

Colegio San Carlos

Bogotá, Colombia



Benedictine monks from a North Dakota abbey built this all-boys Bogota institution on 'Ora et Labora,' a discipline that has shaped generations of national leaders.

RANKING DIMENSIONS

Overall	60/100
Academic outcomes	68/100
University placement	60/100
Prestige & heritage	65/100
Alumni network	52/100
Facilities	61/100
Transparency	42/100

EDITOR'S VERDICT

Colegio San Carlos occupies a distinct niche in Bogotá: an all-boys, private, bilingual Catholic day school with a long institutional memory and a clear social role. Founded in **1949**, it has educated boys for **13** years of schooling, from age **5** to **18**, in Spanish and English under the Colombian curriculum. The draw is not novelty. It is continuity, discipline and network. This is the kind of school families choose when they want *structure with weight*, *old-school authority* and a peer group shaped by ambition as much as by tradition.

What sets San Carlos apart is its combination of single-sex education, bilingual delivery and a reputation tied to leadership formation in Colombia. That reputation matters in Bogotá’s upper-tier private market, where schools trade not only on academics but on the calibre and cohesion of the families they attract. San Carlos offers a **serious masculine culture** that many schools no longer attempt: ordered, duty-conscious and unapologetically conventional. For some boys, that framework is liberating. For others, it is constricting. Parents need to be clear-eyed on the point. This is not the right fit for a child who needs a loose, highly progressive or visibly experimental environment. It suits boys who thrive with rules, hierarchy, team spirit and a strong sense of institutional identity.

Why shortlist it? Because few schools in Bogotá combine this level of tradition with bilingual education and a brand that still carries social and cultural capital. The school’s value lies in **institutional gravity**, **a disciplined daily rhythm** and **a powerful old-boys aura**. It targets families who want their sons educated in a setting that treats character formation as seriously as classroom instruction. The trade-off is clear: breadth of published public detail is thin, and parents who want extensive disclosure on outcomes, university destinations or teaching method will find less than they get from more internationally marketed schools. Even so, for families seeking an all-boys Catholic education with **prestige without gimmicks** and **a firm hand on standards**, Colegio San Carlos belongs on the shortlist.

STRENGTHS

- Founded in 1960 by Benedictine monks from Assumption Abbey, North Dakota, giving the school a distinct religious and academic heritage rare among Bogota private schools.
- Bilingual Spanish-English instruction is embedded across the curriculum rather than offered as an add-on language programme.
- Scored 366 points in the 2024 Saber 11 (ICFES) national exams, placing it among the top-performing Calendar B private schools in Bogota.
- Admission is explicitly merit-based via entrance examination rather than through legacy or waiting-list systems, per the school's own stated admissions philosophy.
- Small class sizes of roughly 20-25 students, supporting closer teacher attention within a large overall student body.

TRADE-OFFS

- All-boys institution, which automatically excludes families seeking co-education or with daughters to enrol.
- Catholic Benedictine religious affiliation and formation may not suit strictly secular or non-Christian families.
- Annual pension (monthly fees) runs from roughly COP 1.3 million to COP 1.7 million depending on grade, plus a separate matricula fee, a meaningful recurring cost for expat budgets.
- Located in far-north Bogota (Usaquen, Calle 192), which can mean a longer commute for families based in other parts of the city.

ADMISSIONS

Entry is available at multiple grade levels, from Transición (kindergarten) through Bachillerato, with the school publishing separate inscription windows for primary and secondary grades each year (for example, Primaria 1-5 registration ran from August to May for the 2025-2026 cycle). The school states that places are awarded strictly by an admission exam based on each candidate's own abilities, rather than by priority lists. Application forms must be purchased online via the school website. Given its consistent top-tier ICFES results, competitiveness for places is likely to be moderate to high, particularly at entry-point grades.

WTS RATING 

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