The Columbus School

Medellín, Colombia



Since 1947, an Envigado hillside campus fusing American college-prep with IB primary years amid the Andean valley of Medellin.

RANKING DIMENSIONS

Overall	54/100
Academic outcomes	58/100
University placement	55/100
Prestige & heritage	52/100
Alumni network	45/100
Facilities	62/100
Transparency	48/100

EDITOR'S VERDICT

The Columbus School sits in a strong niche at the top of Medellín’s international market: an established, secular day school with ****1954**** roots, a bilingual English-Spanish environment, and a curriculum that combines American college-prep with the IB in the primary years. That mix matters. It gives families a route into US-style schooling without sacrificing local fluency or international mobility. The age span, ****3–18****, also gives the school unusual continuity. Children can start early, stay put through adolescence, and avoid the disruption that comes with changing systems midstream. For parents who want **institutional stability**, **serious academic intent** and a campus life tied to one community rather than a transient expatriate churn, Columbus earns a place on the shortlist.

What sets it apart is not novelty but synthesis. Plenty of schools offer bilingual education; plenty promise international-mindedness. Columbus ties those claims to a long-established local reputation and a clearer academic structure than many rivals. The American framework gives shape to progression in the secondary years; the IB Primary Years Programme adds inquiry and breadth at the start. That combination suits families who want their children taught in English to a high standard while remaining fully operational in Spanish and anchored in Colombia. The result is **a demanding bilingual education** with **a real sense of permanence**. Parents who dislike educational fashion and want a school that has already proved it can endure will find that attractive.

This is not the right school for every child. It suits motivated, adaptable students who can handle bilingual expectations and who benefit from a campus culture built around steady performance rather than reinvention. Pupils who thrive here will value **academic structure**, a broad peer group, and the discipline of moving between two languages every day. Families looking for boarding, a narrowly local curriculum, or a looser, alternative ethos should look elsewhere. Families looking for **long-term educational continuity**, international options at graduation, and a school with enough history to know what it is will see the case immediately.

STRENGTHS

- The campus spans 21 hectares with facilities including 70 classrooms, eight science labs, two libraries, gyms, fields for soccer and baseball, and outdoor theater.
- The school runs on a Calendar B system, with the school year going from August to June, which eases transitions for families relocating from North America or Europe.
- The school blends the IB Primary Years Programme with an American curriculum, with English as the primary language of instruction in most classrooms and daily Spanish.
- Notable programs include COSMUN, Columbus Life extracurriculars, and student governance through StuCo and National Honor Society.
- Columbus School runs bus routes across most of Medellin, including Laureles and Belen, widening practical access beyond the immediate Envigado/El Poblado catchment.

TRADE - OFFS

- The Columbus School is a Candidate School for the Primary Years Program (PYP), and this school is pursuing authorization as an IB World School, meaning full IB status is not yet confirmed.
- Tuition is among the highest in the city, with annual tuition ranging from COP 39,079,260 for 2026/27, plus separate charges for food and transport.
- The school is located at Km 16 (Alto de Las Palmas), Envigado, in the hills outside central Medellin, meaning many families rely on bus transport rather than a short local commute.
- One relocation account describes extremely tight admissions timing, noting the family secured exactly one open seat at my son's grade level, due to a family that pulled out at the last minute, suggesting limited spare capacity at some grade levels.

ADMISSIONS

Primary entry point is K4 (age four), with an extemporaneous process available for later grades and mid-year international transfers. The school holds information meetings for prospective parents months ahead of the August (Calendar B) start, and regional guides note IB-curriculum schools in Medellin typically require an entrance assessment, English-proficiency check and family interview. Given reports of very limited spare seats, applying well before the intake year, rather than after arrival, is advisable for competitive grade levels.

WTS RATING 

This profile summarises editorial research by World's Top Schools. Verify all admissions dates directly with the school before submitting. Sources are cited in the full online profile at WorldsTopSchools.com/schools/sch_ee5c48e1af.