



COWAN HOUSE

Independent Co-educational
Preparatory School

PROSPECTUS



Welcome to Cowan House, where every child is valued as a unique individual, and we strive to nurture their growth in a supportive and stimulating environment.

As the 7th headmaster at the school, I am excited to be part of a community that encourages children to explore, question, and develop their passions and excited to partner with our families on this educational journey. At Cowan House, we focus on providing a balanced, holistic experience—academic excellence is complemented by a strong sporting, cultural, and music program, where every child has the opportunity to shine and learn something new.

Our promise is to foster not only academic and sporting or cultural achievement but also and perhaps more importantly, character, confidence, and self-belief. Through a thoughtful, considered curriculum, we guide our pupils to be their best selves, ready for the challenges of Senior School and beyond. Our Christian values and family-oriented atmosphere help create a foundation for lifelong learning and growth in knowledge, spirit, and friendship.

As you explore our website, I invite you to consider the many opportunities for personal development that await your child at Cowan House, where our values of Be Yourself; Be Reasonable; Be Caring and Be Your Best are lived out daily and where curiosity, wonder, and the pursuit of excellence are at the heart of everything we do.

- **Mr James Hough**
Headmaster



COWAN HOUSE

Vision & Values

Unlocking potential, self-belief and curiosity in lifelong learning, through Christian principles.



Cowan Cubs

The Foundation years - Grade RRR to Grade R



Play is at the heart of education and the impetus for learning in our Pre Primary which caters for girls and boys from age 3 to 6 in our Grade RRR, RR and R classes. We have 2 classes per grade.





Our children learn in small, nurturing classes whilst being free to explore our expansive well-equipped play areas; truly the best of both worlds. Added to this, are the broader experiences of 'Big School' lessons in the Computer Lab, learning to dance, sing and play instruments in the Music and Drama Departments, getting lost in story time in the Knowledge Centre, and learning to co-ordinate movement in Physical Education and extra-curricular sports.

By the time our Cowan Cubs are ready to move up to Grade 1, they are socially, emotionally, physically, and cognitively ready (and eager) to face the Junior Primary phase of their education.

Our Early Childhood Development Curriculum embraces the following seven learning areas:

Numeracy

Physical Development

Social & Emotional Development

Cognitive & Perceptual Development

Creative Arts

Language & Literacy

Discovery

In (and out)
the

Classroom



Thinking skills are central to learning at Cowan House. Our highly qualified and committed team of teachers shape our academic curriculum to develop pupils' ability to think individually and collaboratively, analytically and creatively.

We include a focus on social and environmental 'intelligences' as well as fostering an awareness of these responsibilities which will grow in relevance once 'outside' the classrooms of school.

Junior Primary

Grade 1 to Grade 3 - Welcome to 'Big' School!

Our Junior Primary offers a warm and nurturing start to your child's educational journey.

With two small classes per grade and the support of dedicated Teacher Assistants, we ensure that each child receives the individual attention they need. Learning takes place in a variety of stimulating environments - both indoors and outdoors - across our expansive campus, all designed to encourage curiosity and a love of learning.

Learning in the Junior Primary is rooted in team work and guided discovery. We embrace a range of learning styles, ensuring every child feels confident and supported in their own unique abilities.

Children regularly work in small groups, sharing ideas, exploring strategies, and learning from one another under the careful guidance of their teacher. Whether solving mathematical problems, taking part in reading sessions, or engaging in language enrichment guided by a speech therapist, pupils benefit from focused, interactive experiences that build both academic strength and communication skills. Thinking Maps enrich our curriculum by helping children develop cognitive and critical thinking skills from an early age.

This collaborative approach allows teachers to meet individual needs while encouraging children to take an active role in their learning. By constructing their own understanding, children develop confidence, curiosity, and a deeper grasp of key concepts across subjects.

While we lay a strong academic foundation, we also place great value on nurturing emotional and social intelligence, encouraging independence, and living out our school values rooted in Christian principles.

"Through this holistic approach, we aim to develop happy, confident, and capable learners - ready to excel both in and beyond the classroom."





Senior Primary

Grade 4 - Grade 7 - Learning for Life

Our Senior Primary offers a broad curriculum with specialist teachers preparing our pupils to achieve their full academic potential. They are challenged and prepared to grow in self confidence in order to be curious, express their ideas, try new ways of doing things, and to allow mistakes to propel new discoveries.

We prepare our Grade 7 pupils to leave Cowan House with confidence and a readiness to embrace new challenges. This journey begins in Grade 4, where pupils are gently introduced to the Senior Primary phase with a focus on developing independence and personal responsibility. While they are still primarily taught by their class teacher, they also begin engaging with specialist teachers, move between different classrooms, and experience a more formal approach to assessment.

