



Dear Parents, Old Boys and Friends of Michaelhouse

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Rector's Message

Following the postscript to last week's eNews concerning boys testing positive for **Covid-19**, I need to update you and to reflect that the number of boys currently affected is in the early twenties. These boys, along with the first contacts, are, naturally, isolating. According to reliable medical sources which have oversight of the national scene, the "reproduction rate" in Kwa Zulu-Natal at the end of last week was 1.9, indicating that there are approximately two additional people in this province contracting Covid for each person currently carrying it. Whilst on a national level, this figure is much lower and, indeed, well below 1 in Gauteng, for example, we continue to try our best to re-establish the Michaelhouse bubble and we hope that our boys who have been away will soon be able to return to us. The message that is, therefore, with the boys at the moment revolves around this scourge being very much with us in this province and that we and they need to continue to take appropriate action to curb its spread. I believe that we are doing everything which is reasonable and practical in this area and we hope that we will soon see the upward curve moving in a more positive direction.

For the moment our school sport remains principally of an intra-House nature for obvious reasons as the boys regain their fitness though we hope, in due course, to move into a more interesting phase with our co-curricular activities. We are certainly not in a position yet to re-commence our normal third quarter inter-school events and may not be able to do so during August. Time will tell.

Today marks the **125th birthday of Michaelhouse** and we have celebrated this historic event in a two-tiered assembly, held with appropriate spacing and masks, in our amphitheatre. Our Senior Deputy Rector, Paul Fleischack, spoke to the boys and staff in a moving way about the origins of the school and the work of James Cameron Todd in establishing Michaelhouse on the principles which still impact on the school today (see Annexure A). Old boys all over the world have been asked to wear their Old Boys' Tie on this special occasion to mark our anniversary but, in the light of the incidence of Covid, our celebrations here are relatively low-key, revolving around a thanksgiving service for the school and those who have shaped it over the years and the consumption of some cakes adorned with red and white icing. There are red and white flags, in place of the House flags, flying in front of the school, but there is no half-holiday for the boys and the normal programme continues.



On Monday we will be celebrating **Womens' Day**, an event which is, I believe, particularly important in the context of a boys' school. There will be a presentation by our Senior Prefect, Kwande Dhlomo, our Second Prefect, Jason Makhele, and by Nicholas Holt, a prefect in West House. The messages they will put across will be both of an historical and practical nature.

Firstly, there will be an oversight of the event which happened 65 years ago when, on 9 August 1956, twenty thousand women marched on the Union Buildings to protest against legislation encompassing the Pass Laws which tightened the apartheid government's control over the movement of black women in urban areas. On this march, a protest song for the occasion emerged with the words "You strike a woman, you strike a rock"; this grew to represent women's courage and strength over the next decades.

The national theme for 2021 is **Choosing to Challenge** – the notion is to call out gender bias and inequality and to celebrate women's achievements in leadership. I have been interested to learn that the mimosa flower has, over the years, been chosen as a symbol of strength, sensibility and sensitivity as an emblem for Womens' Day.

Secondly, there will be two practical messages put across by the boys and to the boys: the first of these revolves around the issue of consent and what this actually means in terms of sexual



relationships between boys and girls, men and women. Then, boys will be asked to contribute in a practical way to alleviate the difficulties of a number of township girls who are not able to attend school as a result of not being able to afford the sanitary towels which are needed at the time of their period. 4TheThirty is an initiative started by two Redhill matric girls, Tegan Noach and Ffionn Evans, who aim to make a sustainable difference for a number of students who remain absent from school during menstruation. Their goal is to distribute reusable sanitary products to as many communities as they can. Michaelhouse has partnered with Redhill in this initiative so that we can help make what we hope will be a major difference to our surrounding communities here in Kwa Zulu-Natal. The senior boys feel that this is a great opportunity not only to educate our boys here about some of the difficulties that girls face, but also to impact positively on our less advantaged communities in the area relatively close to Michaelhouse. In terms of cost, each reusable sanitary pad costs R35 and lasts for approximately one year. Boys will be encouraged to donate to this cause and are allowed to wear civvies on Monday to indicate that they have aligned themselves with this venture. My wife, Brigitte, and I are very happy to fund 20 reusable sanitary pads and hope you might similarly support this practical way of making a difference in the lives of girls close to us. Nick Holt has been the driver in this venture and if you would like to contact him, his email is NicHol@michaelhouse.org.

Staff Welcome

We welcome **Mrs Pippa Moore** who is joining us in a temporary capacity in our Visual Arts Department, taking on the classes previously taught by **Mrs Candice Smith**.

She is an experienced artist with a most engaging personality and will add lustre to our staff.

Individual Achievements

Applications Olympiad

Congratulations to Alex Brits who participated in the final round of the Applications Olympiad last Saturday and was awarded a Silver award. This is a tremendous achievement on the national stage. He is the most recent successful candidate in this Olympiad and follows a long line of successful boys in this venture.





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 Kiyang 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 until 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>

Prescribed Devices at Michaelhouse

Please find attached to this eNews a document (Annexure B) detailing information with regard to prescribed devices at Michaelhouse from 2022. A similar document has already been sent to those joining us in the E Block in 2022.

E Block Open Day

A reminder that the E Block Open Day is scheduled for Wednesday 11 August and will 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.

Matric Ball

We have really struggled to find an appropriate date for the Matric Ball; we have postponed this ball a number of times during the course of the year and have tried to take into account the dates earmarked by other schools as well but, inevitably, there will be clashes and we have had to settle on Friday 17 September right at the end of term for our event. We know that this is not suitable for all boys and their partners, but in this year of great turbulence, it is the arrangement which suits the majority for a number of different reasons.

With my best wishes

ANTONY CLARK
RECTOR