



Dear Parents, Old Boys and Friends of Michaelhouse

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Rector's Message

I recognise that you have probably been expecting some comment from me in connection with the recent national dialogue about alleged inappropriate behaviour and/or paedophilia in schools as highlighted in the important work of Deon Wiggett/News 24 and the *My Only Story* book and podcast.

We have been working on the development of our procedures around what is internationally known as Safeguarding, but this is not complete yet as there are a number of aspects to review in the formulation of an approach which seeks to ensure the safety of the boys, but is also practical.

Yesterday we received questions from the News24 team regarding one particular waterpolo consultant who worked at Michaelhouse briefly in 2018. He did not engage specifically as coach of any particular team and his role was, in essence, to enhance the coaching ability of our own teachers and coaches.

While we currently have no evidence to hand of any inappropriate behaviour at Michaelhouse, we are open to hearing any such evidence from our boys or Old Boys. To this end, later in this eNews we explain the means by which such reports can be made, confidentially if necessary. In any event, parents are alerted that the school may thus be mentioned in tomorrow's podcast episode.

I have set out below how our school has to date handled the recruitment of teachers or coaches. While we have found these to be acceptable, we are open to lessons learned from the dialogue which is underway so that we can improve where necessary.

When teachers are currently appointed to Michaelhouse, the following is required:

- Two good written references, one from the school/organisation from which he/she comes
- A police clearance demonstrating that the teacher has not committed a criminal offence
- Membership of SACE (South African Council of Educators) which is the professional body to which teachers belong
- Interviews are conducted in person and, when an offer is made, in the contract appointed teachers need to disclose any previous criminal offence



For existing teachers:

- Under the Staff Disciplinary Code and Procedure, there is a paragraph drawing attention to inappropriate conduct with pupils “including on-line relationships which could be construed as grooming”
- Staff are reminded annually of the professional distance required between teachers and boys, as well as of specific situations which must be avoided
- They are reminded annually of the duty they have to report any instance of unprofessional conduct or any illegal activity to the Rector

Coaches who are itinerant and employed at a number of schools or at Michaelhouse on a part-time basis are required to have a police clearance before they can coach here, unless they are under constant direct supervision/surveillance by a teacher. This stipulation would also apply to a guest speaker, for example, coming to the school to interact with boys

As part of their induction programme at the start of the year the E Block have two sessions on various aspects of living in boarding school life that we call *Bodies, Boundaries and Boarding*. This is run through an organisation call *Sexy Smarts* which also facilitates our D Block *Sex and Sexuality* workshop later in the year. While *Bodies, Boundaries and Boarding* does not specifically include material on grooming it does cover the “touch continuum”, the law when it comes to our interaction with others, culpability, abuse and the age of consent.

This year due to Covid we were unable to run the full programme but we have made plans for the current E Block to cover what they missed at the start of next year. We are also in discussion as to whether to include content specifically on grooming either in this programme or in some other context as part of the boys' education.

Our staff are particularly alert to the need to protect and safeguard our boys, an alertness which has been heightened by the recent exposure of some alleged unprofessional and inappropriate conduct in schools. As I have already mentioned, we have been reviewing our processes and procedures in an attempt to be ahead of situations, rather than simply being reactive.

In no way are we complacent about similar events not having taken place historically at Michaelhouse and if parents wish to reflect on situations requiring my attention, these could be brought to my attention either directly or otherwise through our Guardian App which is accessed in the following way:

1. Download the *The Guardian App* from your cellphones relevant App Store
2. Once downloaded sign up, entering in your cellphone number, selected password and contact details
3. Under category, select school and then select Michaelhouse from the list provided
4. Agree to Terms and Condition
5. Register

We recognise our very important duty of care to our boys in the school and our awareness of inappropriate conduct has been increased by the focus, nationally, on issues which should never have occurred. The Chairman of the Board of Governors and the Board are fully behind our making every attempt to ensure that our environment is safe for the boys.



Following the announcement last week that **Andrew Davis** of Tatham House is to take over the reins from **Kwande Dhlomo** as **Senior Prefect** for 2022, I was very pleased to name the Heads of House who are automatically School Prefects in our assembly on Monday. The School Prefects are elected by a combination of boys in a particular House and the staff in that House and across the school and then each Housemaster proposes who the Head of his/her House should be in discussion at a meeting of all of the Housemasters, Deputy Rectors and me. The Housemaster indicates how effective the proposed Head of House has been in leadership portfolios and other situations over the past years.

