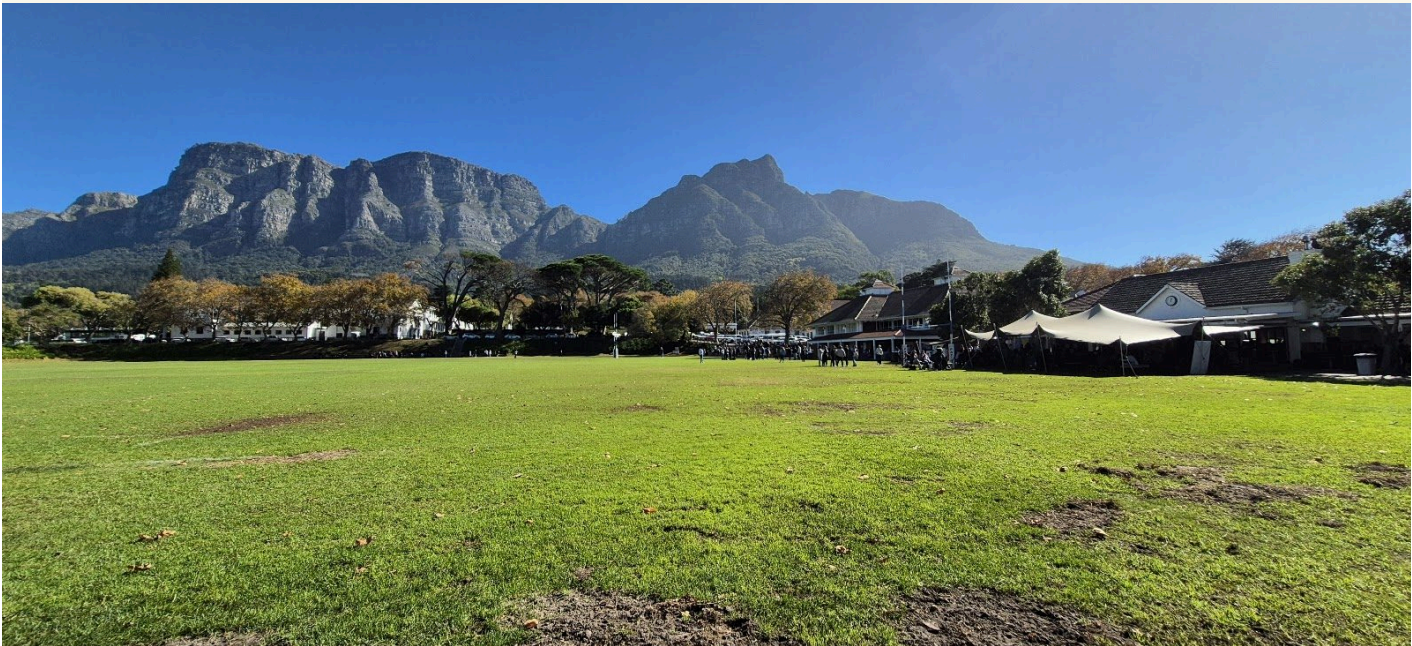


South African College High School

Newlands, Cape Town, South Africa



Founded in 1829 as the seed of the University of Cape Town, this Newlands campus still nominates boys for Rhodes' original scholarship.

RANKING DIMENSIONS

Overall	61/100
Academic outcomes	72/100
University placement	70/100
Prestige & heritage	78/100
Alumni network	10/100
Facilities	65/100
Transparency	52/100

EDITOR'S VERDICT

South African College High School occupies rare ground in South African education: a boys’ school founded in ****1829****, on a Newlands campus, with both day and boarding provision, and a direct institutional link to the origins of the University of Cape Town. That history matters because it gives the school a defined identity rather than a borrowed one. SACS trades on continuity, ritual and academic seriousness. The curriculum is the IEB leading to the NSC, the language of instruction is English, and the school holds IEB and ISASA accreditation. Parents looking for a co-educational, progressive, pastorally expansive environment should look elsewhere. This is a traditional school with a ***deep historical spine***, a ***clear sense of hierarchy*** and a ***serious academic brief***.

What puts it on a shortlist is the combination of old-school prestige and public-school reality. SACS is not a boutique international school insulated from its setting; it is a long-established South African institution with a strong local reputation and a boarding arm that extends its reach beyond Cape Town. For families who value *institutional weight*, *earned reputation* and a school culture shaped over nearly **200** years, that carries real force. The editorial tagline matters too: this is the school that still nominates boys for Rhodes' original scholarship. That does not turn every pupil into a scholar, but it signals a culture that prizes intellectual attainment, leadership and competitive distinction.

The caveat is straightforward. A school this traditional does not suit every boy. Some boys thrive in a structured, competitive environment with visible expectations around conduct, commitment and performance. Others chafe. The right student for SACS is academically capable, resilient, comfortable in an all-boys setting, and energised by *old Cape confidence* rather than intimidated by it. He does not need hand-holding at every turn; he needs challenge, peers who push him, and a school with *hard edges* as well as opportunities. For that student, SACS has strong appeal: a recognised name, a durable culture and a place in the South African school landscape that few rivals can match.

STRENGTHS

- Founded in 1829, it claims to be the oldest continuously run school in South Africa, giving it a long institutional history and strong old-boy network in Cape Town.
- In addition to the normal FET curriculum, boys can take GCSE in Maths and Chemistry from Grade 8, and senior students may choose Cambridge A-level subjects in English, Mathematics, Biology or Chemistry, starting in Grade 10 and completing in Grade 12, giving academically strong pupils an internationally recognised qualification alongside the NSC.
- 2026 day fees are R72,800 for Grade 8 and R71,000 for Grades 9-12, with boarding an additional R79,000 a year, making it markedly cheaper than Cape Town's leading independent schools because it operates as a fee-paying public school.
- SACS led the Open Schools' Movement of the 1980s and early 1990s, reopening its doors to boys of all races in 1992 ahead of formal legislative change, a notable historical marker of the school's role in desegregation.
- The school has occupied the historic Montebello Estate in Newlands since 1959, land donated in part by the widow of mining magnate Sir Max Michaelis, giving pupils access to extensive grounds at the foot of Table Mountain shared with the junior school.

TRADE-OFFS

- It is an all-boys school, so it is not an option for families wanting co-education or with daughters to place.
- As a Western Cape Education Department public school rather than an independent institution, applicants must apply through the WCED Admissions Portal, and in practice Southern Suburbs schools fill largely from feeder-zone and sibling categories, with a handful of Cape Town schools dramatically over-subscribed, so families outside the catchment or without local ties face real difficulty securing a place regardless of fees paid.
- Its claim to be the oldest continuously run school in South Africa is disputed, given a number of older schools such as Simons Town High School, Outeniqua High School, Muir College and Durbanville High School, so prospective parents should treat the school's own heritage marketing with some caution.
- The rugby-centric, tradition-heavy culture and prefect system rooted in over 190 years of history may not suit boys who prefer a less competitive or less institutionally formal environment.

ADMISSIONS

Main entry is Grade 8, with limited places in Grades 9-12. As a WCED public school, applications go through the provincial ePortal rather than the school's own selection process, with priority given to boys living or whose parents work within the feeder zone, then siblings, then remaining space. SACS runs an academic scholarship exam for Grade 8 entrants, and boarding applicants must submit handwritten motivational letters from both learner and parents. Southern Suburbs schools of this profile are known to be heavily oversubscribed, so early, zone-compliant applications matter more than at independent schools.

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_0e131054f6.