The academic facilities on campus include classrooms all equipped with interactive white boards, our Innovation Centre housing the Science & DT Laboratory and Art Studio, and the Knowledge Centre which is home to our Media, Library and Research areas. At Cowan House we are fortunate to have specialist teachers who teach these lessons, as well as Afrikaans and Zulu. Streamed Mathematics and Afrikaans classes from Grade 5 to 7 ensure that all pupils' academic needs are met, preparing them for acceptance to their High Schools of choice.

Cultural Curriculum

Music at Cowan House

Music is an important part of life at Cowan House.

From Grade RRR to Grade 7, pupils explore their musical talents through singing, instrument practice, and ensemble work, building confidence and creative expression along the way. Our dedicated music school is designed to inspire with spacious classrooms, a Marimba room that rings with energy, and private practice spaces for focused learning.

Class music lessons at Cowan House include singing, theory, and practical experience with a range of instruments, building a solid musical foundation. Beyond the classroom, pupils can join Marimba groups, a string ensemble, or explore instruments through an introduction programme in Grade 4. Choral music is a key part of our music offering, with both junior and senior choirs regularly showcasing their talents.

Private lessons, available at Cowan House, give the pupils the opportunity to master their chosen instruments.





Visual Arts at Cowan House

At Cowan House, we embrace individualism, creativity and confident self-expression. In every art lesson, our goal is to form children who are confident expressing themselves, and comfortable 'thinking outside the box'.

Art classes are a valuable and exciting journey of creative thinking and production.

Art lessons begin in Grade RRR and continue through to Grade 7. Up to Grade 3, pupils enjoy class-based art sessions, after which they transition to specialised art lessons. From Grade 3 onwards, our art teacher provides an hour art lesson each week throughout the year.

From Grade 4 to Grade 7, children alternate between Art and Design & Technology. Lessons take place in the Innovation Centre, which is a hub of colour and creativity. Multiple skills are gained in these classes such as drawing, painting, printing, jewellery making, sculpting and pottery.





Dramatic Arts at Cowan House

Dramatic arts play an important role in developing empathy, critical thinking and confidence.

Formal drama lessons are included in the Cowan House curriculum from Grade 3 to Grade 7. These lessons lay a solid foundation in the subject, inspire pupils to nurture their talents, and equip them for future success in drama. Pupils are also encouraged to make the most of extra-curricular opportunities, these experiences help develop performance skills and self-assurance.

A highlight of the Drama programme is the annual Speech and Drama Festival, held in the second term. Every pupil from Grade 1 to Grade 7 takes part, with Junior and Senior Primary pupils performing choral verses. Many pupils also participate in individual events, including poetry recitation, sight reading, mime, show and tell, and public speaking. This festival provides a valuable platform for self-expression and growth, reinforcing the school's commitment to nurturing creativity and confidence in every child.





Sport at Cowan House

Sport is a critical part of a Primary School education and experience. From teamwork to discipline and sportsmanship, all these characteristics are important in developing a Cowan House child.

At Cowan House both sport and culture play an integral part of our holistic approach to education. We provide age-appropriate skills whilst growing the ability of each child. We strive to compete at all levels and across all age groups, and are guided by our Sports Vision Statement which is applicable to children, coaches and parents alike.

“To inspire and empower all children through engaging and inclusive sports experiences, promoting teamwork, resilience and a lifelong love for physical activity.”

Sport is an essential component in the development of any child, and for this reason, involvement in team sports is compulsory at Cowan House. We believe in participation, skills development and, most of all, a growing enjoyment of sport coupled with a healthy sense of competition on the field and the court.





Our Sporting Grounds

We are extremely fortunate to offer top-tier sports facilities that support every child's growth, participation and enjoyment in physical activity.

Multi-Sport Indoor Centre

- 1 full-sized indoor hockey field
- 2 indoor tennis courts
- 3 indoor basketball courts
- 2 indoor cricket nets

Aquatics Centre

- A 25m, 8-lane heated swimming pool for training and galas
- A 12.5m, 1m-deep heated pool for younger swimmers to build confidence

Outdoor Facilities

- 4 full-size sports fields
- 4 outdoor tennis courts
- 2 outdoor basketball courts
- 2 astro cricket pitches
- 1 turf cricket pitch
- 1 obstacle course





Learning Support

The Learning Support Department continues to grow as the needs of our children continue to change. Our philosophy is ***“To support each child to be the best they can be”***.

