



Dear Parents, Old Boys and Friends of Michaelhouse

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Rector's Message

I write to you looking out over the terraces where the House flags are fluttering proudly in the morning breeze and boys are walking up to Screens. Once again, the quads resound with the purposeful steps of boys and their laughter as they make their way to lessons. The depth of friendship that emanates from a full boarding school such as Michaelhouse is something that is not easily understood by those who have not been privileged to experience it first hand and it is rewarding, once again, to feel the “buzz” in the cloisters, the quads and on the sportsfields as boys meet up with each other again and share their experiences of the times when they have been apart. There is so much to be learned in a boarding situation in terms of that critical quality of EQ. There is no better environment in which to learn to “read people” and this is partially why people who have had this privilege are able to progress to the highest level in education, business and, indeed, any sphere of human activity in which others need to be orchestrated, nurtured and developed.



As you will recall, I have been commenting on the *Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teens* which is based on Steven Covey's celebrated *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. You might be relieved that I have eventually arrived at the seventh Habit which revolves around **personal renewal in body, mind, heart and soul**. The suggestion here is that there are four key ingredients to the creation of a healthy body and these lie in good nutrition, good sleeping and rising habits (note the latter), physical relaxation and proper exercise. The argument is that looking after your body becomes even more important with the approach of exams, such as matriculation exams or other important challenges in



one's life. Generally speaking, it is not difficult for the average teenager to control activities which would undermine physical wellness as long as he/she has the "refusal skill", which means not going down the easy road when peer pressure rears its head, but sticking to his/her plan of action. Having sufficient exercise, for example, is almost a given in the Michaelhouse situation.

The mental dimension requires the development of the brain, not simply through academic lessons but through co-curricular clubs and societies, interests and the somewhat old-fashioned yet very valuable notion of hobbies. An educated mind is the best way to unlock the future for oneself. Creativity, analytical ability, the capacity to write, or to speak to groups will open up opportunities for teenagers. Intellectual capacity generally grows in young people through their twenties and an overall awareness of the thought patterns of people across the ages from Confucius and Socrates to Mandela, alongside an interest in reading and probing deeply into mathematical or scientific areas conditions the mind to generate its own fresh ideas. I was acutely aware of this during the course of this past week in interviewing two of our young Old Boys, Ryan Anderson and Liam Furniss who are now 24 and are going up to Cambridge and Oxford Universities respectively for postgraduate study. Ryan's academic passage has seen him move through Business Science and an Honours degree in Statistics and to a Masters degree now in a field related to Artificial Intelligence, whilst Liam took triple majors in English Literature, Economics and Psychology with a related Honours degree and is now to embark on a multi-dimensional Masters in Literature and Art. They are both well set up to make a success of their careers and of life.

With regard to the next category, a teenager's heart is a temperamental beast! Life can be an emotional roller-coaster but a good focus for teenagers is on building relationships both by what, in terms of the jargon, relates to making regular deposits into a relationship bank and a personal bank account. The relational bank account and personal bank account deposits are very similar, but strangely enough making deposits into other people's bank accounts usually ends up by enhancing your own as well. What follows is a diagrammatic explanation of the two.

RBA (Relationship Bank Account) Deposits

- ❖ Keep promises
- ❖ Do small acts of kindness
- ❖ Be loyal
- ❖ Listen
- ❖ Say you're sorry
- ❖ Set clear expectations

PBA (Personal Bank Account) Deposits

- ❖ Keep promises to yourself
- ❖ Do small acts of kindness
- ❖ Be gentle with yourself
- ❖ Be honest
- ❖ Renew yourself
- ❖ Tap into your talents

The thought here is that we should encourage teenagers to look for ways and opportunities to build instead of to tear down and that, through engendering well-being in others, we do so in ourselves.

As Mother Theresa said, "Let no one ever come to you without leaving better and happier. Be the living expression of God's kindness: kindness in your face, kindness in your eyes, kindness in your smile."

Then there are a number of ways to renew the soul. For those who are engaged with a religion, this is often the source of inspiration and power, but there are a number of other ways in which teenagers



can lift their spirits. This may be in listening to music, watching a good movie, getting out onto the beach or veld, or going for a bicycle ride or keeping a journal which can act as a best friend, a confidant. This is because it strengthens one's self-awareness and reading back on past entries, an individual can see how he has matured and grown. Talking and joking with friends can also take one out of oneself. It is a sadness that too many teenagers world-wide battle with depression and, whilst I do not want to minimise the challenge of this phenomenon, some of the steps above, taken proactively, can make a huge difference to teenagers.

