



OTAGO GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL

DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS **NEWSLETTER** TERM 3 2025

Message from our Principal, Mrs Bridget Davidson

Kia ora koutou

Hello to all of our friends and families from around the world!

We are delighted to welcome Spring this week. Daffodils and blossom are blooming in our school gardens, the days are longer and warmer and we are coming close to our September break.

We welcomed several new students this term and are growing our International Student friends and family network. A highlight this term was our Host Family BBQ at school where we welcomed host families and their international students to celebrate the wonderful contribution and friendships formed through sharing homes and cultures.

In August we hosted a two week visit from a group of 21 students from our sister school in Hiroshima, Japan - Yasuda Girls' High School. This relationship is now thirty years old. A group of 12 of our Japanese language students leave for a reciprocal tour of Japan next week. International relationships are important and strong at Otago Girls' High School.



Our Director of International Students, Mrs Rose Gilani, has been very active in international student marketing and loves to connect with future students and their families. If you have friends or connections interested in experiencing New Zealand school life and education for a term or up to five years, please get in touch with Mrs Gilani in the first instance: rsg@otagogirls.school.nz

Our Dean of International Students, Mrs Katherine Boomer, is a great support for our English Language Learners and International Students in their academic studies and runs exciting local study tour programmes for students who are free during the NCEA examination periods. She is great at



connecting our international students with the Kiwi students and we often enjoy shared lunches and treats! She loves to take students outdoors and helps them prepare for camps and the Ski Trip.

Please come and visit if you are in New Zealand. We welcome back alumni almost every term and often they bring their families to visit us at school. Our alumni are around the globe doing amazing things, following the time they spend with us here at Otago Girls'. You will find some of their stories here.

In New Zealand we have Māori proverbs which give wisdom in our lives. Here is one to share:

He aha te mea nui o te ao

What is the most important thing in the world?

He tangata, he tangata, he tangata

It is the people, it is the people, it is the people

Ngā mihi nui

Bridget Davidson

Tumuaki ~ Principal



Message from our Director of International Students, Mrs Rose Gilani

Kia ora dear students, parents, and education advisors,

It has been a whirlwind of a Term 3! There have been so many activities this term and everyone has been super busy, as usual.

A huge thank you to our Principal Mrs Bridget Davidson for her care and support of our international students. And a big thank you to our support team who works tirelessly in the background to ensure that everything goes well for our international students. Lastly, a thank you to our teachers for inspiring our international students in their classwork and extra-curricular activities throughout the year.

At the beginning of this term, we had a group visit from our sister school, Yasuda Girls' High School, from Hiroshima, Japan. It was very special for me because I finally got to meet Mr Matt Canada in real life after working together online for quite some time. It was great to spend time with both Mr Canada and Ms Ayako Ando and to share ideas and exchange thoughts. The programme this year was different to previous years. There was a lot more interaction in between students from both schools and lots more activities, both within and outside the school. It was a lot of hard work organising the visit; much kudos to Mrs Katherine Boomer, our Dean of International Students, and our Japanese teacher, Ms Bronwyn Thomson, for organising everything so well over the two weeks.

Another highlight this term has been the Dunedin Shanghai Red Note Competition, organised by Teresa Chan of the Dunedin Shanghai Association. This is a competition to create six different categories of short films targeted at attracting Chinese students to study at our school. The videos will be posted on Red Note, which is the Chinese version of Instagram. The deadline was really tight, yet our students did really well in producing





really high-quality and well-edited videos. Best of all, it sparked an interest in our students to start our own school Red Note account and to make small videos to promote our school to the Chinese market. Really looking forward to it!

With the start of springtime in New Zealand, we recently celebrated Daffodil Day. Everyone dressed in yellows and flowers. Food trucks and music at lunchtime added to the fun. Daffodil Day is an annual New Zealand Cancer Society fundraising event that symbolises hope for those affected by cancer. The yellow daffodil, a flower that blooms in spring, represents a new beginning and is used to show solidarity and support for cancer patients and their families.

Next week, we will have our parallel exams (practice exams) and all of our senior students are going into study mode. For our international students who are not taking exams, there is a special programme of events lined up for them, which will be an exciting experience.

We are very much looking forward to more adventures next term!





International Team

Mrs Rose Gilani (Director of International Students)

Mrs Bridget Davidson (Principal)

Mrs Katherine Boomer (Dean of International Students)



Term 3 International Students

YEAR 9	YEAR 10	YEAR 11	YEAR 12	YEAR 13
Summer Li	Moana Li	Mia Windmueller	Ada Hu	Allison Han
	Rina Nagayasu	Marlene Deu	Gaeun Park	Mai Someya
	Oceania Ren	Yiling Zhang	Sumika Moriya	Esther Huang
	Honoka Ueda	Silei Chen	Zifeng Chen	
	Micaela Senilliani	Josefin Breit	Tammy Honda	
	Saki Chinda	Lucia Shen	Kanon Yamamura	
	Chiharu Iijima	Chika Kajiyama		
		Tamaki Ishii		
		Haruko Suzuki		
		Saki Amao		



Reflections from our Dean of International Students, Mrs Katherine Boomer



With spring on its way, we can look back on what has been a jam-packed term. The new international students had some difficulties trying to decide what subjects to take as we offer a wide range and many which are not available in their own countries. Once acquainted with the OGHS way of life, the students were off exploring and making new friends and memories. There have been numerous outings for subjects, cultural and sporting groups. Several have also joined SVA (Student Volunteer Association) and are logging their time from the volunteering hours.