Taking into account the boys and staff voting for the Senior Prefect, the Second Prefect is then decided upon; warm congratulations go to **Lucky Mabuza** who is also Head of East House on receiving this honour. Indeed, our congratulations go to all of the School Prefects/Heads of House on their election: Founders: **Kamohelo Rathepe**; West: **Samuel Berchowitz**; Farfield: **Peter Woodland**; Tatham: **Andisa Young**; Pascoe: **Matthew de Villiers**; Baines: **Benjamin Frost**; Mackenzie: **Lazola Mayekiso**; Ralfe: **Robert Lawrence** and McCormick: **Rupert Hechter**.



The Rector and 2022 School Prefects

With regard to the House Prefects, these will soon be announced in the various Houses. The format for their election and the criteria used are very similar to those outlined above. A maximum of six boys in each House are able to be elected House Prefects for 2022, though it is possible for additional matric boys to be promoted in the first quarter of 2022. There are also Rector's Leadership Portfolios which may be taken up by those wishing to demonstrate their leadership and who have not been elected to be House Prefects; these relate specifically to aspects of charitable fundraising, marketing and the like and a reference from the Rector specifically relating to such activities would accompany a boy's CV.

As with any awards, there will always be those who narrowly miss out on being elected to a particular position after the considered opinion of the staff throughout the school as well as in each House and the support of boys has been taken into account, along with the Housemaster's evaluation of their capacity to lead. In such cases, boys are encouraged to discuss the matter with their Housemasters and to consider applying for a Rector's Leadership Portfolio for 2022 in order to demonstrate their qualities of leadership and service.



Staff News

While we are always sad to see the departure of respected and well-liked staff who have given much to the school, we also celebrate with them in their various successes. **Mr William Silk**, Senior Master: Cultural Activities, has been appointed the Deputy Head and Head of High School at Wembley College in Greytown. He will be leaving us in March 2022 to assume this role and we wish him and his wife, Lisel, further success and fulfilment in their role.

Congratulations go to the following staff who have been appointed as Assistant Housemasters: **Ms Marcel Cornelius** (West), **Mr JP Olivier** (Tatham), **Mr Brad McManus** (Baines).

We also would like to welcome **Sister Sanelisiwe Ntuli**, who will be joining us in the San from 1 November.



Mr Peter Dennyson, surrounded by some of his students, after giving his last lesson – 44 years after giving his first at Michaelhouse.

A Block Applications for Tertiary Education in the UK & USA – Mr Tim Jarvis, School Counsellor

If your son is applying to colleges and universities in the United States or the United Kingdom it is important that this is done both thoroughly and in good time. Accordingly please can you ensure that you inform our Guidance Counsellor, **Mr Tim Jarvis**, by e-mail at TimJar@michaelhouse.org before *Wednesday 10th November* if this is your intention for your son. Once you have done so you will receive an e-mail outlining the process further. This deadline exists so that the appropriate planning can take place before the end of the year.

Please also note that the boys must then have finalised the details of their applications with Mr Jarvis before the end of Wednesday 24 November. There is a high demand for references and academic transcripts at this time of year and so appropriate time is needed to process these before school closes on 2 December. Given that there is a lot of material required from the school in support of these applications, late notice requests, or requests made during the holidays, will only be dealt with in the New Year (sometime after the start of the new term in 2022).



Co-Curricular Achievements

Chess

Inter-House Chess came roaring to life during Cultural Week, with a lively round-robin style tournament taking place in the Media Centre on Tuesday afternoon. Each House entered four boards; one contestant from each Block B-E. Competitors faced off in timed rounds in the preliminaries resulting in the Baines and McCormick teams rising to the top of their pools.

That very evening the finalists from Baines and McCormick found each other on stage in the theatre ready to play off in front of a live audience. Board 1 was filmed and projected onto the backdrop of the theatre so the audience could witness the technical action on screen, as well as the emotional twists and turns on stage.

In a nail-biting televised matchup between **Theo Apteker**, and **Luke van Niekerk**, the fast-paced gameplay was briefly interrupted by load shedding, leading to the game continuing by cell-phone torchlight, though power was restored before the frantic finish. Luke doggedly hunted down Theo's defence until his options and time ran out. Fortunately for Theo, the rest of his team fared far better.

Luke van Niekerk bt **Theo Apteker**

Dylan Noach bt **James Burns**

Alexander Brits bt **Jonathan Baber**

Luke Marks bt **Matthew Hardie**

After the points from the final matches were tallied, Baines had accumulated a total of 35 points, leaving McCormick room to snatch a narrow victory with 36 points. Congratulations to McCormick, who are the 2021 Inter-House Chess winners.

