



## ALTERNATIVE STREAM PROSPECTUS 2024

Oakley House High School is an independent school specialising in supporting students who struggle to achieve their potential in a mainstream classroom. The school's aim is to provide a complete education sensitive to the academic, social and emotional needs of the students.

At the High School we aim to offer sympathetic assistance to students whose learning difficulties affect their ability to achieve their potential in a mainstream classroom, be it for academic, social or emotional reasons. Examples of difficulties include ASD, ADHD, dyslexia, processing and working memory challenges, anxiety, etc.

Our priority is to build confidence and to develop a positive attitude to learning by providing specialised teaching within an atmosphere of support and understanding for each student's specific needs. The High School prides itself on being a safe space where students can thrive (instead of just survive) and where they can be happy. We do this in a teen-appropriate context of building independence. The **Alternative Stream** is for students unable to cope with the level or pace of the academically-aligned CAPS curriculum that the majority of the school follows. This prospectus pertains to the Alternative Stream offering. Please see our High School prospectus for the CAPS offering.

The Alternative Stream is divided into three: the **Amended Learning Programme (ALP)** Senior phase that progresses into the **Transition Focused Education (TFE)** phase, and the standalone **General Education and Training Certificate (GETC)** band. In a nutshell:

- The ALP Senior phase lasts up to three years and is a continuation of the programme started in the Preparatory School.

- The TFE phase follows the ALP phase and lasts up to two years. It has a vocational emphasis and aims to prepare students for the world of work.
- The GETC programme runs apart from the ALP/TFE programme and is a route to a South African Grade 9 equivalent qualification (NQF 1), but taken over a few years and using the more accessible AET curriculum.



Not yet seen our website? See <https://www.oakleyhouse.co.za/alternative.html> or scan the QR code on the right:

## **CRITERIA FOR ACCEPTANCE**

The Alternative Stream caters for students between 13 to 18 years of age. Students must exit at the end of the year in which they turn 18 years of age, regardless of the stage they have reached.

Applicants to the Alternative Stream must have an assessment from an educational psychologist – not older than two years – indicating this as a suitable route. Any other supporting documentation is taken into account (therapy reports, scholastic reports, etc.).

As a small specialist school with a very limited number of places, we carefully assess the suitability of each student during a week-long observation period before deciding whether we can offer a place. The observation ensures the school is the appropriate place for the student and allows the student to get a taste of the school for themselves. A positive attitude towards learning and school plays a big role in deciding if Oakley is the right place for a child.

The High School will not offer any student a place unless the staff feels confident that they have the capacity to help him or her. We also will not accept students who have emotional or behavioural problems which might seriously inhibit their progress or compromise the learning of others.

The observation carries a cost (See Tuition Fees).

## **ASSESSMENTS**

All students in the Alternative Stream take modules from the South African Adult Education and Training (AET) curriculum. This curriculum has Levels as opposed to Grades and placement assessments are used to determine the appropriate starting level in the curriculum for each student. This assessment is done internally by a trained assessor and has no cost attached.





## CURRICULUM

Oakley House has a strong commitment to blended learning and all AS students are required to have their own Chromebook at school daily. The Chromebooks are variously used to meet special needs requirements, to promote learning, to access teaching material, and as a personal organisation device. ***Please contact the school for further details before making any purchases.***

We view reports as a record of past progress but also as the basis for setting new directions. ALP Senior and TFE students do not write tests and exams and their reports have no marks or ratings; the reports consist of reflective comments by the class- or subject teacher related to progress on social and emotional levels, or in the various skills covered. Reports are emailed to parents at the end of each term.

GETC students are building towards exams that must be passed in order to proceed or receive a certificate. GETC students do write examinations. GETC student may get homework if they are falling behind on their study plan. Reports for GETC students include module progress and marks achieved in assessments.

Food-related activities are common in, and integral to, the curriculum. Despite seemingly like 'fun' at face value, the activities all have an educational function and are carefully structured to achieve educational ends. The ALPs are involved in a regular food preparation, the TFEs run the school tuckshop and, with the GETCs, have a daily tea break (as they would in the work of work) which they have to manage.

### ALP Senior

Students usually enter the ALP Senior phase in the year they turn 14, and spend up to three years in the phase. Most students entering the ALP Senior programme are likely to have already spent preparatory school years following a non-mainstream programme.

The ALP Senior phase is non-academic in that students do not have standards to pass, and there are no tests or academic pressure. The ALP Senior students are not in Grades. There are no promotion requirements in ALP Senior; all students progress to the next year. Projects exist but these are for the experience and are done mostly, if not entirely, in class time. A small amount of routine homework may be set.

To reduce the anxiety and complexity in the High School context, ALP Senior students spend the majority of each day in their home room with their register teacher, moving classes for the occasional specialised subject (e.g. Art, Drama, Physical Education).

#### There are five aspects to the ALP Senior curriculum:

**Personal Development Programme (PDP):** This is essentially a Life Skills programme loosely based on the ASDAN offering from the United Kingdom. The programme consists of ongoing tasks that form the object of assessment.