Open Night is a major event for our school and if you are fortunate enough to go on a tour of the school, you would be astonished at what you can learn. Other events in the term calendar were the annual Culture Day and the Art & Design Exhibition. For the cultural day, students could wear traditional dress to school, participate in performances and food in the hall at lunch time. Stunning art and DVC (design and visual communication) work were on display at the community art space in town. There were pieces of work on display and for sale by some of our international students.

Yasuda Girls' High School in Hiroshima, Japan, is one of our sister schools and we always enjoy hosting them in our community. We revamped the program so there was much more interaction with our students. There was great laughter and friendships made this year.

It has been wonderful having new host families for our school and this term we had a BBQ to welcome new and old families to our school and department. The turn-out of people and food created a festive atmosphere on a fresh winter's evening.

The annual ski trip for four days to Queenstown was popular with our students and was one thing they had been looking forward to since they first arrived. They were very lucky, getting enough snow and great weather to make for fine skiing and snowboarding conditions. A number of our students also played sports in the triangular tournament with two other high schools from Invercargill and Oamaru. OSSSA (Otago Secondary School Sports Association) held their third and final international sports day at Metro





Indoor Sports where students could play dodgeball, futsal and inflatables.

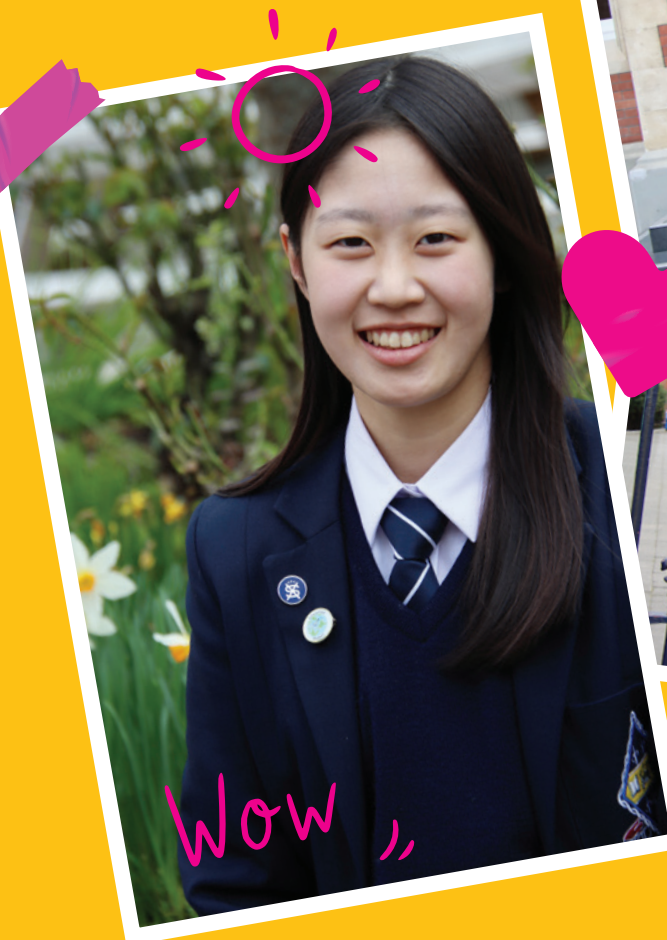
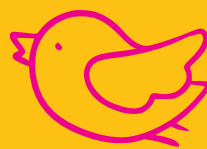
Every year in this term, we have parallel NCEA exams for the senior students. This is a chance to show what they have learned so far and see what can be done until the November exam period. The seniors who are not sitting exams had a special program with outings and activities around Dunedin. The first event was morning tea at my house, then beach and hill walks, visits to a farm to see super cute animals and the Orokonui Ecosanctuary. Showing off what we have in the Dunedin area is a favourite thing to do.

After the exams, the term has two special events of Sports Blues, and Cultural and Scholar Blues. These two celebrate the achievements of our students in these fields. The last day of the term had the much-anticipated PJ Day for the Dunedin Foodbank. Students can wear pyjamas to school if they bring a tin of food to donate to a local foodbank charity.

See you next term!



FAREWELL TO OUR LEAVING LEADERS TERM 3



A sad farewell to our international students Summer Li, Honoka Ueda and Kanon Yamamura. Thank you for the impact you have made on our lives in such a short time! We look forward to hearing all about your successes in the future.

Summer Li

Nationality: Chinese



1. How long did you study at OGHS?
6 weeks.
2. What did you love about studying at OGHS?
I love how almost everything is student involved.
3. What is one OGHS memory that you will never forget?
Setting up the set for an interview was new for me, as well as shooting an interview. I'm sure that those moments of 'the first time' will be pretty unforgettable.
4. How has your experience at OGHS transformed you?
My experience at OGHS has inspired me to be brave and try new things.
5. Would you encourage other international students to study at OGHS and why?
I would, because all the students at OGHS in my class were really supportive and there are many opportunities for me to try things I like.
6. What advice would you give to other students who are thinking about studying abroad?
Get yourself involved. If you are interested in something, just go for it!



I love how almost everything is student involved.



