Sophie Von Klitzling

German NCEA student



Age: 17 yo

Sex: Female

From: Germany

Length of stay: 6 terms (1.5 years)

ABOUT MYSELF

My name is Sophie and I have been in Taupo for over a year now. I think about 14 months, I actually don't know. Yeah people, that is what happens when you go far away, you lose the sense of time. Coming here was one decision, staying here another one. In the beginning I was supposed to stay for only a year, which I was already more than fine with. But my parents and I had many conversations about me extending my stay to finish school here. And honestly, I am not regretting it. Yes, it is hard, especially because I am doing all the work in my second language. But whenever I am meeting new people here and I tell them I am German, I have seen more confusion in their faces than when you look at your math paper. So my English has gotten pretty good I would say. But not only that. I have learned so much this year, not only in school, but also about myself and life.

SCHOOL

So let's start off with the most obvious topic, school. If you would compare school here to school in Germany, it is probably like the relaxed music teacher in year 4. It is very chill, which doesn't mean you don't have to do your work, nooooo. I have decided, at the end of last year, to do NCEA and finish school here in New Zealand. This was at first a massive decision, finishing school in a second language?! Wow. Yeah, in the beginning it was quite overwhelming. Especially because the school system is so different to what I was used to. But by now it is second nature to me. Actually this is a bit of a lie, there are still things I don't fullly understand, but nothing that can't be fixed by a quick 'Ahhh what?'

But what I incredibly like about school here, especially if you are not doing NCEA, is the variety of subjects. When I first got here I had subjects like engineering, ODE (which I still take by the way), hospitality and much more. When I was reading the subject selection first I had a whole shock from just how many subjects there were. Another thing that I really like is the teachers. Everyone wants to get their work in, of course, but it is a lot more relaxed and more like a big family where everyone has to get their chores done.

FAMILY AND FRIENDS

You will find new friends. And you will start a completely new life. Everything that you have known so far, can and most likely will change. My biggest advice that I can give you is get involved. Don't sit with another German person, go and sit at a table with people that you have never talked to before. I have made friends with many people and actually found someone that I can call my best friend. Be open to a different culture, that is why you are here. You are gonna be living with a different family with different habits and rituals. I am not saying to completely ignore what you do and know, but to show them what your culture is like and to let them show you what their culture is like makes your experience even better. And say yes. Say yes, except you have a valid excuse (I am speaking of having a broken leg or being sick, not scrolling on the phone). Go on random walks and maximise those sidequests.

HOBBIES

You might have to live with the fact that whatever you did at home, you can't do here. But that doesn't mean you can stay at home now. Actually it is the opposite. Taupo and the school offer so many different sports that you might have never heard of. And even if that is the case and even if you have the option to stick to what you have been doing, try out new stuff, even better if you find a friend to do it with you.

I got really lucky with my homestay placement and was able to do nearly everything that I have been doing at home. My host mom has one horse and two ponies, which I am allowed to ride and compete. I have participated in the North Island Secondary School Championships in 2025 and 2026 and did many other local shows. In the summer season I did 420 sailing in the Nui team and was able to compete in the Nationals. This was an awesome experience, as I have never done 420 sailing before. I did sail at home a lot but this was a new discipline to me. I also go to the gym regularly, as Taupo has over 5 available gyms.

TAUPŌ

Taupō is an amazing town that I did not regret going to. Why? It is central on the north island, you have the mountains about an hour and a half away (skiing in August is quite cool), the ocean about two/ two and a half hours away (I went surfing in December, how cool is that?!) and a lot more around you. Taupo has a small little airport which allows you to go down south and up north. And you obviously have the whole lake right in front of your nose. Taupo has a lot of shopping opportunities and heapppps of good food.

THE TEAM

Aniek, Suze and Victoria are probably the best people you could have when it comes to organizing and helping people. They manage everything around us internationals and to be honest, they are pretty good at what they are doing. I have done so many trips with them that I don't even know how many. And I have asked so many questions that I am surprised they haven't kicked me out yet. No, jokes aside, these three people made my stay the best thing ever, from my

homestay placement to my visa application over hundreds and hundreds of questions.

SO WHAT CAN I SAY

Coming, and above all staying, in Taupo was one of the best decisions that I have ever made. It is not gonna be easy, especially in the beginning, but I can guarantee you, you will not regret a single second of being here. Taupo and Taupo-Nui-A-Tia College have more to offer than just a few houses and classrooms. So if you want to find out what else you can find around the corner stop thinking about coming and just do it.

Over and out from Sophie

