

A close-up photograph of a person's leg wearing a brown hiking boot with a green and black treaded sole, stepping on green grass. The background is a blurred outdoor scene with trees and another person in the distance.

TIHOI  
VENTURE  
SCHOOL

A journey  
of self  
discovery



St Paul's  
COLLEGIATE SCHOOL



## A UNIQUE EDUCATION PROGRAMME

### What is Tihoi Venture School?



**Tihoi Venture School is a residential outdoor campus for Year 10 students at St Paul's Collegiate School.** It is certainly a challenging environment. But through community living, a quality academic programme and wide ranging outdoor pursuits, Tihoi gives our students the best possible opportunities to grow.

This unique 18-week education programme is designed specifically for 14-year-old-boys. It removes them from technology and connects them with the outdoors and their peers. Not only do they develop outdoor and academic skills, their social development is accelerated through a focus on traditional virtues and a values-based programme of honesty, respect, care and understanding.

Tihoi gives young men confidence, builds their resilience and develops their independence giving them a valuable head start into their senior years and life beyond school.





The site  
was once  
an old  
timber  
mill.

## TIHOI'S HISTORY

### **St Paul's Tihoi Venture School was opened**

at the beginning of the first term in 1979 following the vision of four men – John Hart, John Mortimer, Michael Shelby and Mike Shaw. Mike, with his wife Judy, had arrived at St Paul's in 1970, fresh from Timbertop, the outdoor pursuits centre of Geelong Grammar School in Victoria, Australia. Mike and Judy were the inaugural directors of Tihoi, moving to the campus in December 1978.

The site was once an old timber mill – the mill houses became the students' homes and the mill club rooms the dining room. Classrooms, a main kitchen and an ablution facility were added. Between 2000 and 2005, Tihoi was redeveloped. The old houses were replaced with a new version, built in the same position. Although modern, the new houses retain much of the austere nature of the old ones, boys still cook on wood burning stoves, do not have refrigerators and

houses contain only the essential furniture. In later years, a new dining room complex was built, a high ropes challenge course was established and new staff houses and utility storage buildings were constructed.

Tihoi is situated on the edge of the Pureora Forest, in close proximity to Lake Taupo, the Central Plateau, rivers and mountains, enabling the wide range of pursuits offered in the outdoor component of the programme.





**“Pastoral care is a very important part of the Tihoi programme.**

As a Mum, I understand it is a big step sending your son away, so we have an excellent care system in place.

Each house has a house tutor who gets to know each boy. These house tutors and I live right beside the houses so we are there and available 24/7. The teachers all work with the students in the outdoors, so the relationships that are built are really substantial and the students all find someone they can relate to.

As part of the English curriculum, the boys write in their journals, which is an important communication tool between themselves and me. I gain a good sense from reading these journals on how they are feeling and coping.

Boys need to become independent and their experience at Tihoi is a good time for them to do just that. They grow up a bit and learn to appreciate their families a lot more. The personal growth is significant.

The boys write home once a week and many parents really treasure the open and frank correspondence they receive from their son. Parents value tremendously the letter the boys write to themselves on the 44-hour solo towards the end of their Tihoi journey that outlines what they want to achieve from life. We post this letter to them on their 20th birthday.

I will look after your son the same way I'd expect my son to be looked after and that is with a lot of care and good communication.”

I'll look after your son the way I'd expect my son to be looked after.

**CYN SMITH**  
Director  
Tihoi Venture School







Students learn to communicate better and work together.



## PERSONAL GROWTH AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

**The purpose of Tihoi Venture School is to encourage the personal and social growth of Year 10 boys during their 18-week journey.** Students are placed into a three-bedroom self-contained cabin with seven other boys, where they take responsibility for their own housekeeping and learn to care and work together with other house mates.

Each house of eight boys has an assigned teacher who becomes their mentor for the duration of their stay at Tihoi. The house mentor meets regularly with the boys teaching and guiding them. Any arising conflicts are valuable learning experiences and students are given formal guidance in solving problems and discussing social issues through sessions with their mentor.