Our learning support interventions and the department under which they operate are well established. Teachers and the learning support department work together to identify and support children with learning difficulties. Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy, and Remedial Therapy are offered on campus at an additional cost to parents. Individual remedial therapy lessons provide an opportunity for children to receive extra reinforcement of specific skills and concepts that require further consolidation. Cowan House also has access to counselling psychologists who can assist our children on campus when needed.

Cowan House offers English and Mathematics small groups to our Grade 3, 4 and 5 classes, for those who may need additional support in one or both subjects. The Head of the Learning Support Department is available for support and guidance to staff, parents, teachers, and children.

Weekly Language and Literacy lessons are incorporated in all Grade R to Grade 3 timetables. These lessons focus on the sound structure of language. The main aim of these groups is to teach pupils, in a fun and interactive way, how to think critically about information which they hear and read, to be more confident writers and to develop a hunger for knowledge.

Community Service & Outreach

The importance of community service and outreach is introduced to our Cowan House children from a young age. We are aware of the privilege and access to resources which many of our learners enjoy. It is therefore our duty, to continually assess our community needs and our involvement in making this a better place.

Cowan House offers a solid social responsibility programme which benefits several organisations – iThemba, The Sunflower Fund, Save the Rhino, CHOC, Pietermaritzburg Children's Home, Kenosis and FreeMe Wildlife. Our active Ekokids Club places us firmly at the centre of concern for our environment and the world we live in.

We are planning to extend our involvement within our surrounding communities and are looking to partner with suitable donors passionate about community engagement and the environment.



Boarding

Grade 1 to Grade 7 - Life in Cowan House Boarding

Boarding forms an integral part of life at Cowan House. Our boarding product is a unique and homely space where boys and girls live in an environment which is suitable for Preparatory school Boarding.

Cowan House is deeply committed to the welfare of our boys and girls and our Boarding Houses provide a caring and secure atmosphere as well as a balanced and fun-filled support system for our weekly and termly borders.

With a full complement of boarding staff, life in the boarding house is structured to provide boarders from Grade 1 to Grade 7 with the routine they need, while also ensuring there is plenty of 'family-style' fun. Weekends are filled with engaging activities on our expansive campus, as well as outings beyond the school grounds.

Our broader Cowan House community is remarkable in its support, often including boarders in sleepovers, outings, and birthday parties over weekends.

Our distinctive boarding setup integrates boys and girls into a single, structured boarding environment rather than housing them separately. This model strengthens pastoral care, encourages friendships, and promotes a warm and supportive atmosphere for all boarders. Shared yet separate spaces contribute to the development of well-rounded and independent individuals. A designated junior boarding further supports the unique developmental needs of our younger boarders while maintaining their connection to the broader boarding community.



Peer mentorship also plays an important role, with older boarders naturally guiding and supporting younger ones. This setup allows for streamlined supervision and attentive care from our dedicated staff.

Boarding in Grades 6 and 7 has become a popular option for children preparing to board in high school. This experience provides our pupils with a strong foundation in independence within the safe, supportive context of a preparatory school environment.

Each prospective boarder is invited to join us for a two-night boarding stay, during which they spend time with current boarders and take part in all aspects of life at Cowan House - from boarding routines to classroom learning, as well as our cultural and sporting programmes.

We take great pride in the high level of pastoral care and personal attention provided within our boarding environment. We work in close partnership with parents, building strong relationships and supporting the character development of our children. We also collaborate with local churches and youth ministers to provide spiritual guidance. Additionally, a qualified counsellor is available to support boarders and liaise with all relevant parties when needed.



Although we're not related, we're all family.

Meet the Boarding Team

Our boarding team includes many valuable and well-equipped Boarder Masters and Mistresses who are overseen by our Deputy Headmaster, Mr. Dorian Larter; our Boarding Coordinator, Mrs. Steph Lee; and our on-site SAN Sister, Sr. Shelly Edkins.

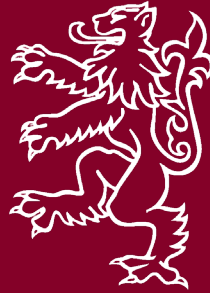
Why choose Junior Boarding? (Grade 1 - 3)

Junior boarding, from Grades 1 to Grade 3, offers a nurturing, structured environment where gentle routines help young children feel secure. From wake-up to bedtime, children enjoy supervised homework, fun learning activities, and plenty of play. They build friendships, develop teamwork, and learn everyday responsibilities like making beds and packing bags, all of which foster confidence, independence, and resilience.





BOARDING



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