



Dear Parents, Old Boys and Friends of Michaelhouse

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Rector's Message

I just wanted to reiterate that you and your families have been very much in our minds, particularly over the last week, and we hope that your situation, wherever you may be either in South Africa or another part of the world, is improving. We very much look forward to welcoming your son back to Michaelhouse on Sunday and hope that he is, similarly, eager to see his friends and peers again.

All schools, whether they are government or independent schools, are set to re-open for contact classes on Monday 26 July and this was contained in the DBE Amended Directions No.44858 of 15 July (6 days ago) which I attach for your perusal. I am aware of the fact that the president is due to speak again on Sunday night, but all school Heads and organisations allied to schools are confident that stipulations for contact classes in such a recent **Government Gazette** would not be overturned. The imperative to vaccinate teachers throughout the country, after all, has been to ensure that boys and girls are able to return to school as safely as possible since this, in turn, allows parents to work more productively and impacts positively upon the economy as a whole. It was with the above in mind that schools such as Michaelhouse have asked their pupils to be ready to begin lessons in class on 26 July. I have asked our Deputy Rector: Pupils, Allan Laing, to send a standard letter to those travelling from Gauteng to indicate that each boy is returning to school to commence in-class lessons on Monday 26 July. We do not want to waste time in getting underway again at school.

Over the holidays, our new catering company, **Feedem**, carried out renovations on our dining halls as part of the contract with us. The serveries have been altered and extended, the flooring has been sanded and sealed and the halls have been painted. As I write, there are still some finishing touches needed at the serveries, but we hope the boys will appreciate the changes that Feedem will bring to us.





Last term, I commented briefly on each of the first five *Habits of Highly Effective Teens*. I have only two to go. The sixth suggested habit is to value **synergy**. Synergy revolves around creative cooperation and is achieved when two or more people work together to create a better solution to a situation than could be done individually. It focusses on the notion that each individual in a group has an important and different role to play in creating the best possible solution. The members of a synergistic group are not in competition with each other, but work together. The members of the group may be followers (very supportive of the leaders), innovators (creative people with ideas), harmonisers (providing unity, support and cooperation) and extroverts (adding spice and momentum to the overall group success). Perhaps synergy is best demonstrated in the operation of a sports team: the hooker throws the ball in a line out and it is generally caught by a lock who passes it to the scrumhalf who then sees the ball move down the line. Each player has particular skills and, whilst there is some overlap, the special attributes of each lead to the success of the team.

A synergistic approach relies on people celebrating differences, understanding the need to be open-minded, finding new and better ways of operating and, ultimately, in working alongside others. It is an extremely important concept for teenagers to grasp in a world with great diversity in terms of gender, race, culture, wealth, language, interests and other differences. People differ, not only in respect of what is apparent to us on the outside, but also in terms of what may not be immediately apparent. We learn in a different way, we see the world in a different way and have different personality traits; we draw on past experiences and consider the different paradigms we have encountered to solve problems.

Part of the value of the boarding experience in a school such as Michaelhouse is to learn to understand and to appreciate the differences in people and to develop the capacity to reach out to those people and to appreciate their values. This is not necessarily easy for teenagers who, in their earlier years, will want to congregate around people who are the same as them but, with growing maturity, there comes an appreciation of the value of others who are not the same as them. This is exactly why “peer group niggles” which may be prevalent in the E and D Block, in most cases, tend to dissipate by the C Block and, in the A and B Block, there is often a celebration of those differences. I return to the metaphor of the rugby team: younger teenagers may all be striving for the same position in the team, but older teenagers will appreciate the fact that their role as a hooker or a lock or a scrumhalf are all vital to the makeup of the team and each one is valuable.

The Morning After – Mr Tim Jarvis

The events of last week feel like a seismic shift in the landscape of South Africa. It's like waking up in the morning with a huge headache and wondering what on earth happened the night before. Trying to piece together the puzzle, like the movie ‘The Hangover’, but now on a nationwide scale.

In the context of a global pandemic, it feels like a lot. The first movie was bad enough, we didn't need a sequel. Many are reeling as a result. I know too it has rocked many of our children. What do we say to them when we don't know what to say to ourselves? I can't tell you what to say. I think very few of us know the answers and the answers themselves are few and far between.



I do think though there are some principles that we can hold onto as we talk with our teenagers. Parents, as you engage your children and teachers as you converse with your classes try and keep the following at the forefront of your mind:

1. *Don't be an optimist*

Don't dismiss the severity of what just happened. This was a backwards step for the country that has deeply affected many and will continue to do so in a significant way for a significant length of time. If it is true that every cloud has a silver lining, then every silver lining has a cloud. Your teen will know if you are minimising or downplaying the chaos of last week. They will also pick up if you are being glib or giving them reassurance that is false. We can't climb out of this through positive thinking like Pollyanna in hiking boots.

2. *Don't be a pessimist*

While it's true that this situation is dire, don't give way to fear or despair. Throughout history and geography, people, communities, and nations have been, and are in, worse situations. You will have also noticed encouraging reactions and responses across the country. From community leaders who stood up and showed a different way, to extensive community clear ups, an alternative narrative of what South Africa can be emerged. In relation to this Dr Imtiaz Sooliman of Gift of the Givers said, "I've never seen anything like this in my 29 years of working in disaster in South Africa." This is hopeful.