Students keep a journal of their experiences, which is discussed and reflected on in sessions with their journal teacher.

Students learn to communicate better and work together in a back-to-basics environment. Each week, members of each household are given different leadership opportunities and responsibilities for the operation of their house, such as cooking,

cleaning and chopping firewood. Lunch is served every day in the dining room by the resident chef but breakfast and dinner are prepared in the house by the students for their housemates.

Digital technology such as mobile phones, iPads and tablets are not permitted at Tihoi. The only exception is in the classroom where students use their chrome books to complete their schoolwork. Therefore, the boys have very limited access to what is happening in the outside world except for what they read in the daily newspapers supplied.

Letter writing is an essential component of the Tihoi programme. Being away from home can be an intense experience so once a week the boys are expected to hand write a letter home as a way of expressing themselves and keeping in touch with their family. Letters and parcels, in return from mum or dad, siblings, grandparents, or even the cat, are eagerly awaited.

The boys go home for mid-term breaks and school holidays.



**Tihoi Venture School operates a seven-day week programme**, where four and a half days are spent in academic studies and two and a half days learning outdoor skills and challenges.

The academic programme is based on a mix of classroom and experiential learning style, as students are given the opportunity to learn from the environment they live in. Academic standards are maintained in all subjects and modern technology is fully utilised in the teaching programme. Students have the opportunity to begin their NCEA with a range of courses offering some

National Achievement Standard assessments where they can gain 16-20 credits for NCEA level one.

The academic programme is taught to the same standards and curriculum as if students were in a regular schooling environment at St Paul's. They study the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and social studies. Outdoor education, physical education and health are also taught during the normal school day.

On academic days after dinner, the boys return to their classrooms for 75 minutes of supervised homework time, commonly known as prep.



Academic standards are maintained in all subjects.



THE STRUCTURE OF EACH WEEK AT TIHOI:						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Normal school day	Normal school day	Normal school day	Outdoor pursuits	Outdoor pursuits	Outdoor pursuits	Normal school day







The work  
is not  
limited  
to the  
classroom.



## OUTDOOR PROGRAMME

### **Fitness is a strong component of the Tihoi programme.**

The boys will start running 3km each day through the Pureroa forest trails and slowly build up their fitness and distance to complete a 21km run (half marathon) before they leave.

To assist the boys in reaching their peak fitness, their diet is healthy – free from fast foods and soft drinks which are commonly referred to as contraband. For those students with a sweet tooth, dessert is offered every lunchtime and baking is regularly provided.

We believe in offering a wide variety of social education and outdoor pursuits to ensure there is either challenge or success for each boy in different areas.

Students are encouraged to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme and can achieve their bronze award while at Tihoi.

### **THE OUTDOOR PURSUITS PROGRAMME ENCOMPASSES:**

*Kayaking – flat water and moving water*

*Sea kayaking*

*Abseiling*

*Rock climbing*

*Tramping*

*Caving*

*Mountaineering*

*Mountain biking*

*Firearms and range shooting*

*Survival exercise*

*A six-hour and 44-hour solo*

*An extended five-day expedition in the outdoor pursuit of the student's choice*



**All full-time staff live at the centre with their families and are trained in both academic education and outdoor pursuit education.**

Staff are selected on their ability to work closely with students, enabling the boys to achieve their goals in safe and positive surroundings, while challenging and assisting them to extend their limits.

Teaching staff have a tertiary qualification along with the necessary teaching qualifications. They also have the New Zealand outdoor instructor skills and qualifications required to enable them to lead outdoor activities.

Tihoi operates within a strict code of practice. The policies for each outdoor pursuit, and safety within the centre, conform to national guidelines. We undergo ongoing risk assessment, adherence to industry standards, staff training and a comprehensive safety

management scheme to minimise these risks while maximising the challenge and potential outcomes for the students.

