



Dear Parents, Old Boys and Friends of Michaelhouse

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Rector's Message

With the arrival of the “third wave” in South Africa we have, naturally, been considering how best to deal with its impact at the start of next term. As I suggested in my last eNews, it is incumbent on each of us to play a role in trying to minimize the spread of Covid-19 and, in the Michaelhouse context, this is particularly relevant in the period before the boys return to school in mid-July. We ask you to be circumspect in what your sons are permitted to do in terms of social gatherings prior to their return and to ensure that they are Covid-tested, via the rapid antigen or PCR test, before coming back to Michaelhouse. Boys travelling on buses back to school will need to demonstrate to the teacher in charge of the bus that they have been tested and are negative before they can travel on the bus whilst those arriving at school with parents are asked to go directly to their House where they will need similarly to demonstrate to their Housemaster that they have had a **Covid test and are negative**. As previously indicated, when back at school, we will attempt to recreate the Michaelhouse bubble and, to this end, we foresee there being no leave outs before half-term. We plan to have lessons initially on Saturday mornings and, in certain cases, there will be an extra lesson during the course of several days in the week in order to make full use of the time available and to place all of our boys in the best possible academic position. Sport will initially be on an intra-House basis, moving after some two weeks to an inter-House basis and then, hopefully, opening up in the latter part of the term to inter-school events. Several sports are planning events at an inter-provincial level: for example, the Craven Week rugby event, alongside the Grant Khomo Week for U16s is planned for October and it is likely that other sports, such as hockey, will run inter-provincial events in September. Schools will need to play each other before then and so, with the impact of the “third wave” hopefully diminishing in late August, some sport may return to us. Time will tell. If circumstances allow, the Matric Ball (already postponed twice) will, we hope, take place on Thursday, 12 August.

It is important to remain optimistic about the prospects for next term and, at this stage, the term is due to start with the boys returning on Monday 12 July. If there is any aberration from that, then we will obviously be in touch with you as soon as possible to inform you.

With so many boys away, we recognised our **Youth Day** more briefly than usual this morning with the ringing of our bells, and a two-minute silence. When everyone returns to us, we will reflect again on this important day in the calendar as there are significant messages concerning democracy to be considered and understood.

I thought it appropriate to mention here that an **Honours Board** has been installed in the Board Room of the Heritage Centre recording all those who have given 40 or more years' service to Michaelhouse since



the inception of the school. This was a recommendation of the **Transformation and Diversity Advisory Committee** and there are ten such staff members, most of whom have worked in either the grounds or the kitchen over the years since 1896 honoured there; the last of these was Simon Zondi who left us very recently. The board is placed alongside similar Honours Boards which record the names of the Presidents and Secretaries of the Old Boys' Club and also St Michael's awardees, the last of whom was Dr Adi Enthoven earlier this year.



Honours Board reflecting staff members with 40 or more years of service placed in the Heritage Centre

I am conscious of the fact that you may be growing weary of my exposition of the *Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teens*, but I do hope that at least one or two ideas will resonate with you and provide some fuel for conversations with your sons when you have situations where you have to drop him off at a destination half an hour away or fetch him.

The *fifth habit* is *Seek First to Understand, then to be Understood*. The gist of this habit is self-evident and suggests that communication with others is enhanced by an attitude of seeing things first from the point of view of another. “You have two ears and one mouth so use them accordingly” is a rather crude way of expressing this, but it, nevertheless, makes a good point. Understanding another involves the skill of listening with an open mind and having the desire to comprehend the essence of what is being said to one. As people we engage in public speaking and expressing our views, but seldom have classes in listening. So many people just blank out when they are being told about something or make judgments too early or formulate a response when another person is in mid-sentence. We are told that in oral communication usually our body language conveys 53% of our intention, the tone of our voice 40% and the actual words only 7%. This places a special onus on us to be alert to those words.

The second part of this habit often requires giving constructive feedback. The idea is that the act of your genuine listening demonstrates that you have shown respect to the person with whom you are engaging, and he/she will be more inclined, in turn, to respect your view.



Consider this imaginary interplay between a 15-year-old boy on holiday at home and his mother:

John: Mum, can I go out tonight?

Mum: No, you can't go out tonight and that's final!

John: I can see you are upset about my request, Mum.

