



**SOUTH OTAGO
HIGH SCHOOL**

Prospectus

Quality Education in a Supportive Community

 South Otago High School, Frances St, Balclutha 9230, New Zealand
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I am proud to welcome you to South Otago High School and introduction through this prospectus.

South Otago High School was founded in 1926 and has a strong tradition of academic, sporting and cultural success. A walk through the school entrance hall provides an insight into the achievements our students have enjoyed at a regional, national and international level. The school motto, 'Faith and Fortitude' encourages the spirit with which we expect students to achieve and work.

The school caters for all students from Year 9 to Year 13. Typically our classes are small with great student to teacher ratios and this allows teachers to get to know their students. Relationships between students and staff is a vital part of our school and helps promote student engagement.

Teachers provide a high quality education and set high standards for students. The achievement of our students at national qualifications is well above comparable schools throughout the country. Each student has a mentor who will guide and support individual students to achieve their personal goals as well as be involved in the life of the school.

Students starting at South Otago High School in Year 9 are introduced to a broad curriculum. As they progress through the school they have the opportunity to specialise their subject choices to meet their needs for their future. We also offer courses of study in partnership with tertiary institutes such as Otago Polytechnic and Hokonui

Tertiary Partnership as well as links to local industry such as our association with Big River Homes.

At South Otago High School we expect our students to work to our key values:

- **Respect**
- **Excellence**
- **Perseverance**

We celebrate success for those students who demonstrate these values.

At South Otago High School we encourage students to participate in extra-curricular activities, both sporting and cultural. There are a wide variety of opportunities available to students and we are very proud of students who represent our school.

This prospectus provides you with a sample of some of the opportunities which are available to students who are enrolled at South Otago High School.

We welcome personal contact and would enjoy showing you our excellent facilities.

M T Wright
Principal



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The aim at South Otago High School is to provide students a diverse and full curriculum.

Juniors

The aim at South Otago High School is to provide junior students a diverse and full curriculum. We prepare students for the rigours of NCEA and life beyond school.

At Years 9 and 10 junior students at South Otago High School undertake a wide variety of subjects that cover the NZ curriculum document. This includes compulsory lessons in English, Mathematics, Science, Social Sciences and Health & Physical education. Students also engage in modules that cover the Arts and Technology.

Mentors are able to track the progress of individual students using our unique South Otago Academic Programme (SOAP).

The data for this is based on a standardised test run out of the University of Canterbury. It allows us to gauge the potential of each student in each subject and track if a student is working to their individual potential. This works alongside mentoring to provide a framework to support and encourage students to be the best they can be.

Senior

The aim at South Otago High School is to provide senior students with a wide variety of choices whilst catering for individualised needs. We aim to ensure students are ready for life beyond school wherever that may be.



“Students also get the chance to learn ‘life skills’ such as automotive skills and basic budgeting. Other opportunities include polytechnic courses, gateway placements and work experience.”

Students in Years 11-13 are offered a choice of 5 NCEA subjects. Each subject offers approximately 20 credits. The school has a comprehensive mentoring and careers guidance system that allows students to make informed choices at each level of NCEA. Regular mentoring ensures students are working to their potential and towards individualised goals.

Friday school

At South Otago High School we have a unique timetable that allows us to cater for a variety of needs. We aim to engage students in passion led learning that allows for individualised success.

Students in Years 11-13 have the opportunity to engage in enrichment and extension activities on a Friday. The day consists of two ninety minute lessons. In these time slots students are able to explore learning in a way that is meaningful and engaging for them. Students also get the chance to learn 'life skills' such as automotive skills and basic budgeting.

Other opportunities include polytechnic courses, gateway placements and work experience. Each opportunity is discussed with the student and their family to ensure the day is meaningful and works towards the students individual goal.

Success for Maori

South Otago High School places great value on the success of our Maori students. A number of initiatives have been launched in recent years to build a sense of belonging and value in Te Ao Maori.

Te Kapa Haka o Iwi Katea is our performing arts group that attracts students from all age groups. The school engages with local community organisations as well as participating in polyfests. We have a Maori Mentoring group made up of interested students who promote the values and integrity of the Maori culture and language to the rest of the school. This can be seen through the karakia (blessing) and waiata (songs) that many other students are learning.



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South Otago High School has clear uniform expectations for all students. We ask parents to please work with us to maintain a high standard of uniform for all students.

For new students starting at South Otago High School we provide current details where to purchase all items of the school uniform from our local suppliers. Students starting in Year Nine will have the opportunity to purchase from the PTA second hand uniform shop in December and January. NB Stock is limited and we recommend that you purchase early.

The school office does keep a small stock of uniform items that may be purchased during the year. If students are not able to find the correct uniform the school may have some loan items which can be borrowed by students on a temporary basis.



