

Carlucci American International School of Lisbon

Lisbon, Portugal



The Iberian Peninsula's oldest American school pairs a U.S. diploma with the IB from its Sintra hillside campus.

RANKING DIMENSIONS

Overall	76/100
Academic outcomes	79/100
University placement	78/100
Prestige & heritage	77/100
Alumni network	74/100
Facilities	75/100
Transparency	82/100

EDITOR'S VERDICT

Carlucci American International School of Lisbon occupies a rare slot in the market: an American day school in Portugal with real history, not a recent international entrant. Founded in **1956**, it is the oldest American school on the Iberian Peninsula, and that matters. Schools with this kind of longevity tend to have a clearer institutional identity than newer competitors still assembling one. CAISL's version is straightforward: English-medium, American in curriculum, non-religious, and built around a campus in Linhó that brings together arts, academics and athletics in one place. The school's own language leans hard on belonging and the "whole child"; stripped of the brochure gloss, the substantive point is that CAISL wants breadth, not a narrow exam factory. For families who want a *stable*, *all-through*

international school from age 3 to 18, that has weight.

What makes it special is the combination of U.S. educational structure with Lisbon-area internationalism and a long local foothold. The school started with 9 pupils in a small apartment and now has over 700 students, which places it in a useful middle ground: big enough to offer range, small enough to avoid the impersonality that creeps into very large international schools. Its average annual day fee is **€16,621**, which puts it in the *serious but not stratospheric* bracket for an international school of this type. Recent destinations listed include King's College London, Lancaster University and Goldsmiths, University of London. That is not a trophy-destination list designed to dazzle; it is a *credible* signal that students move on to recognised UK universities. Parents who need a school to publish a flood of aggregate outcomes data will find the picture thin. The school does not disclose a broad spread of destination or exam statistics here, so families comparing on hard outcomes alone will want sharper detail than CAISL currently puts into public view.

The pupil who will want CAISL is not the child chasing a hyper-pressurised, rank-obsessed atmosphere. This school suits internationally mobile families who want an American educational frame in English, a campus community with a strong social core, and room for sport and the arts alongside academics. It will also suit students who benefit from *known-and-noticed* school culture rather than anonymity. The less obvious caveat is that families seeking a sharply specialised academic brand, or the relentless intensity of the most selective British-style schools, may find CAISL's balanced model too *deliberately broad*. On a Lisbon shortlist, though, it earns its place because it offers something distinct: a *mature*, long-established American international education with enough scale to feel complete and enough history to feel rooted.

STRENGTHS

- Founded in 1956, CAISL is the oldest American school in the Iberian Peninsula and the only school in Portugal assisted by the US State Department's Office of Overseas Schools.
- Offers a dual-diploma pathway, awarding both the American High School Diploma and, in the final two years, the IB Diploma as an authorized IB World School.
- Accredited by the Middle States Association and holds a permanent license from the Portuguese Ministry of Education, giving formal external validation of standards.
- Draws a genuinely international community of roughly 700-750 students from more than 50 countries across PreK-12.
- Runs an extensive school bus network linking the Linho/Sintra campus with Cascais and central Lisbon, easing commutes for families outside the immediate area.

TRADE-OFFS

- Campus is in Linho, Sintra, around 20 minutes from central Lisbon, meaning a real commute for families based in the city centre or Cascais without relying on the school bus.
- Annual tuition runs from roughly EUR 12,000 to over EUR 23,000 depending on grade for 2025/26, a significant recurring cost before one-off fees.
- Day school only, with no boarding option, so it is not viable for families seeking residential schooling.
- The CAISL Scholarship is not currently available to new students, limiting financial-aid routes for incoming families.

ADMISSIONS

Admissions are rolling and year-round, with new students accepted at any point though a September start is preferred. Applicants submit an online application form together with three years of prior school records; a EUR 100 application fee applies. Places are assessed on previous academic records and the school's capacity to meet the applicant's needs, including learning-support requirements. As the only US State Department-assisted school in Portugal, demand can be steady from relocating diplomatic, corporate and expatriate families, though the school does not publish acceptance-rate data.

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_624bb454ed.