Honoka Ueda

Nationality: Japan



1. How long did you study at OGHS?
Six weeks.

2. What did you love about studying at OGHS?

There were a lot of instruments in the music suite and there were lots of things in food class.

3. What is one OGHS memory that you will never forget?

I will never forget talking a lot with friends, hugging each other and laughing together.

4. Describe your homestay family. Did you enjoy the homestay experience?

Every day with my homestay family was so much fun! They were the best host family!

5. How has your experience at OGHS transformed you?

I had a significant growth in independence and communication skills.

6. Would you encourage other international students to study at OGHS and why?

Yes because you can study with peace of mind.



7. What advice would you give to other students who are thinking about studying abroad?

It's important to talk to people. The more actively you talk to people, the more you will gain.

Every day with my homestay family was so much fun! They were the best host family!



Kanon Yamamura

Nationality: Japan



1. How long did you study at OGHS?

One term (3 months)

2. What did you love about studying at OGHS?

I love being able to take the subjects I was interested in, and teachers were kind and supportive which made it easier for me to follow the lessons.

3. What is one OGHS memory that you will never forget?

One OGHS memory I will never forget is the ski trip. It was the most memorable experience because I made a lot of friends and improved my skiing skills. We went skiing at The Remarkables and Coronet Peak ski fields, and the views in Queenstown were absolutely stunning.

4. Describe your homestay family. Did you enjoy the homestay experience?

I stayed with a host mom, her 11-year-old daughter, and their cat, Leo. It was a unique experience that helped me grow and adapt to a different lifestyle. We even went to the Ohau ski field together where I tried snowboarding for the first time.

5. How has your experience at OGHS transformed you?

I was already able to express my opinions, but thanks to improving my English skills, I became more confident in communicating my thoughts with my host family.

6. Would you encourage other international students to study at OGHS and why?

Yes, because the international support teachers are really kind and supportive.

7. What advice would you give to other students who are thinking about studying abroad?

Don't be nervous; the international support teachers and your host family will always be there to help you.



One OGHS memory I will never forget is the ski trip. We went skiing at The Remarkables and Coronet Peak ski fields, and the views in Queenstown were absolutely stunning!

Haruko Suzuki: Fencing Superstar!

A combined team of girls from Otago Girls' High School and Columba College won second place in the Otago-Southland Secondary School Fencing Team Championships last weekend.

Our international student, Haruko Suzuki (Year 11), and Mikayla Lindsay (Year 12) from Otago Girls' High School along with two students from Columba College made up the combined team. Congratulations!



Mai Someya makes Otago Rugby Team

We are proud of our Year 13 international student Mai Someya, who has been with us at Otago Girls' since 2023. Mai is a very talented rugby player and had a really successful time playing rugby and rugby league locally. Mai has been selected once more to represent Otago in the under 18 girls rugby team. Well done Mai for following your passion and making a difference in our local sporting community!



11:16
Otago Community Rugby
3d

OTAGO UNDER 18 GIRLS

FORWARDS

- Ellie Bezzett in Hill's Collegiate
- Neve Black in Hill's Collegiate / Ashburton Union
- Rosa Black in Hill's Collegiate
- Emily Dale Otago Girls' HS
- Soliana Freeman Columba College / Richmond
- Molly Hansen Columba College / University
- Madie Hill Dunedin HS
- Leilani Jones Zameen College / Central Otago Dues
- Nadia Koni Otago Girls' HS / Dunedin
- Jade Lamont University
- Aria Nixon-McFalls Otago HS / Zingst Richmond
- Olivia O'Brien in Hill's Collegiate
- Clara Patterson Columba College / Ashburton Union
- Kaitiaki Payne in Hill's Collegiate
- Tessa Steele in Hill's Collegiate
- Sarah Stephens Columba College

BACKS

- Lyla Bowring Columba College
- Jessica Clough Otago College
- Payton Downs Columba College / University
- Madison Flattery Columba College / University
- Elin Goldenhays Otago HS / Big River Country
- Lula Joseph Columba College / Dunedin
- Zara Latham Otago HS / Big River Country
- Sydney Marshall Otago HS / Big River Country
- Sahara Mason Otago Girls' HS / Zingst Richmond
- Aya Moritani in Hill's Collegiate
- Hannah Norris in Hill's Collegiate / Dunedin
- Sari Perkins in Hill's Collegiate
- Mai Someya Otago Girls' HS / Zingst Richmond
- Caitlyn Stowers Dunedin Union
- Maddy Taylor Columba College

MANAGEMENT

- Cameron Burrow Head Coach
- Ellie Doyle Assistant Coach
- Julia Greenhalgh Assistant Coach
- Tom Turtle Assistant Coach
- Mikaela Dawson Manager
- Charlotte Parker SSC Coach
- Kim Grimes Medic

We are proud to announce the Otago Under 18 Girls for 2025.



Yasuda Girls' High School Students Experience New Zealand Culture

We enjoyed hosting 21 students from Yasuda Girls' High School, our sister school in Hiroshima Japan. This relationship spans three decades and is something we treasure.

Over the two weeks the Yasuda students were immersed in learning English, as well as some Kapa Haka, Te Reo Māori lessons and opportunities to make friends while teaching OGHs students about life in Hiroshima. They enjoyed a North Dunedin adventure afternoon that finished with great excitement at the duck pond. The group also enjoyed being creative and making photo tiles, lolly cake balls, and proverb collages.

