

International School of Kenya

Nairobi, Kenya



Nestled on a former Nairobi coffee plantation, this embassy-backed campus channels a demanding IB pathway into global universities.

RANKING DIMENSIONS

Overall	63/100
Academic outcomes	73/100
University placement	71/100
Prestige & heritage	72/100
Alumni network	1/100
Facilities	74/100
Transparency	66/100

EDITOR'S VERDICT

Set on a former Nairobi coffee plantation, the International School of Kenya has the physical scale and institutional heft that many city schools lack. It is a private, non-profit school in Nairobi for ages 3 to 18, founded in 1976, with English as the language of instruction and CIS and IBO accreditation. The academic shape matters: this is not an American school wearing an IB badge at the top, but a British-and-IB proposition that asks families to buy into an international track with real academic demands. The average annual fee is ****\$25,000**** for day pupils and ****\$40,000**** for boarding, which places ISK firmly in the premium tier for East Africa.

What puts ISK on a serious shortlist is the combination of campus, governance and outcomes. Embassy-linked schools can drift into social-club territory; ISK’s draw is that it couples that diplomatic and expatriate base with a *hard-edged academic route* to university. Recent destinations listed in the school context include Boston University, Carleton College and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. That is a small sample, not a triumphalist spray of names, but it points to a school with genuine global mobility rather than a narrow UK-only or local-university pipeline. The non-religious stance also broadens its appeal for internationally mobile families who want a school that is culturally mixed without a confessional frame.

This is best for students who thrive in a *cosmopolitan, high-expectation* environment and who will use the size of the campus and the international peer group rather than hide inside them. Families who want close doctrinal identity, a softer academic pace or a bargain fee point should look elsewhere. ISK suits ambitious, outward-facing children who can handle transition, mix easily across nationalities and aim for overseas higher education. It has at least **2** notable alumni catalogued in Wikidata and a history stretching back to **1976**;

more important than either figure is the school’s enduring role as Nairobi’s *upper-tier international default* for parents who want an established English-medium school with recognised accreditation and a clear route into the IB years.

STRENGTHS

- Long-established school founded in 1976 through a partnership between the US Embassy and Canadian High Commission, giving it a well-documented institutional history in Nairobi.
- Dual accreditation from the Council of International Schools and the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools provides external quality assurance.
- Sizeable, genuinely international student body of roughly 1,000 students drawn from more than 65 nationalities, offering a highly diverse peer group.
- Spacious 40-acre campus with a competition swimming pool, five tennis courts, multiple playing fields, a Track & Field facility added in 2023-24, and a 30,000-book library.
- Around 70 percent of graduates complete the full IB Diploma alongside the school's own accredited High School Diploma, and the school runs a scholarship covering full costs for selected Kenyan students.

TRADE-OFFS

- Fees are substantial for the region, with published tuition ranging roughly from \$14,550 to \$34,800 a year plus a one-off capital levy reported at around \$10,000-\$11,000 for new entrants.
- The school's own admissions priority list places children of US and Canadian government staff, ISK employees, scholarship recipients and siblings ahead of other applicants when grade places are limited, which can disadvantage unaffiliated expatriate or local families.
- The curriculum is North American/IB in structure rather than a true British national curriculum, so families specifically seeking GCSEs or A-Levels will not find them here despite the school's broad international label.
- The 40-acre campus sits on the outskirts of Nairobi, meaning families living centrally face a longer commute or reliance on the optional bus service, which carries its own additional fee.

ADMISSIONS

ISK admits from Pre-Kindergarten (age 3) through Grade 12 and accepts applications year-round, though popular grades can fill up, especially given a formal priority order favouring children of US/Canadian government staff, ISK employees, scholarship holders and siblings. The process requires an online application, a non-refundable \$400 application fee, prior school records, and a school-administered assessment before a place is confirmed; a \$1,000 deposit secures enrolment. Entry is described as non-discriminatory in principle, but space-limited grades apply the stated priority hierarchy.

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_a8752086a5.