**The teaching philosophy at Tihoi is delivered in three phases:**

**To teach** – the first six weeks are spent teaching the boys to clean, cook, pitch a tent, perform house duties and the basics required in the outdoor activities

**To supervise** – the second six weeks are spent working alongside the boys, supervising them and allowing them to make mistakes and providing suggestions for moving forward in a safe environment

**To encourage independence and leadership** – the final six weeks are spent taking a step back and allowing the boys to lead and show their independence. Staff will be there to provide guidance, but only if necessary.

Challenging  
and assisting  
students  
to extend  
their limits.







“This is where he starts to discover himself.”

CELIA LASHLIE  
(1953-2015)



**Former prison officer, researcher and author, Celia Lashlie worked with teenagers in 25 boys' schools in New Zealand and advised parents on how to raise boys through her book 'He'll be OK'.**

*"Tihoi is a gift...If I had the opportunity to have one solution in terms of the social problems facing our adolescent boys and the at-risk behaviour they indulge in, Tihoi is the answer. I would give every New Zealand boy a Tihoi experience in Year 10.*

*It's a fundamental crossing of a bridge for him. It's a moment when he wakes up to the fact that he's on a journey to manhood, that he's on an adventure through an important stage of his life which makes it an extraordinary experience for him.*

*The real essence of Tihoi is that it links action and consequence for him – action and consequence of the simple kind. If you don't get out of bed, a cold river awaits. If you don't chop firewood you don't get warm and if you don't cook, you don't eat. Boys are*

*pragmatic creatures, they learn and grow when action meets consequence.*

*I've watched when the boys come to Tihoi. Once they are placed in the environment and realise they are here for the next 18 weeks and they are going nowhere else, they settle.*

*They start to disconnect from the other stuff and he's left with himself...that's where the growing occurs and he starts to make solid decisions about why he does things. And it's a simple decision like 'should I get out of bed now or do I want to go in the river?' At this stage of his development, this is the crucial learning for him. This is where he starts to discover himself."*



**CELIA LASHLIE  
(1953-2015)**



**“Tihoi taught me a lot about myself and what I am capable of. If I could, I would definitely do it again.”**

I knew it was going to be hard, but I was looking forward to giving it a go. It's a rite of passage that all St Paul's boys have to go through. Tihoi is one of the reasons my parents sent me to St Paul's.

There were many challenges – like the runs. I thought we would run on a road, but instead you have to run in the bush on a track that is uphill and downhill. The runs definitely tested my endurance. At the end, you have the challenge of running 21km of which I ran 14km – a good achievement for someone who never ran before.

I also had to get used to living in a house of eight boys, having no parents around and needing to think for myself.

It's definitely not like home, but you have to get used to it. There is no TV, phone or laptop, so you have to get outside or read a book. It's like going back to the old-fashioned days.

I already knew some of the basics of cooking but I wasn't the best at it. I learnt a lot from Tihoi's head chef, as we would get to help in the kitchen. I would observe what he did and it helped me to perfect my own cooking in my house.

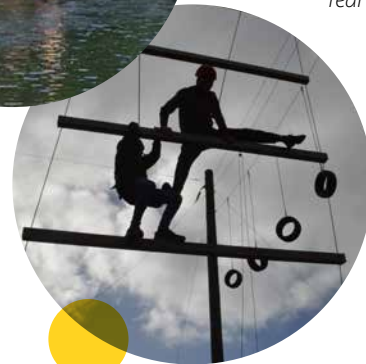
The Tihoi staff are all really helpful and you think of them as one of your house members, especially your house mentor. They get involved with your group and become a part of it, which was really cool.

One of the biggest lessons I learnt was – structure and keeping a routine. I had never structured my days before, but Tihoi taught me how to organise my day better. This helps me a lot now with my study.”

If I could,  
I would  
definitely  
do it again.

**HAWAIKI TE RUKI**

*Year 12, day student*





## MORE INFORMATION

**knowtihoi.co.nz**

Enrolments – [stpauls.school.nz/enrol](http://stpauls.school.nz/enrol)

Scholarships – [stpauls.school.nz/scholarships](http://stpauls.school.nz/scholarships)

Fees – [stpauls.school.nz/fees](http://stpauls.school.nz/fees)

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**St Paul's**  
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