Debating and Public Speaking

The Junior Debating Finals were held last night, as part of Cultural Week. The finals saw Mackenzie and West pitted against each another. The motion was: *This House Regrets the Rise of the Individual*. Proposing the motion for West were **Boitumelo Motsepe**, **Roelof Rossouw** and **Nathan Strachan**. Opposing for Mackenzie were **Seth Segal**, **Carlisle Hawkins** and **Damian Watson**.

By a narrow margin, Mackenzie secured victory, with Best Speaker going to **Damian Watson**.

Further afield, **Reuben Baldry** was placed 2nd out of 10 in the Top 10 Speakers within the Senior Provincial Debating Tournament, and as such has been selected for the KZN Debating Team which will be competing against other provinces in December.

Lucien Baldry, **Damian Watson** and **Luke Kaufmann** have been selected for the Junior KZN Debating Team, with **Seth Segal** joining the reserves for the team.

In the Pietermaritzburg League, **Kwande Dhlomo** and **Ross Keep** finished 3rd and 5th overall in the senior league. **Jonathan Boesak** was awarded the Best Speaker accolade for the Grade 8s, and **Boitumelo Motsepe** placed 2nd overall in the Grade 8 league. Well done to all who participated!



Squash

Our 1st and 2nd Teams played against Westville last Friday and both of the teams were highly successful. The 1st Team won 5 – 1 and 2nd Team won 5 – 1. Well done to our squash players. Inter-House squash matches were played during the week, with Pascoe taking home the silverware.

Tennis

Our top two teams participated in the annual tournament at Sun City and excelled: The 1st Team came second overall losing to Rondebosch 6–3 and Helpmekaar 5–4; but winning against St John's 6–3; St Peter's 7–2 and St Benedict's 8–0.



The 1st Team (left) and 2nd Team (right) at the Sun City Annual Tournament

The 2nd Team were top in the B Section winning all their games – against Blouberg A 8–1; against Heronbridge A 9–0; against Uplands A 9–0; against Cornwall Hill 5-4 and against Blouberg B 8-1. Congratulations to the tennis teams on their very fine showing.

Canoeing

An inter-schools' K2 race was held at Shongweni on Saturday 23 October and the results were as follows: U18 – 1st **Jack Edmonds** and **Matthew Millward**, 2nd **Murray Behn** and **Jack Shooter**; U16 – 2nd **Dominic Furby** and **Robert Butcher** and 4th **Aiden Furby** and **Louis Souchon**.



Aiden Furby & Louis Souchon at a compulsory portage.



The canoeing fraternity held their end of year dinner last Friday where these boys received awards:
Floating Trophy for best junior canoeist/s: **Dominic Furby** and **Robert Butcher**
Connolly Award for Perseverance and Commitment: **Murray Behn**
Stu Maclaren Floating Trophy for best senior canoeist/s: **Jack Edmonds** and **Matthew Millward**
The Canoeing Leadership for 2022 is: Captain: **Jack Shooter** and Vice-Captain: **Reuben Baldry**

Basketball

Our teams played against Westville Boys High this past weekend. We played 13, won 6 and lost 7, with the following results:

U14A won 26-25, U14B lost 10-44, U14C won 23-18 and U14D lost 4-32.

U15A won 28-17, U15B lost 16-18, U15C won 18-13 and U15D lost 15-34.

The 1st Team won 59-35, the 2nd team lost 19-21, the 3rd team lost 28-45, the 4th team won 20-18 and the 5th team lost 26-36.

Cricket

This past weekend our teams also played Westville, with some games being held at Michaelhouse and others in Westville. Our 1st XI chased down a low score of 144 and won by 5 wickets with **Oyama Ntshona** taking 3/29. The 2nd XI won by 3 wickets with both **Duncan Davies-Webb** and **Kamohelo Rathepe** bowling well with 4/35 and 3/60 respectively and **Tom-Tom Walters** making a magnificent 111* off 120 balls. The 3rd XI won by 6 wickets, and 4th XI won by 7 wickets.



Tom-Tom Walters after his 111*
against Westville 2nd XI

Our other teams generally fared well and their results are as follows:

U14A won by 6 wickets, U14B lost by 9 wickets and U14C won by 60 runs.