**Literacy:** This is delivered according to the AET curriculum and focuses on increasing students' comprehension of, and competence in, basic English language. A textbook is required.

**Numeracy:** This is delivered according to the AET curriculum and focuses on functional, number-based literacy, such as basic sums, telling the time, etc. With Literacy, we regard Numeracy as a high priority. A textbook is required.



**Integrated Content (IC):** This is the closest thing to the learning of content. Each term follows a themed approach based on topics from the Natural and Social Sciences, aimed at teaching basic knowledge and skills.

**Specialised subjects:** The specialised subjects are Art, Drama and Physical Education, each of which are one to two hours per week.

From time to time, the ALP Seniors go on outings to both enrich and enthuse them. They also practice hands-on culinary skills in our small kitchen areas, are responsible for the school recycling programme, run a gardening project, and participate in activities designed to teach social skills, such as interpersonal communication and conflict management.

## TFE

This two-year programme is focused on readying students for the world of work, and independent living. The TFE phase strives to offer students real-life work experience, simulated at school, or in the work context as circumstances allow. Work opportunities that arise at short notice may take preference over the usual programme. Students generally enter this phase in the year they turn 16, or later, and leave in the year they turn 18. At this age students are eligible for post-school transition-to-work programmes, such as that offered by *The Living Link*, or work placements.

### There are nine aspects to the TFE curriculum:

**Literacy:** This builds on the students' start in ALP Senior. The emphasis is on competence in and confidence with basic English language skills but extra hours are devoted to reading for understanding and enjoyment. Literature books need to be purchased for this subject.

**Numeracy:** The focus is on establishing functional mathematical literacy, including calculator skills, linked to the micro-enterprise initiatives.

**Work Experience (Tuckshop):** The TFEs manage all aspects of the school tuckshop. The tuckshop exposes the TFEs to all aspects of running a micro-enterprise. Further ideas for micro-enterprises are in development.

**Work Experience (Card Making):** The TFEs second micro-enterprise is making greeting cards which are sold locally at the school reception, pop up stores and School Market Day.

**Work Sampling (External):** From time-to-time individuals are placed in local businesses for short work-sampling experiences. This programme is *ad hoc* and is overseen by a team of UCT OT students.

**Work Readiness:** This is a quasi-academic programme that covers the theory of the world of work, such as work-rights and responsibilities, work etiquette, CV writing, etc.



**Current Affairs:** The TFEs are exposed to and discuss current local and international news items with the aim of improving media literacy.

**Life Skills:** Students are exposed to cooking skills, basic life skills for independent living, interpersonal skills, conflict management, etc. Touch typing and basic computer skills are promoted.

**Specialised subjects:** The specialised subjects are Art, Drama and Physical Education, each of which are one to two hours per week.

## GETC

The GETC is a Grade 9 equivalent qualification in the AET curriculum which caters for students who may have passed Grade 7 or 8 but cannot cope with the intensity of a normal Grade 9. Having a GETC is an important milestone, giving students who would otherwise have left school with no exit-qualification the opportunity to pursue further education, such as vocational training as offered at TVET colleges.

GETC students must leave Oakley House by the end of the year they turn 18. As students work at their own pace, Oakley House does not guarantee that a student will complete their GETC in their time at the school. Students wishing to follow the GETC route will undergo an assessment to determine the appropriate starting level from which to start pursuing this certificate.

While each student in the GETC works to their own roadmap, there are a number of class-based activities that promote class cohesion and introduce some balance.

To achieve a GETC, students must pass English, Mathematical Literacy and Life Orientation, plus three electives, all at AET Level 4. Oakley House offers a GETC through the officially recognised South African Comprehensive Assessment Institute (SACAI). Students write off modules by writing internal examinations on levels 1-3, and complete each module with an externally assessed examination at Level 4. Level 4 modules also require SBA (Site-Based Assessment) tasks to be completed before the final examination takes place. The SBAs count 50% of the final mark.

Examinations are offered at times of the year dependent on the student's AET level. Level 1-3 exams are offered monthly. Level 4 exams occur on fixed dates and times, twice a year. The cost of exam entrance is for the parent account.

GETC work has clear content which students engage with using textbooks and online modules, under the supervision of a classroom support person.

## EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Alternative Stream students are very much a part of the school, and the stream's breaks and extra-curricular activities are scheduled to allow Alternative Stream students to integrate with the rest of the school. Students also attend the annual school camp, school assemblies, etc.

- **Meridian** – This is our lunchtime student enrichment programme that takes place in Utility period on Wednesdays. Meridian is a programme of regular clubs and *ad hoc* workshops, speakers, etc. The programme is voluntary but students are encouraged to sign up.
- **Sport** – Oakley House offers cross country from the school premises as part of the Western Province League. Students are otherwise welcome to participate in sport at the nearby Bergvliet High School that offers a wide range of sporting disciplines.
- **Audit Lessons** – Both ALP Senior, TFE and GETC students might attend mainstream lessons as appropriate/possible in the interests of supporting interest or social interaction. Students do not do assessments in these lessons and only attend for audit purposes.



