



OTAGO GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL

International Department Newsletter Term One 2021

The summer holiday period was most definitely a new experience for our international students as they were unable to return to their home countries for the long holiday. Some of them joined lessons and outings at the Language Centre, some English lessons at Talent International Institute, and some entertained themselves. They have shown incredible resilience in having to be away from their families for such a long period of time. We have been extremely pleased with the fine NCEA results from 2020 as many of our students gained merit and excellence endorsements.

Once school started, they quickly got back into the swing of studying and joining their chosen activities. We are very proud of our group of senior internationals who have many ideas of what we could do this year. They are Hermione Hai, Lindsay Hu, Well Chomchoei, and Sol Kwon. Hermione was chosen to be the international prefect and is doing a fantastic job with our students as well as the international prefects and students at other Dunedin schools.

We have welcomed one new international student to OGHS and this is Allison Han who has come to us from Kavanagh College. Her move was driven by her desire to study Japanese at school. Allison has fit in seamlessly, attended camp, and is an active OG's girl. Our annual International BBQ was once again catered for by Wairua Puhou, and this year, Hermione organised a display of the girls' beautiful work from art and textiles.



A highlight of this school year is our 150th Jubilee. It is wonderful to be a part of such a strong and long-standing institution that has produced many outstanding women over the years. On the first Friday of the school term, we held a special assembly to commemorate this achievement and several ex-girls attended, and stood proudly to sing the school song. In the afternoon we had some traditional games and treats. Staff and students dressed up some of the clothing that spans the years of the school. Well Chomchoei made an exquisite Victorian dress in her textiles class last year. She taught herself how to crochet and made all the lace herself. She even dyed the fabric with beetroots.



The annual sports day is always full of fun, laughter, and colour. It was great to see international students pushing themselves in some of the track events, as well as in the field events. The tabloid events are quite unique to our school and require no particular skills except a willingness to participate and have fun. Swimming sports is another colourful event and this year the seniors could also do the fun events in the shallow pool.



OGHS offers many opportunities to learn outside of the classroom and this term there were trips around the Otago area, and to Borland in Fiordland National Park for Year 12 biology and geography students. For the first time, these students got the pleasure of going on a boat trip to the magical Doubtful Sound. It was a real highlight and hopefully it will stay on the itinerary.



We hosted a combined OGHS-OBHS international social where we played some games in the classroom, then some more active games in the gym. These were run by our prefect, Hermione, and the boys' prefect, David. There was a good turn out of students and lots of fun was had. Study Dunedin organised an Amazing Race where Sport Otago organised different events and challenges around Logan Park, and concluded with sausages, fruit, and ice cream. One of our teams won first place.



2020 NCEA Endorsements

Level 1 Merit: Christine Hu, Pamela Peng, Rebecca Zhuang

Level 1 Excellence: Chloe Lai, Kate Lui, Hiroka Ryu

Level 2 Merit: Letitia Shen, Linh Vu, Jessica Xue

Level 2 Excellence: Well Chomchoei, Hermione Hai, Lindsay Hu, Sol Kwon, Julia Ma, Evelyn Wei, Dora Xue, Chloe Zhang

Level 3 Merit: Annsen Chan, Will Chomchoei

Level 3 Excellence: Chris Huynh, Dain Kim, Elaina Yang

International Prefect: Hermione Hai

Hi all. I'm Hermione, the international prefect 2021. A brief introduction about myself: I come from China. This is my third year in Otago Girls. I play guitar and Guzheng (a Chinese instrument), my favourite sport is snowboarding. My aim for this year is to try my best to engage our international students to integrate with the local community.



2020 was a tough year for our international students. We couldn't have the chance to go back to our countries. I deeply understand that we all miss our families very much. However, it is a great opportunity for us to experience diverse cultures. To be honest I have never experienced a summer Christmas until last year. Before that all my memories about Christmas were wearing my winter jacket with at least 5 layers beneath it and walking on the freezing cold street. But last year I wore my mini dress, hung out with friends and took photos. I spent my Christmas with my host family. We played secret Santa and had a bunch of food. To even make you more jealous, we had cheesecake, strawberry sponge cake and Tiramisu for dessert. I believe this kind of cultural experience is a precious memory which makes ourselves diverse and open-minded.

