

Gimnasio Moderno

Bogotá, Colombia



Since 1914, this Bogota pioneer of South America's Escuela Nueva movement still runs its IB classrooms on Montessori and Decroly roots.

RANKING DIMENSIONS

Overall	76/100
Academic outcomes	72/100
University placement	68/100
Prestige & heritage	86/100
Alumni network	84/100
Facilities	76/100
Transparency	80/100

EDITOR'S VERDICT

Gimnasio Moderno matters because it is not another late-entry Bogotá private school borrowing progressive language for effect. It has been in the city’s educational bloodstream since **1914**, and that age counts for something when it is tied to a defined pedagogical lineage rather than empty prestige. The school’s own admissions language still points parents to its philosophy and project before process, and that order is revealing. This is a non-religious day school for ages **3–18**, teaching in Spanish and English, with the IB in place inside an institution rooted in the Escuela Nueva tradition and, as your context notes, Montessori and Decroly thinking. That mix gives the school its distinction: *intellectual inheritance with modern structure*, not a generic bilingual-IB formula.

What puts it on a shortlist is the combination of historical weight and educational seriousness. Bogotá has no shortage of expensive schools; fewer carry a coherent idea of schooling across a full age range. Gimnasio Moderno does. The school’s public face still gives space to philosophy, ethics and public conversation — the homepage podcast on artificial intelligence and bias is a small but telling example — which points to a culture that treats ideas as part of daily school life, not decorative extras. Parents looking for *old-school civic confidence* and *a real pedagogical backbone* will find more substance here than at schools built around facilities first and mission second. It also has the advantage of being an IB World School without reading like an IB franchise.

The trade-off is clear. This is not the school for families who want a glossy, hyper-managed international product with every outcome packaged into digestible metrics. The school does not flood the public domain with aggregate exam data or performance dashboards, so parents who demand constant quantification will want more disclosure. Nor is it the place for children who need a narrowly coached, transactional route through school. Gimnasio Moderno suits students who enjoy discussion, can work within a culture with deep traditions, and respond to *freedom with intellectual discipline*. The best fit is a child who is curious, articulate, culturally grounded and comfortable in a school with *institutional memory* — one that values thought, conversation and formation as much as credentials.

STRENGTHS

- Founded in 1914 by Colombians following the initiative of Agustin Nieto Caballero, and awarded national monument status due to its longevity and historical stature, making it one of Colombia's oldest and most historically significant schools.
- From age 4 through Preschool and Primary, the school offers 75% of its subjects entirely in English, including Math, History, Arts, and Science, and has established agreements with the University of Cambridge and the University of Michigan to conduct international certifications.
- The school's pedagogy centers on the 'Discipline of Trust,' a principle following Maria Montessori's active discipline that seeks to instill self-confidence and inner discipline in students, as well as a deeper sense of responsibility, honesty, loyalty, and friendship.
- Its marching band, one of the oldest school marching bands in Bogota at more than 50 years old, has won the national Batuta de Plata competition five times between 1999 and 2017.
- The school has managed Gimnasio Sabio Caldas for over 20 years, a public school providing quality education to approximately 1,200 children and young people from the Ciudad Bolivar locality, a notable community outreach commitment.

TRADE-OFFS

- The school is a boys' school that is in the process of implementing a gradual mixture toward coeducation, so full mixed-gender schooling is a recent transition rather than an established norm.
- The school is transitioning to the B Calendar, a shift away from Colombia's standard national academic year, which can complicate mid-year transfers to or from other local schools.
- Gimnasio Moderno is still in the process of accreditation with the Council of International Schools, with the goal of establishing connections with institutions worldwide, rather than operating as a long-established IB World School.
- The school does not run admissions processes for grades eight through eleven, nor for repeating students, which excludes families relocating with older teenagers.

ADMISSIONS

Entry is concentrated in the early years. From Grade 2 to Grade 7, candidates attend a 'Dia Gimnasiano' visit day and sit a paid entrance exam (around COP 300,000), submitted alongside a full application form and required documents. No admissions are run for grades 8 through 11, and repeating students are not considered, so the school is effectively closed to families arriving with older teenagers. Annual deadlines apply (historically mid-May for the following school year), and given the school's long-standing reputation, places at the younger entry points are competitive.

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_66db666925.