

RECTOR'S eNEWS



NEWSLETTER 36/2025: Wednesday 19 November

MICHAELHOUSE

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Rector's Message

With our boys writing examinations at present I was considering the nature of their learning processes and how relatively little time is spent in note-taking by hand as this is so often done on a laptop or another device such as an iPad. It is usually regarded as helpful to use such a device as a learning tool especially in the digital age; ideas and notes are often stored more appropriately and in a more accessible form than on paper, in files and with the correct solutions to, for example, mathematical problems. And yet examinations are almost always written by hand - across the world, in all countries.

When I was on an educational visit to Australia in 1995, I was alerted to the fact that a major independent school in Adelaide had been the first school in the world to adopt a laptop-only policy. All notes and interactions in class had to be recorded on a laptop with no handwritten notes being taken. What the school discovered, however, was that when each year group/grade came to write their state examinations - and naturally did so by hand - the results dropped on average by one grade per pupil. There are a number of reasons for this, but the most obvious one is that, when you start to write a sentence, you have to have the end point of your sentence in mind. Not so on the laptop: most tend to start and then amend and then add to what they have written or reconstruct. So the thought process is different.

Recently I came across an article by Ian Kane, a spatial artist whose work is well known in the UK, Belgium, Norway, France, Canada, and Japan. He draws attention to the fact that neuroscientists have considered writing by hand important for brain development, learning and memory functioning; handwriting is considered to activate a broader and more integrated network of brain regions including the motor cortex, sensory processing areas and areas for memory formation than typing. The process of writing helps the brain to encode and retain information more deeply. In children the physical act of forming letters by hand, additionally, is crucial for developing neural pathways associated with reading and spelling proficiency.

Handwriting demands sustained attention and fine motor control and writing by hand in, for example, a journal can help people process emotions, reduce stress and enhance creativity and self-reflection.

There remains, to my mind, something special about a hand-written note to a colleague or friend. It



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carries one's personality to a certain extent and, even though I have a measure of arthritis in my hands and notes are less legible than I would like, I still believe that such letters convey something special. They can never be mass-produced. Partially for that reason, I require applicants for teaching positions at the schools I have led to write a hand-written covering letter; I believe that, perhaps even to a limited extent, the personality of the applicant comes through in the letter. He/she cannot mass-produce such a letter for a range of schools; it is particular to *our* school and I want to establish how badly they want to be at *our* school, and the extent to which their emotion, tone and personality comes through in what they have written.

If one sees a letter written in, for example, the Victorian era, one is astonished at the rhythm, the flourish, the cadence and the elegance of the writing; the construct of letters was a work of art and I am not suggesting that we should abandon the ease of typing, which is cleaner, neater and, in the long term, more sustainable. We can reorganise material more efficiently and the end product of this eNews, for example, is better than if it had been hand-written. I accept that.

But, as all E Block boys will know, after they have come to dinner with Dr Clark and me in the first couple of weeks after their arrival at Michaelhouse, they are instructed that a hand-written note to thank us by lunchtime on the following day is required. They are being trained in good manners for a start and learning a skill which may be old-fashioned, but will prove valuable to them, I hope, as they move on in life.

A Block Applications for Tertiary Education in UK and USA -Mr Tim Jarvis

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. Most boys are well on their way to completing these applications. However if this is still in your plans, it needs to be a priority. If applying overseas is your intention for your son please can you ensure that you inform our Guidance Counsellor, Mr Tim Jarvis, by email at TimJar@michaelhouse.org before **Friday 14 November**. Once you have done so you will receive an email outlining the process further. This deadline exists so that the appropriate planning can take place in the last two weeks of the school term.

Please also note that the boys must then have finalised the details of their applications with Mr Jarvis before the end of **Friday 21 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. 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 2026).

A Block Leavers Ceremony

A reminder that the A Block Leavers' Ceremony takes place on 27 November; tea will be served from 12h00 on the Terraces (weather permitting). A detailed letter has been sent to A Block parents. For any queries please contact Mr Brendan Gittins, Deputy Rector: Pupils.

Co-Curricular and Individual Achievements

Cricket

Our teams played against St Charles, we played 10, won 8 and lost 2:

U14A won by 7 wickets, U14B won by 17 runs

U15A won by 41 runs, U15B lost by 24 runs and U15C won by 41 runs

1st XI won by 6 wickets, 2nd XI lost by 56 runs, 3rd XI won by 9 wickets, 4th XI won by 83 runs and 5th XI won by 26 runs

Top performers:

U14A – **Cameron Pluke** 3/28, **Cameron Cahill** 3/40, **James Velleman** 50 and **Daniel Rees** 122

U15A - **Jack Campbell** 70 and **Mark Benfield** 4/19, U15C **Evan McMurray** 70*