In writing about the seven Habits, I have tried to suggest topics or areas which you might like to consider taking up with your son when you are able to direct a conversation away from everyday family life. There are times when he will not be receptive to your steer, as I know from first-hand experience, but there are, perhaps, times when he may be. Such moments are golden and could be around a campfire or on a long car journey when you are alone; without wanting to state the obvious or sound patronising, it is clear that parents exercise huge influence over their children, but sometimes the space for conversations is not always evident and needs to be created artificially or otherwise. I know that I missed opportunities with my own children and my hope is that a consideration of these topics over the past weeks will encourage you in your engagement with yours.

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. There will be a number of workshops this term to assist boys with their applications. The first took place online last Friday and the second will take place in the Life Orientation classroom this coming Friday (30 July) at 15:00. Please remind your son of this if he is intending to apply to university in the United Kingdom.

USA College Applications (Common App)

Last year twelve boys applied to attend university in the United States. We were delighted that Hloni Mapetla got accepted to Stanford University, Tapiwa Chikwanda to the University of Pennsylvania and Kiyen Singh to New York University. According to the Times Higher Education University Rankings, all these institutions are placed in the top 30 in the world.

The US College application process is notoriously demanding and time consuming. To this end we are partnering with 'The Ellis Island Project' led by Stanford graduate and Michaelhouse Old Boy, Rowan Mockler. This is a pilot project that pairs up potential applicants with mentors who are currently attending top US Colleges in order to provide extra support and guidance through the application process. More information on that will be forthcoming.



In the meantime, with applications for 2022 due to open soon we will be sending out an e-mail to A Block parents to inform them of the timelines for this year. We will also shortly be hosting workshops for boys so that they understand the *Common App* process and deadlines, and get their application completed before they leave school at the end of November.

Digital Citizenship

Last year we ran '*The dangers of social media and how to avoid them*' online certificate with the whole school. It was done through Emma Sadleir's *Digital Law Company*.

From this point forward we would like to ensure each E Block boy participates in this course around the time they are first allowed their phones at school. Each E Block boy will need to complete the course (and receive the certificate) if he is to continue with full access to his phone. The boys were given the information and access to the course on Monday this week and have till Monday 16 August to complete the course.

The certificate consists of 10 sessions, each of which contains a video clip followed by some multiple choice questions. In total there are 78 minutes of video to watch. Topics covered include:

- How to protect your digital identity, know your legal rights and be safer.
- Are you on a WhatsApp group? Do you realise you could be held responsible for the content? Even if you didn't send it. Learn more about this.
- Sexy selfies, nude photos, jokes, fake news - what you are allowed to share and what not, and the implications if you do.
- What to do if you screw up, whether by accident or deliberately.
- Cyber bullying, creepy people and what to do if someone becomes a target.
- The dangers and legal pitfalls of social media, how to avoid them and how to protect yourself.

You can learn more at <https://www.digitallawacademy.com/courses/The-dangers-of-social-media-and-how-to-avoid-them>

Individual Achievements

Applications Olympiad 2021

During May, 11 Michaelhouse boys (out of a total of 1,741 students) participated in the Applications Olympiad First Round Open Division. Certificates were awarded to the participants with above average scores. Six Michaelhouse boys qualified to participate in the Second Round on 17 June: **Reuben Baldry, Alejandro Sartini-Kruger, Alexander Brits, Kian Moses, Kofi Asumaning and Theo Apteker.**



Congratulations to **Alexander Brits**, who was chosen as one of the 11 finalists nationally out of 299 participants. We wish Alexander all the best for the final round in Durban on Saturday, 31 July.



Alexander Brits

Polo

Congratulations to **Edwin Miller**, who recently took part in the Zambian school trials and was selected to represent his country in the upcoming tournament against South Africa during August.



Edwin Miller in action



Edwin Miller with his Zambian team

E Block Open Day

The E Block Open Day scheduled for Wednesday 11 August will go ahead but will unfortunately now be held online from 10:15. Your son's teachers will be in touch with you to set up these online meetings. These meetings will be with the teachers of the core subjects which include English, Afrikaans/isiZulu/French, Mathematics, Natural Science, Human and Social Science and Economic and Management Science. If you have any queries please contact Mrs Wendy Kelly on wenkel@michaelhouse.org or on 033 234 1122.



Conclusion

We have contracted a new catering company, Feedem, and, as part of their contract with Michaelhouse, they have reconfigured the serveries and spruced up the dining halls as well as introducing some new menus. The boys' initial reaction has been good, so Feedem have made a good first impression, though there is, naturally, a long road to travel.



Upgraded servery in the senior dining hall

As a postscript and to avoid rumours around this topic, I need to let you know that two boys tested positive to Covid yesterday. Both had tested negative prior to their arrival back at school and all the correct protocols had been followed, but family members who had been asymptomatic up to Sunday tested positive yesterday. So we have other boys who were close to them in isolation, but the vast majority are really enjoying being back at school!

With my best wishes

ANTONY CLARK
RECTOR