The homestay experience was also a great opportunity for our Yasuda guests to practice English and a huge highlight was opening their lunch boxes each day here at





school and trying different foods! The group were also able to take part in the opening of a photo exhibition at the Otago Museum, held to mark 80 years since the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The teachers, Matt Canada and Ayako Ando, took part in planting a survivor tree that was gifted to the city as seeds last year.

We are very grateful to our host families for opening their homes, and making sure the Yasuda students returned to Japan with many memories to cherish. We are already looking forward to our next visit from Yasuda Girls' in 2026.



Gaeun Park: Dean's Award Recipient

We are proud to celebrate our students who have earned Dean's Awards for the first two terms of the year. These students have been nominated by their teachers for consistently reflecting our school's values, by demonstrating positivity, integrity, and respect.

Well done to our international student Gaeun Park for being a Dean's Award recipient for Term 2 2025!



Triangular Tournament

We were thrilled to host the annual 'Triangular Tournament' – a competition between Waitaki Girls' High School, Southland Girls' High School, and Otago Girls' High School. It was a fantastic day of interschool competition, with students giving their all in debating, eSports, badminton, football, netball, and hockey.

A huge congratulations to Waitaki Girls' High School, who took out the top spot by just one point! We came in a very close second, with Southland Girls' High School finishing in third place.

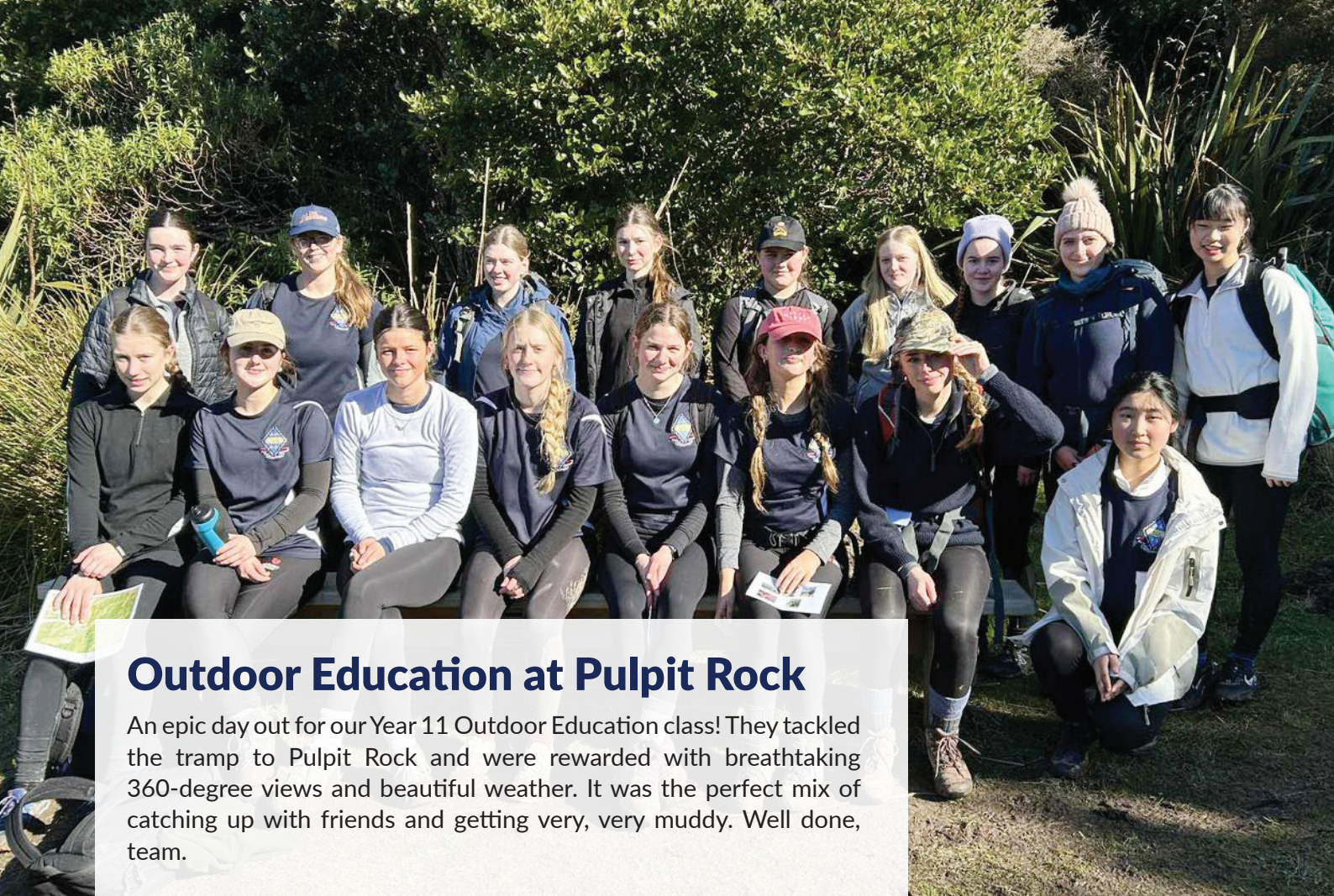
Thank you so much to both schools for traveling to Dunedin. It was a lovely day of competition and camaraderie, and we thoroughly enjoyed hosting you all!



