

## PROFILE of the SCHOOL and COMMUNITY

### TWIZEL AREA SCHOOL

Although the school serves a large geographical area, extending to Omarama, and Mt Cook village, over 80% of the students live within Twizel township. The school is very well endowed with teaching spaces, having formerly been a high school for over 500 students. There are currently 224 students at the school, with just over half of them being in the Year 1-6 and the balance in Year 7-13. We are a Decile 8 school although this encompasses diverse family backgrounds and approximately 18% of our students are Maori.

There are 24 teachers on the staff with 10 support staff serving in various capacities in the school. They are wonderful people; hard working, innovative and dedicated, setting a high store on improving skills and supporting one another in their daily work around the school. The majority of staff meet socially in informal get-togethers. A number of teachers with interests in outdoor recreation use the wonderful surroundings or other locations throughout the South Island to walk, climb, fish, hunt, bike, ski, boat, paddle or picnic in their spare time.

The school tries to take maximum advantage of the local environment, with a strong outdoor education programme, much of which is based at our own wonderful facility, Huxley Lodge, situated in the Hopkins Valley above Lake Ohau. The lodge consists of two 18 bunk log cabins and a huge two story log base building.

The community is very much involved in the school. We have an active and supportive Board of Trustees, and a Home and School group. The Community Library is housed at the school, and the community makes use of other school facilities, such as our sports fields. Parents are to be seen throughout the school during the day, and are encouraged to be involved as helpers, spectators, and supporters. There is a weekly school newsletter, TAN, which is widely circulated. Local businesses and service clubs are supportive of the school.

We value courtesy, cooperation and consideration, and work hard to ensure that the school is a safe and welcoming place for all who work here, students and staff alike. We are working to implement the ideas of Glasser's Quality Schools into our school. This uses a non-coercive approach to discipline, stressing certainty rather than severity in our dealings with students. We are proud of the family atmosphere of the school, which our small size enhances, as everyone is known to every other person. We encourage excellence in all fields - academic, sporting, and cultural.

We are fortunate to be part of the NetNZ distance education scheme, which has broadened the subject range for our students in the Year 9-13 area. We have an up-to-date Information Technology facilities which including a fibre link to the Internet, upgraded school wide wireless and a large internal network of computers. There are sufficient PC's for example for each year 9-13 student to access one and ipads in Y1-6 are at a 1:2 ratio.

We enjoy our ties with neighbouring schools, and a special highlight in the annual calendar is the three day Southern Area Schools tournament, which is a cultural and sporting festival rotating around the 5 Area Schools in the south of the South Island. We are extending this connection by forming a Community of Learning with this group.

### TWIZEL TOWNSHIP

Twizel Area School is situated in the rural town of Twizel, in the heart of the Mackenzie country. The school is therefore not quite a typical country school as less than 20% of our students are from farms. Twizel is a town of approximately 1200 people, just over three hours drive from Christchurch and Dunedin, and under two hours from Timaru and Oamaru. The town was originally built to accommodate the workforce for the Upper Waitaki Power project and peaked at a population of 6,000. As the project wound down the town (and the

schools) population dropped, before picking up again - in the last 4 years over 600 new sections have been sold and 300 new houses built as Twizel enjoys a resurgence of interest as a holiday town. The town population doubles over the summer holiday season as people flock to enjoy the adjacent lakes, rivers and the mountains of Aoraki Mt Cook National Park, and many of the townspeople are employed in serving the tourists who visit this area. Other big employers are Meridian Energy who service the 6 hydro power stations from here and the Department of Conservation.

There are a wide range of shops and services, including a 5 day a week bank, two supermarkets, two hardware stores, a chemist, gift store, 5 real estate agencies, council office, several restaurants, cafes, and liquor outlets. There is a doctor, a St John's ambulance service, a volunteer fire brigade, a kindergarten, and an Early Learning Centre. There are several accommodation businesses, including the large Mackenzie Country Inn, the High Country Holiday Lodge, and several motels.

Two churches, Roman Catholic, and a combined Protestant church, serve the town from the same Church building. Te Whare Mahana Marae is located in the town. A Resource Centre houses our community worker and visiting agencies such as NZ Employment Service and Inland Revenue are located here during their regular visits.

Four kilometres away is Lake Ruataniwha, which has a large camping ground, and is the headquarters of South Island Rowing. Several regattas are staged each year, including the Maadi Cup and the New Zealand Championships on rotation.

There are a large number of community clubs and facilities. The many sports clubs include rowing, basketball, golf, and bowls and there are a wide range of well appointed facilities, including astro turf tennis courts, a solar heated swimming pool, and a nine hole golf course. The latest addition is the Twizel Events centre. This large complex hosts a large sports hall incorporating 2 climbing walls and a full size basketball and netball court. It also includes a well equipped gym, 2 squash courts and a 220 seat theatre. The Twizel Arts Council organises regular visits of various performing artists.

## CLIMATE

Being inland, Twizel enjoys the benefits of a continental type of climate. There is little rainfall, and little wind. The summers are hot and dry, with temperatures regularly reaching 30 degrees. Because of our altitude of 500 metres above sea level, summer nights tend to be pleasantly cool. The winters are dry and cold. We tend to have heavy frosts, followed by bright, clear days. Snow falls in the township two or three times a year, but seldom lasts. Twizel houses have been built to cope with the climate, and are easily heated.

## THE LOCAL AREA

Twizel is well situated for taking advantage of a range of outdoor activities. There are three ski fields nearby, Ohau, Roundhill and Dobson. There are numerous easily accessible areas for tramping, hunting, rock climbing, and mountaineering. The newly opened Alps to the Ocean (A2O) mountain bike trail starts at Aoraki Mt Cook and passes through Twizel on its way down the Waitaki Valley to Oamaru. The surrounding rivers and lakes provide opportunities for water sports such as kayaking, yachting, and boating, and fishing is very popular. Omarama, 35 km distant, is a national centre for gliding. Central Otago is not far away, with Wanaka approximately 1½ hours and Queenstown 2 ¼ hours by road.