Students achieving at school to the best of their ability is highly dependent on their attendance. The higher a student's rate of attendance the more likely they are to succeed. Therefore, attendance is one of the areas we expect students to aim for our school value of Excellence.

At South Otago High School we believe that all students should have a minimum attendance rate of over 90% in order that they can be successful in their studies.

We ask that families inform school early if students are going to be absent for a day. Parents can call the school and select the absence line to record a message. The message should include:

- The students name
- The date that they will be absent
- A clear reason/ explanation for the absence eg, Unwell at home with chest infection OR Unwell and been to doctor, a medical certificate will be brought to school

If a student does not appear at school and we have had no explanation a text will be sent during the morning asking for an explanation. This is also to protect student safety in cases where the student may have left for school but not arrived.

The school does record student attendance each lesson. Where we have concerns for a student who has gone missing we may contact the parent by phone, text or e-mail.

It is important that school has the correct and up to date address, phone number, e-mail and cell phone contact information. This can be checked at the school office.

If a family is going to be away for an extended period of time, eg Tangi, family holiday etc they should contact the school as soon as possible. For family holidays, the Ministry of Education requires parents contact the principal requesting permission to take their child out of school. Where possible and appropriate, teachers will provide work for students so that they can continue with their studies and not fall behind.



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The vision of mentoring is to increase student academic engagement by having students take responsibility for their own learning.

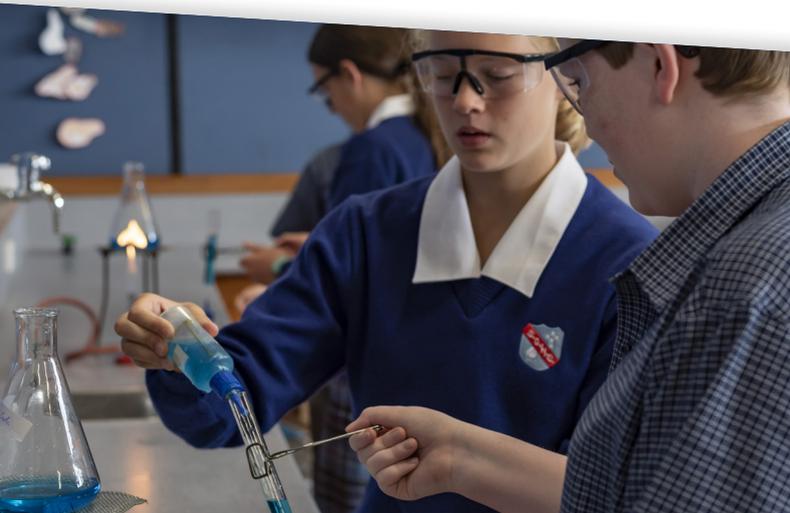
Every student will have a teacher acting as their mentor. As part of this each student will be in a mentoring group which will meet three times a week, in a similar way to a traditional form class, each mentoring group will have a range of Y9 to Y13 students. This provides role models for junior students and leadership opportunities for senior students.

The mentor will be responsible for meeting with each student in their group regularly and having conversations based around their learning, setting goals and holding students to account for reaching those goals.

Students are expected to actively contribute to this conversation by being aware of

how they are achieving in each class and having a range of goals they are working on whether they are academic, personal, sporting or cultural.

Parents or caregivers take part in the process by meeting with the mentor and their child twice a year for Conferences. These are 20 minute conversations where the student is expected to lead the conversation about their own learning. The first Conference of the year takes place mid-term 1 to set goals for the year and the second Conference mid-term 3 to review the progress towards these goals. During term 2 we have parent-teacher interviews so teachers can give feedback on progress in individual subjects.



“Our mentoring model is based on proven research based within New Zealand and is designed to best suit our students needs.”

At South Otago High School we have a supportive school culture where a preventative approach supports student wellbeing and pastoral care.

Student wellbeing affects students' engagement with their learning and their behaviour at school. School staff work in partnership with parents, whanau and community agencies to support our students.

Promoting student learning is linked with promoting student wellbeing. We promote learning with our values programme (PB4L), restorative practices, resilience and our pastoral team. This begins with your child's Mentor who is usually their first person to talk to. The pastoral team also includes Deans, the Guidance Counsellor and the Senior Leadership team.

We recognise that supporting students to gain academic skills alongside social and emotional skills is important. Students are

encouraged to reach out for help when they need it. This can be from members of the school community or ongoing support outside the school. The following are places where students and families can go for help:

- **The Lowdown:** Free text 5626 and www.thelowdown.co.nz
- **Youthline: Free Phone:** 0800 376 633 and Free text 234; Email: talk@youthline.co.nz and www.youthline.co.nz
- **Common Ground:** www.commonground.org.nz
- **Tautoko Suicide Crisis Helpline:** 0508 828 865
- **SPARX:** Free Phone: 0508 4 SPARX and www.sparx.org.nz
- **Need to Talk?** Free text: 1737



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We welcome enrolments and inquiries from everyone within our area. We will meet with all students individually to answer any questions and ensure you are well prepared before you arrive for your first day.