Scenes from the Airport

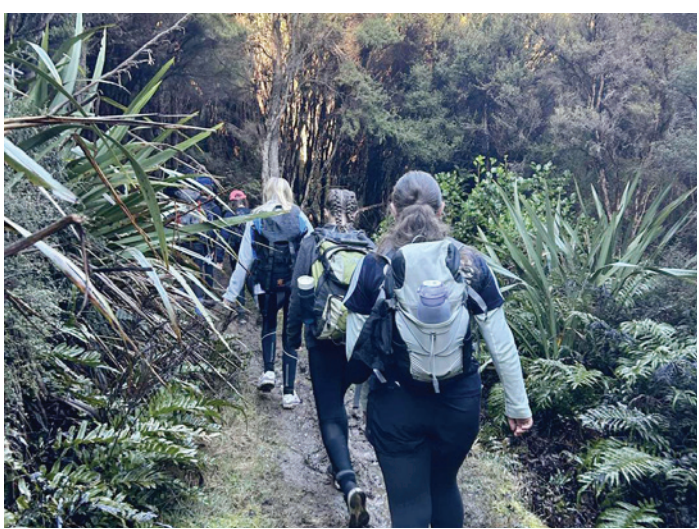
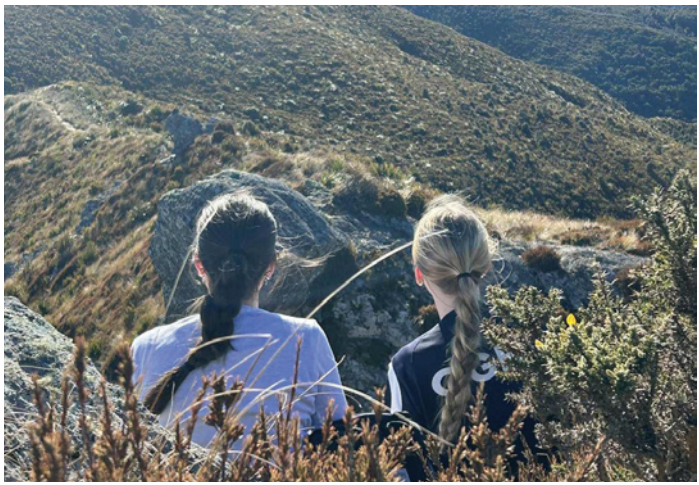






Outdoor Education at Pulpit Rock

An epic day out for our Year 11 Outdoor Education class! They tackled the tramp to Pulpit Rock and were rewarded with breathtaking 360-degree views and beautiful weather. It was the perfect mix of catching up with friends and getting very, very muddy. Well done, team.



Agents from Argentina

On 21 August 2025, our Department of International Students welcomed our valued agents from Argentina. Thank you to Cristóbal Anastasi of Network South America New Zealand Ltd for his time and enthusiasm for our school. We look forward to blossoming these relationships and to receiving students from Argentina and beyond.



A Visit from Chenard Chen

On 4 September, our Department of International students welcomed Prof Chenard Chen, Managing Director of CISR China Ltd and a well-known education advisor. Prof Chen looks forward to working closely with our international team to attract more students from China.





International BBQ

On 20 August, our Department of International Students held a BBQ for our homestay families and international students. Everyone was full of smiles and our students really enjoyed the food and each other's company! Thank you so much to our homestay families for joining us on this wonderful evening and thank you for the delicious salads and desserts. Big thanks to the Japan Trip group for helping out with the sausage sizzle.







Cultural Day 2025

Cultural Day on 19 August was a vibrant celebration of diversity. Beautiful displays of some of our cultures were seen in the stunning clothing worn by students. Our annual event featured incredible performances in the hall and a fantastic concert, along with a hall full of delicious food. This was a wonderful student-led event. Here are some highlights from the day...





OSSSA Event for International Students

Otago Secondary School Sports Association (OSSSA) hosted its third sports activity for international high school students in Dunedin. Over 100 students participated in three activities at Metro Indoor Sports on 12 August. Upon arrival, students were given a coloured band to divide them into groups which meant there was a mixture of schools in each group. They had the opportunity to play futsal, dodgeball, inflatables, and hang out with friends. Some sporting talent was on display on the futsal and dodgeball courts. A highlight of course was being able to meet friends from other schools and spend time with them and our own students.







First Argentinian Student in Many Years

Micaela Senilliani arrived on 4 September and she is our first Argentinian international student in many years! After landing, she Micaela tried her first cheese roll. We are very much looking forward to having more students from Argentina and beyond! Thank you to Micaela's homestay family for taking care of her and showing her the beautiful spots in and around Dunedin.



International Students Explore Dunedin

The senior international students who are not doing NCEA exams had the opportunity to explore some of the beauty of the Dunedin area. We had six days to do some exploring into life here.

We started off with morning tea at Mrs Boomer's, and finished with more baking and eating at her house. In between the eating, we went to Orokonui Ecosanctuary where we saw a lot of bird action, but no insomniac kiwi bird was wandering that day. We had planned to walk up to Flagstaff but the weather forecast was not so favourable for that, so we went to Unipol to play badminton with some self-made rules.

The weather was perfect for a game of mini golf in Mosgiel on Monday so we had a picnic lunch amongst the holes following the game.

