

Outstanding, unthinkable and stunning are the words I'll use to describe my stay in New Zealand. I'm Eugenia, an exchange student from France, and I am really grateful for the opportunity I have had to come to your amazing school for two months. By coming to New Zealand, I realised how lives of people my age can be so different from mine, starting with school: I was first surprised by the number of periods you have a day. In my school, it is not the case every day, but we can start school at 8:30 am and finish at 6 pm with only two breaks of 15 minutes and a 30 minute lunch break. Here, I found the study period very useful because it gives you more free time after school. There are still a few things here that differ from my school in France, like school uniform or the grades, but what surprised me the most in Dunstan High School was the interaction between teachers and their students. It was unusual for me to see how a teacher can just sit with a group of students, eat lunch together and talk about everything. I think that's great.

Outside of school, I had the opportunity to visit some amazing places such as The Hobbiton movie set. It was really interesting there: we were told some fascinating behind the scene facts, and the set was beautiful. Then, we went to the Waitomo glow worm caves. It was really nice learning about these glow worms and seeing them. We also went to Mount Cook and to the frozen lakes around it and stargazed, and the landscape was breathtaking. Another unusual experience for me was skiing in August because at this time of the year it is summer and it's really hot in France.

I didn't know what to expect by coming in New Zealand but I am very thankful and pleased to have come here and discovered many incredible things and met some incredible people.

Ivanova Eugenia.