

6 things to consider when choosing an online high school

The events past two years have resulted in the exponential growth of the online schooling industry, both at primary and secondary level. However, they may not all offer the same standard of learning. So how do high school students with ambitions to earn a place at a top university or an international job go about selecting the online institution that is best suited for their career aspirations?



Image source: Getty Images

South Africa has seen a proliferation of online high schools over the past two years – but not all of them offer the same standard of learning. For parents of ambitious students, who have their sights set on top universities or international jobs, choosing the right online school is a critical step in their child's academic and work career. From class size and participation, to extracurriculars, and subject and curriculum choices, there are a number of factors to consider when making the leap to digital schooling.

“The key to choosing an online high school is to think about what you want for your child when it comes to their education. If studying at a top university is one of their goals, then you'll need to find a high-engagement school that offers international curricula and prepares them for the academic rigour of those institutions,” says John Morris, executive principal of fully registered online high school, Crimson Global Academy (CGA).

Morris is the former head of Auckland Grammar School, founding Chairman of the Association of Cambridge schools in New Zealand, former goalkeeper for the New Zealand national football team, and an appointed Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to education. With over 40 years of experience in education, he heads up the international team of CGA educators, based across five different countries.



Homeschooling vs online schooling - which is the right route for you?

Louise Schoonwinkel 19 Nov 2020



“Before you finalise your decision, do your research to find out what your child’s lessons are like; how experienced their teachers are; what the school’s results are, and even what extracurricular opportunities are available to your child to ensure that they are actively engaged in their passions and interests, both inside, and outside the classroom,” says Morris.

Morris advises parents to consider the following when deciding whether an online high school gets a passing grade:

- **Live versus pre-recorded lessons:** Live lessons offer more opportunities for classroom-based discussion, which improves student engagement and allows them to ask questions, make comments and create meaningful personal connections.
- **Class size:** Smaller class sizes help students feel more comfortable to ask for help and ensure they receive individualised support. Small classes foster greater interaction between students and teachers.
- **International curriculum:** Graduating with globally recognised qualifications improves your child’s options when it comes to applying to university or finding work internationally.
- **Leading technology:** Online learning works best when it’s facilitated via purpose-built platforms that are designed with learning principles in mind. Avoid schools that simply use existing video conferencing technologies for classes.
- **Experienced teachers:** Teaching staff should be trained to provide instructions virtually, and have extensive experience in teaching both on and offline. International online high schools provide access to subject specialists from all around the world.
- **Extracurriculars:** Teacher-led clubs, group activities, and leadership positions are critical to a full high school experience, and a well-rounded university application.

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