Mum: I'm upset, I received your report today and your marks have deteriorated. You don't deserve to go out.

John: You are worried about my marks?

Mum: I am because I want you to go to a good university.

John: University is really important to you isn't it?

Mum: Yes, you have to have a university qualification to enjoy a successful life and that's what I want for you.

John: I see.

Mum: You are capable and you drive me mad when you don't take your work seriously. You may go out tonight, but all I am asking that you really apply yourself when you go back to school and stop spending so much time on social media.

John: Thanks, Mum. Since we are talking about my academic results, I'd like to explain why some of my marks have dropped and why my report wasn't as good as it has been.

By genuinely listening, asking questions and mirroring the views of his mother, John was able to uncover the real issue which was not so much about his going out, but rather about his mother worrying about his future. Once she felt John had understood how important his results and her future aspirations for him were to her, she dropped her defences and voiced the real reason behind her originally saying that she didn't want him to go out.

Secondly, through feeling understood, John's mother would also be more willing to listen to why John's marks had declined and his explanation for a bad report. He had taken the trouble to listen to her feelings and now he has the opportunity to express his feelings and views. It takes us back to the notion of win-win.

Staff News

Congratulations to **Mr Brad** and **Mrs Alex McManus** on the birth of their son Greyson over the past weekend.

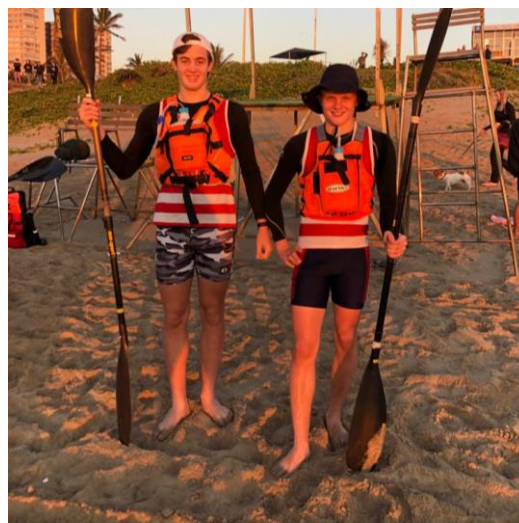
Sporting and Individual Achievements

Canoeing

In the Pirates to Umhlanga surfski race held on Saturday, **Jack Shooter** was placed 2nd in the U18 S1 while **Murray Behn** and **Jack Edmonds** were placed 1st in the U18 S2 and 3rd in the S2 overall and **Matthew Millward** and his partner came 2nd in the U18 S2 and 2nd in the mixed doubles. Well done to our canoeing boys!



Beautiful sunrise to start the boys off in the Surfski Race



Jack Edmonds and Murray Behn

Squash

Congratulations to the following boys on their selection to the KZN Schools' Squash teams which will participate in the 2021 IPTs. The dates are still to be confirmed by SA Schools Squash.

U16 A: **Murray Baker, Joshua Hoatson and Nathan Hoatson**

U14 A: **Justin Higginson**

U14 B: **Nicholas Baker**

Last week, Justin Higginson won the D section of the Midlands Closed Squash Tournament, which is open to any squash player registered in the Midlands region. The tournament was held in Pietermaritzburg from Monday to Thursday.



Congratulations Justin

Photography

Congratulations to **Leo Baber**, who took part in the Kearsney College Photography Competition, which was open to all senior school pupils. Leo came first in three categories (Wildlife, Portrait and Dusk to Dawn) and came second in a fourth category (Architecture). Below are his winning photos:

Rector's eNews

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MICHAELHOUSE



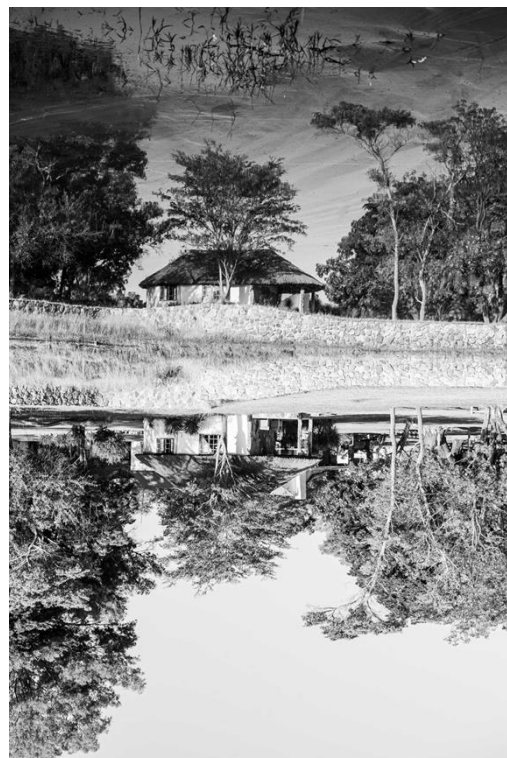
Wildlife Category: Zebra Dazzle (B&W)



