



South Otago High School Newsletter, 23rd October 2015

Nga mihi mahana ki a koutou katoa
Warm greetings to you all

Tena Koutou Katoa

As you are now aware I have been appointed as Principal of South Otago High School and will be starting in this new role in January 2016. I am really looking forward to returning to the South Otago region having spent nine years previously at Tokomairio High School. I enjoyed the great community spirit and the strong links that were shared with South Otago High School and hope that these will continue in the future.

Currently I am employed as Principal at Opihi College in Temuka. This is a role that I have held for the last four years. I have been reflecting upon my work over the previous four years here during the last week. I have lead the school through some interesting changes and development. The school roll is now growing, students are remaining in school for longer and achieving good levels of success. Involvement in sporting and cultural activities is increasing too.

Personally I have a strong interest in the education of young people, their academic success and also their personal growth. I enjoy working with young people and encouraging them to challenge themselves and develop their resilience. I believe that students learn through active participation and should be encouraged to try new experiences. I expect that I will be providing some of these opportunities to the young people of South Otago High School and also working alongside them as they learn.

I am looking forward to meeting staff, students, parents and members of the community. I will be visiting the school prior to the end of the term and plan to start meeting staff and students during my visits.

Ka kite ano
Mr Mike Wright
Principal

Tena Koutou Katoa

At this time of the year the focus for senior students is academic success. The extra distractions that exist in a young person's life should be put to the side for the next month. We ran an assembly yesterday with the senior students in an attempt to highlight the need to be focussed on class work. I would encourage every parent to become proactively involved in this process.

Use the school's Kamar parent portal or the NZQA website to track the progress of your child. Ask them questions about the total number of credits they have? How do they intend getting to 80 credits to pass the year?

Do they have enough credits in a subject to be able to do it the next year? Are they on track to get an endorsement? The more you talk to your children about their credits the more likely it is they will take some ownership of their success and work towards their goals.

We are also working with the students to ensure they pass NCEA. I have spent time with the Deans reviewing the academic progress of every senior student. We have identified approximately one third of each year level we need to keep an eye on in the next two weeks.

As the current internal assessments are completed, moderated and the grades put onto Kamar, we track the progress towards passing NCEA. I think it is essential we all send the message that it is not too late to have success and that we want our young people to keep working. During week four of the term, the Deans and I will meet again and determine who is at risk of not passing NCEA, or not meeting the requirements for the following year. Once identified, these students will not be granted study leave.

As a caregiver, you will be sent an email informing you that your child has not been granted study leave and they will be required to continue to attend school during the exam period. The last day for senior students is Thursday, 5th November. If a student is not granted study leave they will be required to be at school from Monday, 9th November until we determine they are going to pass. A further email will be sent letting you know when this step occurs. Students will be expected in the library every day to complete extra standards, to finish off existing work or be in mandatory tutorials for external exams. Please work with us on this and emphasise the point this is not a punishment but an opportunity to have success and be in the best possible position to start the follow academic year.

Please help us by removing the distractions at home such as gaming, cellphones, parties etc. Every home is different and the needs of every student is different. The one constant is the desire of every parent to see their child do well at school. This is the time to demand a focus on study, to put the distractions away, to have a study plan and to work towards academic goals.

If any parent is concerned about how their young person is doing academically please do not hesitate to make contact with subject teachers, form teachers, Dean's or Senior Leaders to discuss how we can best help.

Have a great long weekend and let's all return next week determined to succeed.

Mr Paul McDowall
Acting Principal
Ka Kite Ano

**Student Job Opportunity
Engineering Positions at the Clutha
District Council**

The essential ingredients are enthusiasm, practicality and willingness to learn! We will add support from experienced staff, a few laughs and a wide variety of work, practical and study opportunities.

At the end of a few years you will get the best of both worlds – the opportunity for tertiary study while you earn and learn practical skills. You will end up with great future career options in an industry that needs more people! For more information contact the school office or contact Jules Witt at the Clutha District Council on 021 02577570.

Below: Vic Tamati from the *Its Not OK Campaign* speaking to our Year 9 and 10 students today.



GATE Whanau Survey

As part of the ongoing development of the school's Gifted and Talented in Education provision, I invite parents to complete a survey about what the school currently does and our possible next steps. You can find this survey here: <https://goo.gl/AyRBVk>. You will need a Google account to access it; if you do not have one then ask your son or daughter to log in through their school account.

Resources for whanau and students

I have created a folder with resources which might be of interest to parents and gifted students. It includes Ministry of Education guidelines and the school's GATE definition. This folder can be accessed here: <https://goo.gl/Q0xR7F>. It will continue to be updated. If you have any resources you would like to add, or any questions about GATE at SOHS, email me at asmith@sohs.school.nz.

Amanda Smith GATE Coordinator

Roman Sandals

These will be available from *Entity* at the beginning of November. They will retail for \$60.

Cricket - Boys

The 1st XI's opening round fixture was cancelled last Saturday.

With it being Labour Weekend, there will be no game for the 1st XI this Saturday, but the school will have four boys representing Otago Country Under 17 at a representative tournament in Oamaru. The boys who have been selected are: Caleb Carson, Connor Smith, Luc Thomson and Ashton Tourell. All the best boys!

**Elliott Carroll
TIC Cricket**

Term Four Upcoming Events

- *Monday 26th October* Labour Day (School is closed)
- *Thursday 5th November* Senior Students Last Day, Leavers Assembly
- *Friday 6th November* NCEA Begins
- *Tuesday 10th—Friday 13th November* Junior Exams
- *Thursday 19th—Friday 20th November* Year 10 Outdoor Education Trip
- *Friday 20th November* Year 9 Trip to Berwick
- *Tuesday 24th—Wednesday 25th November* Year 8 visit to SOHS
- *Thursday 26th November* Teacher Only Day
- *Friday 27th November* Junior Career Exploration
- *Monday 30th November* Senior Prizegiving
- *Monday 7th—Tuesday 8th December* Ki O Rahi Tournament
- *Thursday 10th December* Junior Prizegiving , Last Day