U15A lost by 88 runs with **West Mitchell-Innes** taking 4/31, U15B lost by 64 runs and U15C lost by 152 runs.

Our U14C team also had a mid-week fixture against Grace College, which we won.

Well done to all our cricketers!



U14A Team after their 5 wicket win over Westville

Water Polo

The Stayers 1st Team travelled to Johannesburg to participate in the St John's Festival against all the top teams in the country. We were placed 11th which is Michaelhouse's best placing at this particular tournament. We played 7, won 3 and lost 4.

Our other teams played against Westville: the 2nd team lost 0-10, the 3rd team won 6-2; the U15A lost 3-12; the U14A won 9-3 and the U14B drew 5-5.

Team of the Week – Ryan Strudwick, Head of Sport

There were a number of great performances again this week and special mention must go to all the A Team basketball players, the two tennis teams, the Stayers water polo team and the squash teams. But the Team of the Week accolade goes to the 2nd Cricket XI which, against huge odds, and missing some key players, managed to chase down a total of over 250 runs, thanks to some great batting. Well done to the 2nd Cricket Team!

Parental Surveys

The link to complete the **Parent Surveys** have been sent to you. I would like to add that these surveys are completely anonymous and confidential, and the information is sent directly to Nikki Veenstra, the Rector's Administrator, and is then collated into a larger document.

We thank you for taking the time to complete these surveys and would like to remind you that the final date for the completion of the questionnaire is Monday 1 November. Thank you for your help in this regard.

Open Day – E and D Block – Mrs Win de Wet

A reminder to all parents that the D and E Block Open Day takes place, tomorrow, Thursday 28 October 2021. Tea will be served, and registration will take place from 9:30. The parent/teacher meetings will start at 10:15. Please will you RSVP if you have not done so already. Please encourage your sons to book appointments with their teachers.



Weekend at Michaelhouse – Mr Murray Witherspoon

The past weekend wrapped up the second of our two Weekend @ Michaelhouse open house experiences where we played host to a total of 170 Grade 6 boys representing 56 schools from five provinces and five countries. The boys brought their energy to Balgowan from as far afield as Gloucestershire and Gaborone and spent a high octane 24 hours soaking up the sights and sounds of our campus. They left, brimming with war stories and new friendships.

The 2023 E Block admissions cycle is in the final straight with registrations closing at the end of January, just nine weeks away. Registration numbers are at an all-time high, with 608 boys on the current roll, Michaelhouse is fuller than at any other time in its 125 year history.

Michaelhouse Community Partnership

On Saturday the 16 October, 20 Eduhelpers attended IT Training at the Midlands Community College. Our partnership schools' Safety Committee attended their final Child Safeguarding workshop in Mooi River. We are working to ensure that all partnership schools have a Child Safeguarding Policy as well as a dedicated Committee.

Finally, the Reading to Learn team led by Mike Heart hosted training at Shea O'Connor for 13 teachers. This training is part of a 5 day training programme sponsored by the University of Hull.



Eduhelpers at the Child Safeguarding workshop held in Mooi River

Message from the San – Sister Debbie Hayes

It is spring at Michaelhouse and, whilst the grounds are looking beautiful, boys are suffering from seasonal allergies. If your son is a hay fever sufferer, please could you ensure that he returns to school after the mini-break with his anti-histamine tablets and a cortisone nasal spray so that we can keep the boys well as we head for the 2021 exam period.



Durban Old Boys Club

Old Boys and parents in the Durban area should see the attachment (Annexure A) to this eNews about a drinks evening to be held on Thursday, 18 November, at the Beachwood Country Club.

Term Dates - 2023

In consideration of term dates, a number of factors need to be taken into account and we do discuss such dates with the Heads of other schools, especially those with whom we have a close relationship. However, at times, our needs are very different, or we may have a different view on a particular issue. Considerations in our discussions to include the term dates of the State schools against whom we play fixtures, the proposed dates of our sister school and prep schools close by, the timing of IEB examinations, our own examination period and the fact that our boys are often involved in sporting activities in the holiday between the third and fourth quarters. This often precludes their going home for a reasonable break during that holiday unless we have a two week (as opposed to one week) holiday. We are also aware that the fourth quarter is shorter than the other quarters. Given all of these considerations our term dates for 2023 are attached (Annexure B) and you may note that the only difference in relation to schools which are close to us revolves around the fourth quarter.

Happy Mini-Break

In this unusual year which we are ending strongly, we wish you a happy weekend with your son.

With my best wishes

ANTONY CLARK
RECTOR