Portraiture Category: Shane, the horseman



Dusk to Dawn Category: Dawn Muster



Architecture Category: Reflection
Rondavel



E Block Integrated Studies – Project Superhero: Mrs Katherine Cass

The week following the E Block's June examinations is traditionally earmarked as an integrated studies week. Over the years this has taken many forms on campus. This year, due to the rising "third wave" of COVID-19, the juniors completed their academic term online. As with many events over the past 18 months, adaptability and creativity were required to ensure that the E Block were able to participate in a collaborative learning experience and gain skills which form part of the Future-Fit philosophy the school has adopted.

The week was entitled "**Project Superhero**" and the goal was for the students to collaborate in a problem-solving project, utilising skills that were introduced during the first two terms in their Media Studies lessons. They worked together virtually within smaller groups within their Houses on topics that required the use of an innovative 4th Industrial Revolution resource to solve a pressing social issue. For example, the cleverly entitled *Internet of Trees* group tasked themselves with solving the issue of access to food using IOT (Internet of Things); whilst the *Hydrorobotics* group decided to use robotics to explore communities' abilities to access clean water and *MergeFoods* researched the use of genomics as a tool to solve the issue of food security.

The entire project was run via our Microsoft Teams platform and the students were required to follow the Big6 Research Methodology in creating a viable business plan, as well as a visual and oral presentation to advance a solution to the problem that they had selected. Overall the level of engagement of the students was impressive, with many exciting and innovative ideas presented. Load-shedding, virtual group work and connectivity issues added real-world challenges which the boys needed to manage to complete their projects. We look forward to presenting the winning groups with their accolades when they re-join us next term.

This type of project underlines the fact that education is not just about exams and results, but also about engaging with the possibility of creating a better world.

Community Partnership

The Community Partnership Trust is focusing its efforts on literacy interventions. This week, Sibongiseni Blose from Nal'ibali (<https://nalibali.org/nalibali-training>) hosted a two day workshop.

The Nal'ibali training team strives to enable adults across the country to engage in literacy and reading-for-enjoyment activities with children, by:

- Promoting multilingualism and the use of African languages
- Nurturing the habit of reading and writing through reading for personal meaning and satisfaction

The training included how to support learners to read for enjoyment and how to set up reading clubs outside schools. 25 people including local community members, volunteers, teaching assistants and librarians attended the training.



We are also pleased to confirm that Michaelhouse Community Partnerships has been selected as implementing partners for the Reading for Meaning Campaign. Reading for Meaning is an accelerated catch-up programme for learners using Pratham's principle of *Teaching at the Right Level*. This approach focuses on a child's learning needs rather than their age or what grade they are in. Reading for Meaning is a strategic programme within the Zero Dropout Campaign because it aims to help learners who are struggling to keep up with their peers. They will be working with 300 Grade 5 learners for 30 sessions in our partnership schools.



Training material for the workshop



Training in the SLT

Message from the Chairman of the Board and Rector

Please find attached to this eNews, a letter from the Chairman and Rector concerning the development of the school.

Conclusion

There are a few parents who have yet to return to the school a form entitled *POPIA Consent Form* and relating to compliance to the POPI Act. It would be appreciated if those parents with outstanding forms could do so as soon as possible or, if you have questions, please contact the Bursar's PA, Pushpa Ramharack (email: pusram@michaelhouse.org or telephone: 033 234 1003) or the Bursar, Damien Rautenbach (email: damrau@michaelhouse.org or telephone: 033 234 1002). We do need to finalise this matter urgently.

Lastly, it remains for me to wish you a very happy holiday with your sons.

With my best wishes

ANTONY CLARK
RECTOR