On Tuesday, we got to see and hold the cutest lambs in the world, the Swiss valais breed, at Iconic Farm Tours. At the farm, we also fed the miniature Galloway cattle, Leila and Elvis. Courage, the uncourageous alpaca, greeted us, but Taffee was the star alpaca who gratefully accepted slices of apple and lots of petting. Super-soft ragdoll cats are also there for cuddling along with a range of other uncuddled birds and animals. We had a great, small group of students and it was wonderful to spend more time with them and to show what Dunedin has to offer.

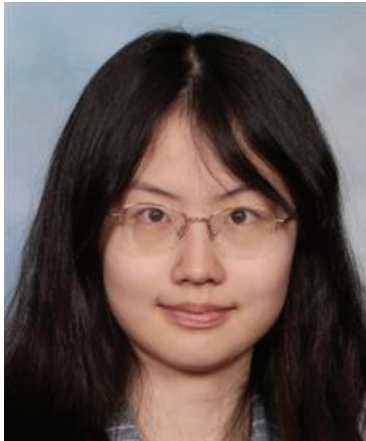




STUDENT ARTICLES

Fear By Zifeng Chen

We are extremely proud of Zifeng representing her English class in this year's Speechfest. This is Zifeng's first year at our school and this is a wonderful way to challenge oneself and show the skills and courage our students have.



Introduction

Every year, over one thousand North Koreans risk their lives trying to escape the country. They cross rivers at night, bribe guards or walk through mountains in freezing cold. Many of them are caught. Some are never heard from again.

Why do they do it? Not for money, not for fame, just for the chance to live without fear.

But we don't need to be from North Korea to know what fear feels like. Maybe you've felt it in a classroom. Maybe it was the moment before you

raised your hand and then didn't. Or when you thought about trying something new and chose not to, because what if you failed?

I know that feeling because I've been there. That voice in your heart saying "Don't. Just stay quiet." That voice is fear. And sometimes, fear doesn't just stop us, it controls us.

Today I want to talk about fear: how it shapes our choices, how it holds us back, and how we sometimes find the courage to break free.

I'll do this in three parts: first, fear as control; second, choosing courage; and finally, I will wrap up with what this all means for us. To help tell this story, I'll be using *The Girl with Seven Names*, a true story by Hyeonseo Lee, who escaped North Korea as a 17 year-old and learned to live, survive, and speak out in a world that wanted her silent.

Fear as control

In North Korea, fear isn't just a feeling — it's a way of life. It's something you live with. It's part of the air. The rules. The silence. You can't ask questions. You can't criticize the government even inside your own home. You have to be careful because saying the wrong thing even accidentally can put you and your family in danger.



That happened to Hyeonseo. One day, her uncle disappeared. No warning. No explanation. He had made a quiet doubt about something on the news. And then he was gone. No one mentioned him again. Not even in whispers. It was like he had never existed.

Even though Hyeonseo noticed something was wrong, she said nothing just like everyone else. She was afraid. What would happen to her if she spoke up?

That's how fear works: it teaches you to stay silent, to not even think too loudly.

Before her 18th birthday, she decided to visit relatives in China — or at least, that's what she told her family. But the real reason is she had grown up near the border, spoke some Chinese, and had always wondered what life was like on the other side.

She didn't hate her country. She wasn't trying to escape forever. She just wanted to see another world.

So one winter night, she crossed the frozen Tumen River on foot, alone, carrying only a few belongings and the weight of a small lie: "I'll be back in a few days." She felt nervous. Curious. Maybe even a little excited.

But once she arrived in China, everything changed. Her mother sent word: the authorities had noticed she was missing. If she came back, she could be jailed or even killed.

From that moment on, fear controlled everything: where she lived, what she said, who she trusted. It wasn't a loud panic. It was quiet, constant and always with her.

Choosing courage

But here's what makes her story so powerful.

After years of hiding in China — Living under false names, in secret apartments, always looking over her shoulder — Hyeonseo made a choice.

She decided to go back. Not to North Korea, but to the border, to help her mother and younger brother escape.

She didn't have to. She was finally safe. She had built a life for herself. But she still chose to risk everything. And she didn't do it because she was fearless. She did it because she was scared and went away.



And those years in hiding? They weren't just uncomfortable, they were life-threatening. She was nearly deported back to North Korea — not once, but twice. She was kidnapped by human traffickers. She had to bribe officials, fake documents, and run from police raids. She changed her name seven times to stay alive. She watched people betray each other out of desperation. And through it all, she had no legal identity. No passport. No safety net. Just fear — and her decision to keep going.

That's courage. And even though we may never face dangers like hers, fear still shows up in our lives. It shows up when we don't speak up for what's right. When we don't try because we might fail. When we hide parts of who we are to fit in. But every time we face fear and move forward anyway, even in small ways, we begin to take some power back.

You raise your hand, you try that new thing, you tell the truth, you say no when it matters; you become just a little braver than you were before. And that's how freedom starts.

Conclusion

So what does all this mean — for me, for you?

Fear isn't always bad. It's our brain's way of keeping us safe. But when fear starts making our choices for us, when it starts deciding who we are, that's when it becomes a cage.

Hyeonseo's story shows both sides — how fear can control a life, and how courage, one small act at a time, can reshape it. She wasn't fearless. She was terrified, but she acted anyway. And maybe that's all bravery really is.