For this year, we have three international leaders who also work for our international community. They are Well, Sol, and Lindsay. All of us would love to provide sincere support to our internationals to get involved in various activities. There are a lot of things going on at school, such as Showquest, music groups, and sports teams. They are great opportunities for us to make friends and understand different cultures. Apart from these, me and our international leaders are dedicated to planning events for international students. This term we had international BBQ, social with OBHS and the Amazing Race. For the upcoming term, we will be having ice skating and international Sports Day. We also made a message box for students to leave us a message. At the end of the year, we will be making a memory book that includes the photos we took during every event.

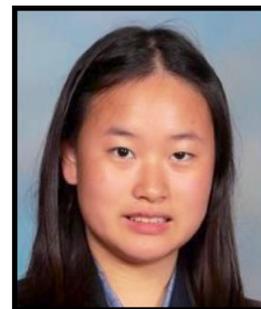
This year is definitely an exciting year for all of us. The international leaders and I will try our best to make the most of it for the international students. We appreciate all the support we've got from our students, host families and teachers.

Your sincerely
Hermione Hai



Year 9 Camp: Lindsay Hu

For a while, being the youngest international student, I have been told more than frequently to how much the year 13 girls missed their junior years. Now that the time has come, I have really mixed feelings. Although to be on the positive note, I, along with Sol, get the privilege to take part in something that is only open to the year 13s - peer support. Ever since the end of last year, we have been involved in activities and bonding relationships with the new girls in year 9.



Standing in my shoes, anyone would be as excited as I was to go on the year 9 camp, I believe. It was the sense that I had obtained the opportunity to revisit the past, even if I did not exactly experience that. There have been countless conversations among my friends about the intense bivy building, fun confidence course, and the soaked tents after a rainy night - not everything was favourable, but it still appealed to my interest.

And it did not disappoint me. I chatted with the girls, watched them scream on the simply-constructed soapy water slide, performed in the talent show and (for one of the rare times of my life) got up early the next morning with the other peer supporters to wake up the girls by banging cooking pots. My favourite part was the letter to the future self - another thing that I had wished to have the chance to do.



I had pondered considerable times about things I was going to put in the letter long before the camp. Nevertheless, in the end, I decided to simply record what I had felt on the day. Because of my position, I was not required to actively participate in the activities, and I used this freedom to observe. I thought about those curious faces and ungovernable laughs and the nice smell of grilled onions. What left me with the deepest impression was their nervousness, eagerness and also vitality. And I relate to them. There is one common thing between us - being in a new environment.

Every now and then, I go back to the question of what the purpose of studying abroad is. Deep down, I see it beneficial as an instinct. But really, why would anyone be willing to put themselves in an unfamiliar condition? It seems to be merely more risk.

However, I see it now. We all have a preconceived notion of the world. Though what we have learned, read or been taught is not necessarily comprehensive or even true. Fortunately, the world is there for us to explore and to use our own eyes to tell us what to believe. Stay hungry. Stay foolish. Let the diversity break your original acknowledgement, and let yourself be touched by those wonderful encounters.

It is those moments that matter. For me, the purpose of studying abroad is those enlightenments when I realised popcorn can be salty, the method of drying dishes can be different, and the last year of high school is unfortunately no less difficult.

And one more thing that I have been told by the year 13 girls which I now sincerely approve? Give everything a try. You won't regret it.





Term 2 Events

- Week 1 School Starts Monday 3 May
- Week 2 Year 11 Geography trip to Mt Cook (Tuesday - Friday)
NCEA Teacher Only Day (Tuesday) No Classes.
- Week 3 School Cross Country Run/Walk (Friday)
- Week 4 Tertiary Open Day (Monday)
Parent-Teacher Interviews (A-L) 3:30-6:30 (Thursday)
- Week 5 Parent-Teacher Interviews (M-Z) 3:30-6:30 (Wednesday)
- Week 6 Queen's Birthday: School Closed (Monday)
- Week 7 Library Day (Tuesday)
- Week 9 Senior Production (Wednesday - Sunday)
Year 12 *Loves Me Not* Programme (Friday)
- Week 10 House Haka Competition (Tuesday)
Year 12 Formal (Thursday)

***There are numerous other events and activities taking place during the term.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!