



PROGRAM COUNTRY: NEW ZEALAND

STS – more than 50 years of experience in student exchange programs all over the world



Adventures and nature experiences in an exceptionally beautiful environment, is what the students will take part in during their exchange year in New Zealand. In New Zealand the students can explore nature and enjoy a variety of outdoor activities like fishing, hiking and water sports with relaxed friendly kiwi people. The

North Island is known for its excellent sailing and other water sports, and for its bounty of fruit. The South Island has lower temperatures and is noted for its beautiful nature and breath-taking adventure opportunities for nature lovers.

COUNTRY INFORMATION

When the Waitangi Treaty was signed on February 6, 1840, New Zealand became a part of the British Commonwealth. New Zealand is an independent nation. New Zealand is an island country in the southwest Pacific. The capital is Wellington; the largest city and principal port is Auckland. Comparable in size (268,680 sq km) to the United Kingdom, the Philippines and Colorado in the United States, New Zealand has a diverse multicultural population of 4 million people, making it one of the world's least crowded countries. New Zealand's indigenous Maori and Polynesian people make up around 15 % of the population.

New Zealand comprises of the North and South Islands (the two main islands), and a host of smaller islands including Waiheke, Stewart/Rakiura and the Chatham Islands. Tokelau and Ross are dependencies. Extensive areas of New Zealand have been set aside as national parks, including Fiordland, Aoraki/Mt Cook and Tongariro.

Protected offshore islands and oceanic reserves ensure New Zealand's unique plants and wildlife are preserved. New Zealand's wildlife includes the kiwi, a flightless bird, after which both the people and the fruit are named. There are also unique varieties of parrots, frogs and reptiles. New Zealand has no native land mammals other than bats. There are no snakes.

The North Island has New Zealand's largest lake, Taupo (606 sq km), longest river, Waikato (425 km), and most of the country's active volcanoes – Ruapehu, Ngauruhoe and Tongariro – all of them usually quiet. Hot springs, geysers and mud pools also form part of the volcanic system centred around Rotorua.

On the South Island, one of the most striking physical feature is the Southern Alps/Ka Tiritiri o te Moanan. These, along with fiords, glaciers, lakes, and the coastal plains of Canterbury and Southland, add to the variety of the South Island's scenery. New Zealand's deepest lake (Hauroko, 462 m) and the deepest cave (Nettlebed, 889 m) are also located in the South Island.

New Zealand has a temperature climate with relatively small seasonal variation. The north is subtropical and the south temperate. The seasons are opposite to those in the Northern Hemisphere. The warmest months are December, January and February, and the coldest are June, July and August. In summer, the average maximum temperature ranges between 20°C and 30°C; in winter, between 10°C and 15°C. Extreme temperatures are unusual.

More than 70 % of the population live in the 16 main urban areas. English is the everyday language of New Zealand. English, Maori and New Zealand Sign Language are recognised as official languages. One-third of New Zealanders are not affiliated with any religion. Of those who are, the largest denominations are Anglican, Catholic and Presbyterian. Sport and cultural activities are important aspects of New Zealand life. Most children participate in organised sport from primary school age onwards, and 93 % of over-15-year-olds are involved in at least one cultural activity.

SCHOOL LIFE

Formal education normally begins at age five, though many children enjoy subsidised pre-school education. The schooling system is divided into primary, secondary and tertiary sectors.

All school systems, both within the private and public sectors, are controlled by the State and conform to the curriculum laid down by the NZ Ministry of Education. The management and administration of schools are locally organized, with school boards composed of teachers, parents, and students.

When they arrive, exchange students are placed in a high school closest to the host family home or where a host family member may be attending.



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School lunches are not free in New Zealand, but most Kiwi students either buy or make their lunch. Purchasing school lunch is the exchange student's expense.

The primary school is from the age of five to the age of eleven. The intermediate school is from the age of twelve to thirteen, and the secondary school is from the age of fourteen to the age of eighteen.

The schools run from the end of January/beginning of February through to the end of November/beginning of December. Classes are typically held from 8.45 am to 3.30 pm, five days a week. There are various vacations throughout the year. The first vacation is mid-April for Easter and it lasts for two weeks, the next vacation is in July for two weeks, and the last vacation before the summer break is in September for two weeks.

New Zealand schools usually organise sport activities, so students can participate in a number of activities through their schools during their exchange.

Exchange students must study English or ESOL, and show interest in all the subjects, study diligently, do assignments and speak in English. Exchange students are expected to take school seriously, behave correctly and respect teachers as well as classmates.

Many New Zealand schools have a compulsory school uniform, and the exchange student would also be required to wear a school uniform. The students can be placed in girls-only, boys-only and also co-ed schools.

HOST FAMILY LIFE

New Zealanders are known to be very relaxed people who love to have fun and enjoy life. They often do things on the spur of the moment, which means that they can at times be very impulsive, but they also show great commitment to things they become involved in. Family life is very important to New Zealanders and the host family will do everything to make their exchange student feel at home. The student will adapt to the new surroundings and feel like a genuine family member in no time.

In New Zealand they generally say "tea" for dinner in the evening, while "dinner" is lunch, which is somewhat different compared to other English-speaking countries. New Zealand parents are very particular with the student informing them about what he or she is going to do when leaving home and with what friends. They are fairly strict when it comes to what the student can do and not, but this is just because they care for the student and want to be sure that he or she is not exposed to unnecessary risks. It is common for the family to socialize a lot during their spare time, also together with relatives and friends.

The New Zealand families who welcome students into their homes are not rich, but are families who want to share their lives with a student from another country. In return they want to learn about

the student and his or her home country. The families are diverse, they may have children of any age, not necessarily teenagers, or they may have no children at all. They may live in urban, suburban or rural environments, however most of our exchange students are placed in rural areas of New Zealand. This can make the student feel isolated, but the challenge for the student is to remember they are on a cultural exchange, and they must adapt to New Zealand and its big wide open spaces. New Zealand is a sparsely populated country with beautiful scenery and it is very green.

A typical New Zealand home is very busy, some with both parent working. Everyone in a kiwi family helps out with the house chores.

PROGRAM EXTRAS

STS NZ offers a North Island Tour and a South Island Tour to the exchange students. Each tour is run once a year. We use a very good tour company, NZET (New Zealand Educational Tours); STS supplies the chaperones for each tour. Both tours include all coach travel, all accommodation, most evening meals and breakfasts, included and optional activities and a fully trained NZET tour manager.

North Island Tour

Our North Island tour runs during the April school holidays each year. It is an 11-day tour of the North Island of New Zealand. You get to visit approximately eight different cities or towns together with other STS students on exchange in New Zealand. The cost is approximately NZD 1,400.

South Island Tour

Our South Island tour runs during the September school holidays each year. It is an 11-day tour of the South Island of New Zealand. The students get to visit approximately eight different cities or towns, including Queenstown (the adventure capital of NZ), together with other STS students on exchange in New Zealand. The cost is approximately NZD 1,500.



All information is subject to change.

