

The glow of learning at Big Rock...



2024

YEAR 7/8 LEARNING PROGRAMME

BIG ROCK PRIMARY

Our Vision at Big Rock Primary School is to create independent, resilient lifelong learners with inquiring minds by providing all of our students with rock solid foundations in Numeracy and Literacy.

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INTRODUCTION



David Grant
Principal

This is an interesting and ultimately, a challenging time in a child's education, as well as their development.

There are many different ways that children can experience this. Big Rock is a full primary, that means we go to Year Eight and have the staff qualified and experienced to teach up to and beyond these years.

Big Rock is not a 'big' school and there are many advantages to this. The purpose of this booklet is to outline some of the things that are in the learning programme that will be taught and experienced by all Big Rock children in Year Seven and Eight in 2024.

EQUITABLE LEARNING

At Big Rock we know that learning programmes and supporting activities must be available to all children in a targeted age or year group. That is because at Big Rock, due to our size and our philosophies, there will never be a restriction on the number of children who can participate in any learning programme. (Robotics, Minecraft Education, Surfing, SCUBA etc).



Literacy

Literacy in year 7/8 is fully integrated into topic. This ranges in experiences including reading, researching, writing, and presenting using a variety of different tools.



Maths

At Big Rock we believe that quality teaching and learning in mathematics must be strongly focused on number knowledge and sound basic fact knowledge supported by Geometry, Algebra, Measurement and Statistics, Financial Literacy.



Science

Science Badge - To get students interested in and working on a series of sciences activities. Activities are well within the capability of average students, and encourage student initiative

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

"Our challenge is to prepare the children for their future, not to our past"

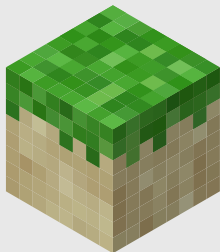
Digital Technology and Literacy is a compulsory component in all New Zealand schools. All experiences directly linked to the Big Rock Curriculum.

Fortunately, Big Rock has long been at the front of that journey. The advantages of Digital Technology and Literacy in Year Seven and Eight at Big Rock are:



Big Rock is not a BYOD school

We provide the children with a high powered, modern laptop or Macbook.



Minecraft Education

A stunning, child friendly programme using Minecraft Education. It has the ability to be coded/ used for coding, which is the basis for creating computer programs, apps, websites etc.



Tech at Taieri

It is compulsory for every Y7/8 student in NZ to do a Technology Programme. We do Food Technology, Soft Materials and Hard Materials at Taieri College.



Web Design

The children create and manage their own Google Site, where all presented school work is posted. These are private, but can be shared with parents and family members so they can follow their progress.

"The good news about computers is that they do what you tell them to do, the bad news is they do what you tell them to do!"

EDUCATION OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

1. Swimming, Surfing, Kayaking, Fishing, SCUBA Diving

As part of the extensive E.O.T.C. we also have our On, Over and Under Aquatics programme. This is a remarkable programme that includes:

Swimming - school pool, the sea and Moana Pool.

Surfing - This programme has been in place for a number of years and is led, by talented local surfers with all surfboards provided.

SCUBA Diving - In 2019 SCUBA was introduced to the senior aquatics programme. This is taken by professional PADI trained dive instructors.

Kayaking - introduced last year. Both open Water and the Sea.

Fishing - Year 8 go deep sea fishing for blue cod and grouper.



2. Bike Adventures

Our Year 7/8's bike the Goldfields Trail at the start of each year. We also have a number of groups (with a range of abilities) that go on different day trips around Dunedin, and an overnight trip for our more experienced mountain bikers to Naseby. While the Naseby trip is an annual one, the local Bike trips occur every term, and cater for all abilities and experiences.

3. Amazing Races

The Amazing Races (Mathematics and Social Sciences) - clue finding and map reading races around Brighton, Dunedin and Mosgiel. There are three per year.

4. Class, Survivor, and Leadership Camps

In 2024, Year 7/8 Class Camp will be in Central Otago, while in 2025 it will be at Stewart Island.

Year 7/8 Survivor Camp - an adventure in the bush, if Bear Grylls went to Big Rock, this would be his thing!



VIRTUAL LEARNING NETWORK LANGUAGES

- Learning another language is a requirement for all Year Seven and Eight in New Zealand schools. This is difficult, because there is a shortage of language teachers.
- Big Rock is privileged to be a part of the Virtual Learning Network. This means that all Year Seven and Eight children not only get to learn another language with a specialist language teacher, but also get to choose the language and not be stuck with what the school can provide.
- In 2024, Big Rock children can learn:
 - Te Reo Māori
 - Spanish
 - German
 - French
 - Japanese
 - Mandarin

SCHOLARSHIPS

At Big Rock, we believe in supporting children in pursuing their dreams. As such all Year Seven and Eight children are eligible to apply for Big Rock Supporting Excellence Scholarships. These are aimed at encouraging and rewarding personal development, endeavour and achievement. In the past these have been used to provide monetary support to children and their families in the following areas:

- Music lessons and instruments
- Theatre and sporting trips and equipment
- Art equipment

This is by no means the limit and is designed to support all children in their chosen area of interest or expertise.



WHAT FORMER PUPILS/PARENTS SAY...

Year 7 & 8 at Big Rock was the perfect place for my son to start preparing for High School.