You don't have to cross a frozen river to know what fear feels like. You don't need to change your name seven times to know what it means to feel lost. But you do have a choice - right here, right now. But the next time fear tells you to stay quiet - maybe you won't listen. Maybe you'll speak, maybe you'll stand, maybe you'll take one step forward even if your hands are shaking. And in that moment, you'll start becoming someone fear can't control.

Thanks for listening.

Why We need to Control the Use of Social Media

By Lucia Shen

Our international student Lucia Shen recently did wonderfully in a speech for her English class. Here are some excerpts from her speech:



Hi everyone.

Let me start by asking: How many hours did you spend on social media yesterday? Two hours? Four? Or maybe... you don't even know? **Well, you're not alone.**

Social media and why we need to control social media has been a topic of concern and debate since plenty of problems have happened to young people. I know some people might want to refute that social media can get information quickly and can get different friends who live where or do what kind of job. Yes, you are right, I believe social media

changes people's lives in many aspects. It connects us, entertains us, and sometimes, even teaches us. But have we ever thought about the cost?

Today, I want to talk about why we must control our use of social media — not completely ban it, but control it — before it controls us.

Firstly, let's talk about **mental health**.

Hey, you may have experienced this, do you feel pressure when you post online. You upload a video on TikTok, and you wait...you might be thinking "Will people like it? Will anyone comment?" If there are many likes from users it can make you feel satisfied. However, if there's silence, it can hurt our self-esteem and sense of achievement. You might think, "*Is my post not good enough? Am I not good enough?*" Therefore, some people even begin to base their self-worth on likes or views.

Worse still, bullying happens online — people leave hateful comments or spread rumors. Teenagers and young adults are the primary victims of various forms of online harassment, including cyberstalking, exposure of privacy, leakage of personal information, malicious impersonation, and online deception. Now, imagine if you were the one facing cyberbullying, with countless people



hurling insults at you, and some even threatening you with what you hold dear. What would you do? How would you respond?

According to research, Between 2005 and 2017, the proportion of adolescents reporting severe depressive symptoms increased by 52%. Between 2009 and 2017, the proportion of adults aged 18 to 25 reporting severe depressive symptoms increased by 63%. Therefore, people of all ages in the world are affected by the negative impacts of social media. If you don't control how much time you spend on social media, these situations could happen to any of you at any time.

Secondly, have you ever found it **difficult to control** after the amount of time you spend on social media? Over the past 10 years, while many people use social media without any issues, a significant number of users have developed an addiction to it, leading to excessive and unconscious compulsive use. In fact, psychologists estimate that currently, 5% to 10% of people meet the criteria for social media addiction. Once you become addicted to it, you will face an endless abyss. You might dare not put down your phone or computer because you fear missing messages, and your repeated procrastination triggers your anxiety.

However, is saying 'no' to social media really that difficult? Whether it is work procrastination or failing to do what you should be doing, the common psychological factor is self regulation. We need to be able to control our own behaviour. Yes, the body may be weak, but the spirit is strong. We need to enhance our ability to control our desires. Using social media can be useful, but self control is even more important.

Thirdly, Social media damages real-life relationships.

Maybe you've experienced social anxiety and found face-to-face communication awkward. To be honest, when I was most addicted to the Internet, I was like this. Replacing face-to-face communication with social media interactions not only affects existing relationships but also impairs the ability to form new people. A report by Common Sense Media said that over 50% of teenagers prefer text chat over face-to-face communication. Psychologists point out that over-

dependence on virtual communication can weaken language organisation skills in real life.

Now, think about this, have you ever met 'phone zombies' in your daily life? For example, if two people sit down to talk face-to-face, but one of them continues to browse social media apps and check notifications, that person is a 'phone zombie.' Plenty of research and survey data indicate that many people think 'phone zombies' as rude and in violation of social norms. Those who have experienced such behaviour said that they feel a decrease in emotional connection and interpersonal trust.

So we must recognise that genuine relationships rely on eye contact, tone of voice, and body language. Don't let social media take away these important emotional bonds.

To end my speech, I want to say:

Though there are some benefits to using social media, the ability to control is also really important and I believe it is necessary for people to pay attention to. Next time, if you still keep using social media without a correct time usage, I suggest you prepare to face mental health in the future. Especially, when your real life relationships are damaged, don't blame anyone and think about my speech. Perhaps one day you suddenly realise that you should no longer continue to be negatively affected by social media, but due to long term use, this dependence has become much more powerful, and it is very difficult to control it.

Overall, we should begin to manage our use of social media, because time never stops for anyone. **Don't let social media control you, you should be the one in control.**



2025 School Ski Trip

By Julia Bai

This year's four-day ski trip on the snowy mountains of Queenstown was an amazing experience for all students who participated. There was a wonderful amount of fluffy snow and beautiful blue skies with not a single cloud.

Everything started off with the lovely van trip where we chatted with our friends, and took pictures of the countryside views. We stayed at the cosy cabins of the Lakeland Park Christian Camp, and everyone enjoyed the chance of having a long sleepover with their friends.