We look forward to welcoming the new Y9 cohort at the start of each academic year. Arriving at South Otago High School is part of a journey where we will have already met you through our Junior Technology program, Open Night, taster lessons and a tour of the school. We will have an enrolment meeting where a teacher will listen to your questions, provide any information you need and let you know what's important to make the best possible start.

If you arrive during the year, for example if you move to the area mid-year, we will endeavour to provide the same level of support and make you feel welcome. To arrange an enrolment interview please contact the school office. During the year it will be Mr McDowall who will meet you, give you a tour and help you with your timetable.

...RTITUDINE

South Otago High School provides many opportunities for students, some of which are part of our delivery of the curriculum and some which are extra curricular. Some of our curriculum based opportunities will take students out of school and see them travelling about the region.

South Otago High School does rely upon parental donations in order to provide these curriculum based opportunities for students. For each activity the teacher will provide details of the activity, the dates, travel and accommodation information as appropriate. The information will also include details of the suggested donation for the activity.

As regards extra curricular trips and activities these are a user pays basis. We encourage all students to participate in at least one sport or cultural activity. Wherever possible we work to remove financial barriers to student participation. We encourage families to talk to the school early to manage these financial arrangements.

For parents to spread the cost of any payments we do encourage families to consider setting up automatic payments for both fees and donations. Receipts for tax refunds on donations are available upon request from the school office.

The Board of Trustees of South Otago High School has over a number of years invested in students' education and opportunities. As a result of the careful financial management, the Board is able to provide both support for students as

well as have a cycle of replacement and renewal of resources and equipment. A walk through the school will show that buildings and facilities are well maintained and the school has excellent modern equipped learning spaces.

The Board of Trustees is also supported by an able Parent Teacher Association which supports activities like the Senior Ball and secondhand uniform sales and provides financial support back to the school.



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South Otago High School prides itself on its high participation rate of students involved sports, whether that is excelling at provincial and national levels, or enjoying the social aspects of participation.

Sport

Students are also encouraged to develop new sporting interests. Staff and parents cater to a wide range of interests and abilities, introducing new codes when such opportunities arise.

Swimming, athletics, cross country, interchanges and house group competitions are also important events on our calendar.

Cultural Activities

Cultural and arts activities are an integral part of our school. They include drama, kapa haka, school productions, school orchestra, vocal group, Rockquest, Sheilah Winn Shakespeare Festival, theatre sports, debating, public speaking and many more. Students are also able to learn how to play a musical instrument with the Itinerant Music Programme.



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Values

In 2017 the Board of Trustees, staff, students, whanau and community revisited and reworked our school's values to accurately and succinctly represent the culture of our school. We promote the values of Respect, Excellence and Perseverance.

Our school uses the Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L) framework to develop initiatives that support students to use these values to improve their behaviour, resilience and wellbeing.

PB4L has a focus on teaching the skills needed for the desired behaviour and recognition of this. Recognition involves signatures on REP (Respect, Excellence, Perseverance) cards to acknowledge students who demonstrate our values which work towards badges, prizes and house points.



Speak and act positively and appropriately to everyone

- Wear correct uniform with pride
- Care for the environment
- Show good citizenship
- Respect the routines of SOHS



Strive to achieve your personal best

- Aim to produce quality work
- Be self-motivated
- Set challenging goals
- Believe in yourself



Do the best you can, go the extra mile

- Overcome challenges
- Stay on task
- Be prepared to try again
- Seek help when necessary



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South Otago High School wants to ensure that our students are prepared for the demands and opportunities of the digital age.

As part of this we are a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) school. This means we strongly encourage all students to be ready to learn with a suitable, and charged electronic device.

In Years 9 and 10 at South Otago High School we recommend Chromebooks as a tool for the learning that will take place within the classroom. Chromebooks are devices that are cost effective with all the capacity that your child will need. Students may continue to use a device they have purchased for use at their primary school.

In Years 11 to 13 some students continue to use their Chromebooks and others purchase a laptop. Either of these is perfectly satisfactory and the student's choice of device often depends on their subjects.

Student devices require a minimum screen size of 11 inches and should have a fixed

keyboard to enable effective use. Mobile phones are unsuitable for this purpose and must only ever be used in class with the express permission of the teacher.

As with all other equipment at school we will do our best to ensure a safe and secure environment although the ultimate responsibility lies with the student and their family.

School lockers are available for students to use for the security and charging of devices.

Minimum Requirements

- Minimum 11 inch screen
- Fixed Keyboard
- Minimum 6 hour battery charge
- Ability to connect to the school's filtered Wi-Fi
- A fully functional web browser compatible with Google Drive