The intermediate class with Mr Murray was carefully geared towards stretching the children – academically, socially, and within themselves. The tech and language options were great and with lots of variety, the trips fostered more leadership roles and encouraged the children to think for themselves and develop their autonomy.

Mr Grant and Mr Murray make it look easy but the whole team works incredibly hard to make a familiar, friendly environment challenge and push the children to fulfill their potential.

Once my son got to high school, he felt completely ready – he even thought it was easy as he'd 'done it all with Mr Murray' – across every subject!

If you are in two minds about whether Big Rock intermediate can offer the same level of education, community, and options as the bigger more central intermediates – feel assured it beats them all.

Emma

The School is not crowded and is very calm, a really good place to be educated.

All the trips are to wonderful locations and have amazing activities, I did not miss out on anything at Big Rock.

Year 7 and 8 really prepare you for at least the first year of high school.

Chris



WHAT FORMER PUPILS/PARENTS SAY...

The leadership opportunities at Big Rock are massive like coaching and leading the junior's MTB group which I really enjoyed as well as things like doing road patrol or even just doing the school lunch orders.

The senior camp at Stewart Island was an awesome experience and it was really cool to see Charlie from Stewart Island school that had been doing Spanish classes with us online.

There were always lots of things to do and try, like cross country, mountain biking, scuba diving, learn languages, help out with the junior classes, try different sports, computers and Minecraft.

High school is epic – the different opportunities and making new friends but you also have a lot more work but I feel that I got the knowledge and skills I needed to make the transition from Big Rock to Kings easy.

Thomas

The best thing that Abi said was we covered some aspects of maths that others in my class hadn't covered at their intermediate school. Abi is doing really well in her language classes because of the opportunity she had with the zoom classes at Big Rock. I would like to add that being a big fish is better than a small fish in a big pond, there was so much more that Big Rock offered to all of their students that may only have been offered to those privileged few. I believe this is the reason that Abi was able to earn both the Deans award and a year 9 scholarship. This also goes for my son Hamish.

Martin



WHAT FORMER PUPILS/PARENTS SAY...

Staying at Big Rock was one of the best decisions I've ever made.

The experiences, the trips, the learning, and the people all played a part in preparing me for high school. Big Rock is a small and open learning space that teaches you to be yourself and gives you the education you need to make the change from year 8 to 9.

The camps and activities offered to the senior school make for amazing experiences that you won't have a chance to partake in at other schools. The memories and friends you make or have in year 7 and 8 are what you carry with you to high school, it shapes you into the person you will become.

From my point of view staying at Big Rock made me more resilient, trustworthy, ambitious, and hard working. You get so many more all round opportunities and you don't have to worry about people's views or opinions on you. You're not only learning about maths and English and such but also life skills that will carry you through the transition to secondary school. Big Rock has shaped me into the person I am today and I can't imagine having attended any other school.

Alice & Isobel

Allowing our daughter to complete year 7 and 8 at Big Rock was the best decision we could have made for her. The opportunity to be a "big fish in a small pond" brought with it numerous opportunities to shine, take on more responsibility, and try new things. At that awkward age, when children are often struggling to find who they are, and where they fit, these opportunities allowed her to grow in confidence in a nurturing, close knit environment.

Any concerns we had regarding the social and academic transition to High School have been very quickly put to rest. She is the top of her class in math and participates in numerous sporting and cultural activities. She has made a lot of new friends but has also maintained the friendships she made at Big Rock – the best of both worlds.



I could not recommend Big Rock highly enough. The confidence and education she gained while there set her up for success as she navigates her High School life.

WHAT FORMER PUPILS/PARENTS SAY...

I had such a great time at Big Rock! My favourite parts about being a Big Rock Senior was the EOTC. Surfing, Padi Dive introduction, Mountain biking, Triathlons and Amazing Races to name a few. The Camps to Stewart Island and Queenstown were unreal (and still talked about) and survivor camp going from being “the captured” in year 7 to the “Kidnappers” in year 8 was so much fun.

I also enjoyed the feeling of being responsible because you are the oldest students at school and the self confidence it gave me from helping with the younger Big Rockers with things like the Taieri Mouth Beach Day and just around the school in general as well as leadership skills from helping take the beginners Mountain Bike group all really helped my transition into year 9 at High School go smoothly.

Ryder



From a parents point of view, Big Rock is a safe and fun environment for senior students to learn, gather self confidence and grow at a time that can be a challenging transition in our young persons schooling life.

The support and guidance from the teaching staff, the relationship Richard Murray builds with his students and the curriculum on offer all contribute to that. There are so many opportunities that cover all bases, academically over and above the necessary subjects, there is a choice of languages, the Minecraft programme and Tech classes at Taieri College.

Also the large amount of EOTC on offer is amazing and I truly believe you will struggle to find anything comparable elsewhere, it all comes with the peace of mind that you as the parent still feel welcome and connected with the school and your child's learning. I have heard concerns in the past from other parents about how can students transition from a small school into a large one when its time for high school, in my experience from the nurturing environment Big Rock has created, students are well equipped and more than capable to enter high school at year 9 with confidence.

ADVANTAGES OF A FULL PRIMARY

The Advantages of a Full Primary are:

- Real and meaningful leadership opportunities through working with younger children, including pre-school.
- Develop and learn genuine empathy for younger people.
- Being the eldest in the school builds a real sense of personal pride and self-esteem.
- Equitable opportunities- all programmes and opportunities are available to all children, not a chosen few.
- Continuity of learning.
- Scrutiny