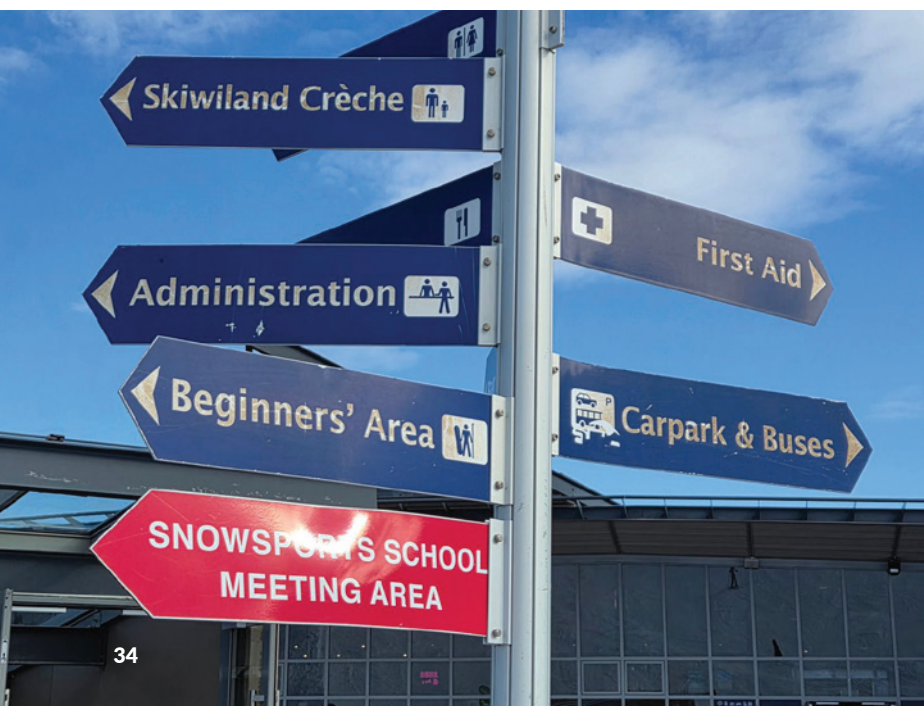
Every morning, we got up early and prepared ourselves for the long, adventurous day. Our first challenge was to get our gear and organise ourselves so we could go to our skiing lesson on time. The first timers and beginners group attended the nine o'clock lesson, where they got assigned with an experienced coach who taught them everything they needed to know to keep safe and have fun in the snow. While the more experienced skiers had some free time to speed down the slopes on their own before their eleven o'clock lesson or one o'clock lesson.

When we were not skiing, we also had the choice of having a snowball fight or building a snowman.

My favourite part of the trip was the free time we got to spend in Queenstown, where my friends and I had a delicious seven-course Japanese-style meal, and went shopping at some of our favourite shops.

The snowy mountains were truly a magical place to spend time at, and it was really nice to take a break from schoolwork and relax for a while. I really recommend people to go next year to have fun, new experiences and meet a lot of nice new people. I can promise that you won't regret it!





An Amazing Six Weeks

By Summer Li

I've had an amazing 6 weeks at Otago Girls' High School, and I've met wonderful people here. I really liked the calm and relaxed environment of our school, whether it's the people there, or the beautiful scenery of lush hills that still grow green in the middle of winter.



I am a person who likes going to school, and I think that going to Otago Girls' High School in my break/holiday was the right choice for me. It is a whole routine, as every school would have, and at the same time, isn't too tiring.

There are a lot of fun activities at school, and I participated in some clubs and events that I wouldn't be able to so easily attend in China. I've pursued in my current dream career— filmmaking, by joining the Media Lab/film club, and getting to

feel firsthand what it's like being behind the scenes.

I know that I will make more friends in the future, and know lots more people, but I've also met some fantastic people here. Three friends stood out to me at school: Paige Kuriger, Kyra Byers and Emily Harwood. Paige was very welcoming for the whole time I was there, especially during the first week. When not many people knew me and I was still confused about a lot of things, she helped me and even invited me to eat with her. She sat next to me during my first assembly, and Kyra was on my other side. They both were very friendly and patient when I bombarded them with questions.

And I met Emily a little later, near the end of my first week, when she invited me to sit with her during class. She was very interested in Chinese culture. She told me that she watched C-dramas, and Chinese reality shows that were also very popular in China, and I thought that it was very interesting. She also told me that she has two cats at home, which is the same amount as me. And coincidentally, her two cats were very similar to mine. Their colours, and their backstory were both similar.

And for whether I'm coming back or not, I'm not sure. I'm sorry to say that I'm not planning on going back for now, but if I change my mind in the future, I





may very likely choose to go back to OGHS! I hope that if I do go back, I will be a very active student at school, and participate in many activities. And I will try my best to pursue in whatever my career choice is then.

My teachers have influenced me in a very good manner. Especially Mr. Herrera and Mrs. Gilani. I have communicated with them the most, because of some special events, but there's no doubt that I will want to contact them in the future even without events.

Farewell OGHS, farewell Dunedin, and farewell to you all.

Thank you,

Summer Li



Special Moments from Term 3 2025





ALUMNI NEWS

Surprise Visit from former International Student

It was wonderful to welcome back former student Hannah Yan who studied at our school as an international student from 1998-2001. After her time with us, she went on to major in marketing at Canberra University before returning home to work in Hong Kong. Hannah is pictured here with her parents, who travelled with her from Hong Kong, and her brother and his children, who live in Christchurch.

We wish you safe travels on the rest of your trip through to Queenstown. It was so lovely to see you all!

19 August 2025



Newsletter Credits



Co-Editor:
Rose Gilani



Co-Editor:
Katherine Boomer



Copyeditor:
Eleanor Ross