## SPECIALIST STAFF AND SUPPORT

All teaching staff are SACE registered and carefully selected for their expertise and ability to understand our students. Staff receive training and support in teaching students with specific learning difficulties. This is conducted from our in-house specialist Training Centre that offers a range of accredited face-to-face and online courses geared towards inclusive education.

The ALP Senior class has a classroom assistant who helps with the day-to-day running of the class and support of individuals as necessary.

The GETC class is overseen by a teacher and otherwise directly supervised by various personnel/subject experts throughout the day.

Oakley House works in partnership with the Department of Occupational Therapy (OT) of the University of Cape Town, which sees 4<sup>th</sup> year students coming in three times a year for 10-week blocks to run various programmes with the ALP Seniors and TFEs. The OT students provide valuable, objective input and expertise, working with the students on an intensive basis, and supporting the development of work-place skills within the school context.

Counselling sessions are afforded by our team of in-house registered counsellors to address the social, emotional and behavioural needs of our students. Where necessary, we refer students off-campus for more specialised therapy. Fees and payments to referred providers is a private arrangement between therapist and parents.

The school will assist GETC students to obtain any concessions recommended in their educational psychologist report. Please speak to the school for further information on this.

## SMALL CLASSES

Small classes ensure individual attention and a caring, supportive environment. This enables teachers to work towards developing each student's strengths as well as guiding them to use compensatory strategies to overcome areas of weakness. There is currently one class in each of ALP Senior, TFE and GETC.

## HOMEWORK AND STRUCTURING OF WORK

Homework plays a minor role in the Alternative Stream programme as most work is done at school. If there is any homework at all, it is simple and to reinforce basic concepts learnt at school.

## LEADERSHIP

At Oakley House High School we believe in accountability, ownership and leadership as important life attributes and we have a number of structures promoting both personal and institutional leadership.

The ALP Senior and TFE classes, along with the rest of the school, elect a class representative to act as their mouthpiece. Class representatives meet for fortnightly discussions. More informally, Meridian offers further opportunity for involvement and leadership, and we regularly hold community awareness and outreach projects. Alternative Stream students are also encouraged to show themselves as leaders capable of making a difference.





## **MEDICATION**

The normal procedure is for any necessary medication to be given by parents at home. However, arrangements can be made for special circumstances to prevail – as in the administering of Ritalin for example. Where it is agreed that medication is kept and administered at Oakley House High School, a relating schedule will be completed and signed by the administering staff member.

## **UNIFORM**

Oakley House High School students wear a comfortable uniform. Certain items are provided by the school, with the majority of items being available online through the school uniform provider. There is no summer and winter uniform; students can choose which items are the most comfortable.

## **SNACKS AND LUNCHES**

Oakley House has a tuck shop that currently operates once a week at break. The tuck shop is run by our TFE students and endeavours to offer what we consider to be healthier options. Pre-orders are available.

Being high school, students are otherwise responsible for their own food choices but sugary foods and drinks are not permitted. Students are encouraged to have a bottle of water with them each day.

## **DISCIPLINE**

It is essential that all students at Oakley House High School are made aware of the importance of good, well-mannered behaviour and we expect adherence to the standards that make our school a safe environment and one that is conducive for learning. A code of conduct and an incentive/encouragement (Merit) and sanction (Alert/ Reflection) scheme are signed by students and parents on entry to the school and every effort is made to reinforce whatever school rules are in place at the time.

Generally speaking, we believe that giving direction to prevent inappropriate behaviour is more desirable and effective than punishments. The students are always encouraged to take ownership of their behaviour and to help devise solutions to any problems that arise.

As part of our commitment to discipline and a safe environment, cellphones must be switched off and stashed during the school day, and we have limitations on device screen-time.

## STATIONERY AND BOOKS

Parents are required to provide personal stationery items, as well as all textbooks and workbooks required for the programme. A stationery list is available on enrolment.

Alternative Stream students all use textbooks but as each student follows their own programme, books will need to be purchased as and when students take the various modules.

## SCHOOL CALENDAR

The Oakley House High School calendar is similar to the WCED school calendar.

## SCHOOL HOURS

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday 07h50 - 14h45

Wednesday 07h50 - 14h15

Friday 07h50 - 13h00

Please note that there is no aftercare and parents are asked to collect their children as soon as possible after their day is finished.

## SCHOOL FEES

Please see the separate fees schedule for detail on fees and levies. If you refer to the fees schedule for the current calendar year, please allow for annual fees increases.

## NOTICE PERIOD

Should parents wish to withdraw their child from Oakley House High School, written notice must be given not later than the first week of the student's proposed final term, failing which the fees for the following term will be payable in full, whether or not the learner returns to school.

*We reserve the right to make amendments to the prospectus from time to time, as and when the need arises.*

## Oakley House High School

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For further information about our Cape Town based School and Training & Support Centre, visit our website

[www.oakleyhouse.co.za](http://www.oakleyhouse.co.za)