3. *Acknowledge feelings*

Michaelhouse has been working with AS Tracking this year. Their UK based research showed that children aren't self-disclosing as much as they used to. This means they are hiding stuff from us. They always did, but with the pandemic it is worse. This is an important point. We must get them to be real with us before we can help them. Listening to them and validating their emotions must happen before anything else. Therefore point 1 (being real) comes before point 2 (being hopeful) in this article. We must move from truth to strength and go through our feelings rather than around them.

4. *Hold the tension*

Model for your teenagers that we can hold competing thoughts in our heads at the same time. Many adults let alone adolescents find this surprisingly difficult to do. Life is not an either or, and dualistic thinking will not give us the flexibility we need to move forward. For example, you can acknowledge that what happened was damaging for the country AND that some good may come out of it. We can acknowledge that poverty and inequality played a part in the looting AND that it was criminal. Justice can be sought WHILE practising forgiveness. By acknowledging the one it does not mean we are dismissing the other.

5. *There's all to play for*

While there is no guarantee that we come out of this stronger it is also true that we might. It all depends on our response. Don't allow what has happened to divide us. Black lives still matter, racism is still wrong, and we all have a part to play in this story. Encourage your teen to find theirs.



Having purpose and meaning is crucial to teenagers. If your adolescent wants to be a rebel it certainly doesn't have to be without a cause.

6. *The way forward*

There is a way through this. In the context of speaking about diversity Paul the Apostle calls us to a more excellent way. The way of love. Love is many things, but we are reminded that it *bears* all things, *believes* all things, *hopes* all things, *endures* all things. Hold on to this hope and hold it out for your children too. If we do that we can't fail.

UCAS Applications

In 2021 fourteen boys applied for acceptance at universities in the United Kingdom. Each boy is allowed to apply to a maximum of five universities. All fourteen applicants got at least one offer, while 79% got three or more offers. Edinburgh, Manchester and Durham were the most popular universities in terms of applications, but it was the University of Exeter which made the most offers. We are now starting the application cycle for 2022.

Applications to universities in the UK are all done through UCAS. While applications for 2022 can only be sent from 7 September, UCAS is open already so that students can begin the process. To that end there will be an online workshop this week Friday for all A Block boys applying to UK universities. This will just be a short introductory session to get registered on the site as a Michaelhouse student. It takes place online on Friday 23 June at 12:45. All A Block boys should check their e-mail for further details on how to attend. However, you can also book your son in directly for this by e-mailing timjar@michaelhouse.org There will be several further workshops back at school so this is not urgent, but it is an opportunity to get started for those who wish to.

Academic and Sporting Achievements

TARPS

This programme is designed to reward a limited number of boys in each Block who achieve academic excellence, as well as to extend them. It complements the extension work conducted in academic departments, but does so typically in a broader fashion beyond the curriculum. To qualify, boys must be in the top five in their Block. The group of boys below is based on the June examination results. You will notice that some tied for a position.

Well done to the following who are our TARPS for the July to November semester:

Name	Surname	House	Block
Alexander	Brits	McCormick	A
Maqhawe	Hoohlo	East	A
Jadin	Jordaan	Pascoe	A
Kwande	Dhlomo	West	A
Callum	Porrill	Tatham	A
Peter	Woodland	Farfield	B



Tristan	Hoyle	Ralfe	B
Adrian	Hill	Ralfe	B
James	Asherson	Founders	B
James	Kennedy	Farfield	B
Kofi	Asumaning	McCormick	C
David	du Toit	Baines	C
Aiden	Jinnah	Pascoe	C
Andrew	Woodland	Farfield	C
Theo	Apteker	McCormick	C
Luke	Kaufmann	East	D
Ruben	Visagie	Farfield	D
Lucien	Baldry	West	D
Carlyle	Hawkins	Mackenzie	D
Johannes	Zietsman	Tatham	D
Reily	Elliot	East	E
Roelof	Rossouw	West	E
Luke	Marks	McCormick	E
Oliver	Bruyns	Ralfe	E
Daniel	French	Pascoe	E
Davrin	Gillot	Farfield	E
Luke	Sidebottom	Mackenzie	E

Tennis

Congratulations to **Joshua Heath** (Farfield B Block) on his selection to the U19 Boys' KZN Schools Tennis Team.

Selection was based on the results of the KZN Schools tennis trials played as a tournament from 18-20 June 2021. In excess of 160 players from throughout KZN participated in the trials.

Joshua and his team will represent the province in the TSA Inter Provincial Tournament planned for 6-9 August 2021.





Individual Achievements

The One Health Hackathon is a global health innovation event open to high schoolers from around the world; last year, we had **300 participants from 20 different countries**. Teams will be assigned to one of 5 diseases (cholera, Nipah virus, Zika virus, influenza, or rabies), for which they will have 5 days to come up with an action plan ranging from policy platforms to business pitches, tech prototypes, and more.

Participants will get to hear from leading global health experts in our speaker series, and get one-on-one feedback from mentors. Our distinguished speakers include professors and scientists from Princeton University, Cornell University, EcoHealth Alliance, the National Institute of Health, and more. **For high school students, the chance to directly work with experts of this calibre, tackle real-world diseases, and meet peers from around the world will be an incredible learning opportunity.**

I am pleased to let you know that **Joshua Hadley-Grave** (Ralfe B Block) and **Tomas Szudrawski** (West B Block) are forming a team and are going to be participating in the One Health Hackathon from the 22 – 26 July.

Conclusion

May I wish you a happy few days with your son before his return to Michaelhouse.

With my best wishes

ANTONY CLARK
RECTOR