1st XI – **Rex Wardlaw** 3/30, **Ethan Muir** 76 and **William Russon** 52, 2nd XI **Nathan Simons** 5/45, 3rd XI – **Callum Fly** 3/9, 4th XI **Harry Latter** 52 and **Cian Hoskings** 3/5 and 5th XI – **Ruan Ramnath** 3/19



Above: A Block Boys – **Ethan Muir**, **Radhesh Jhilmeet**, **Mr Evan Mickelburgh**, **Hayden Hewlett** and **William Russon** in their final match for Michaelhouse 1st XI against St Charles



The 1st XI and their coaches after their excellent 6-wicket win against St Charles

Well done to the following boys who have either made 100 runs or taken 5 wickets this year in both the first and fourth term cricket games:

100s	5 wicket hauls
Ethan Muir 116* vs Glenwood Eston T20 1st	Adam Cooke 6-74 vs Affies U15A
Ethan Muir 102 vs Hilton Eston T20 1st	Adam Cooke 5-19 vs Kearsney U15A
Luke Mallett 103 vs Northwood U14A	Adam Cooke 50 wickets in a season
Daniel Rees 202* vs Northwood U14A	Nathan Simons 5-45 vs St Charles 2nd
Daniel Rees 122 vs St Charles U14A	Jose Sserwanga 5-43 vs Hilton U15A
Matthew Cassidy 116* vs Westville 4 th	Jarred van Niekerk 5-40 vs Kearsney 2nd
	Thandanani Zuma 5-30 vs Paarl Roos 1st
	Callum Fly 5-12 vs Hilton 3rd
	Heath Turner 5-32 vs Kearsney 3rd
	Hayden Ravenscroft 5-21 vs Kearsney U15B
	Lloyd Evernett 6-3 vs Hilton U15B

Last Friday night we held our annual cricket dinner and the following boys were acknowledged for their contribution to cricket in various ways:

- Natal Witness Shield - Eston Night Series with 2 matches played, 222 runs scored, a strike rate of 200, an average of 111 and a highest score of 116 (56) - **Ethan Muir**
- Henry Fotheringham Trophy Batsman of the Year – with the following statistics: 23 matches, 890 runs, strike rate 125.6, average 46,8 and highest score 116 - **Ethan Muir**
- Ravenor Nicholson Trophy Bowler of the Year – with 11 matches, 23 wickets, 290 runs, strike rate 15,6, 3,5 average, economy rate 6,65 and best Figures 5/24 - **Thandanani Zuma**
- Craig Sugden Trophy Players' Player of the Year - **Ethan Muir**
- Dale Benkenstein Trophy Player of the Year - **Ethan Muir**
Batting - 890 runs, strike rate 125.6, average 46,8 and highest score 116
Bowling - 70 runs, strike rate 28,5 average 21,75 and best figures 2/4
- Fielding - 15 catches and 5 stumpings
- Captain for 2026 - **Graydon Leslie**

Basketball

We played 16 games against St Charles, winning 9 and losing 7:

1st team won 54-47, 2nd team won 31-22, 3rd team lost 22-32 and 4th team won 20-14

U16A won 44-38 and U16B won 32-29

U15A won 34-25, U15B won 45-7, U15C won 17-12, U15D won 22-15 and U15E lost 24-34

U14A lost 19-31, U14B lost 21-43, U14C lost 7-26, U14D lost 16-20 and U14E lost 7-27



The 1st Basketball Team after their well-deserved 54-47 victory against St Charles



The 2nd Basketball Team after their 31-22 win against St Charles

Canoeing

Michaelhouse canoeists participated in the Ozzie Gladwin Canoe Race on Sunday. Congratulation to **Sam Hoy** for finishing 3rd and **Ethan Perry**, partnered by **Leo Watson**, who finished 4th in the U16 age group as well as to **Robert Short**, partnered by **Ivan Nel** who finished 4th in the U18 age group.



Ethan Perry and Leo Watson on the left and Sam Hoy on the right – both navigating the weir

Water Polo

Played 8, won 4, lost 3 and drew 1 against St Charles, playing on the stagger:

2nd team vs SCC 1st team won 14-3, 3rd team vs SCC 1st team lost 3-7, 3rd team vs SCC 2nd team won 11-2 and 4th team vs SCC 2nd team won 8-2

U15B vs SCC U15A lost 5-12 and U15C team vs SCC U15A lost 5-7

U14B vs SCC U14A won 16-2 and U14C vs SCC U14A drew 7-7



Cole Freeman advances the ball to his team mates as Michaelhouse threaten the St Charles goal area



Otto von Claer launches another rocket up the pool as Michaelhouse go on another counter attack



Nikolaus Wilfort remains calm under pressure from a St Charles 1st team player



Luke Viljoen (foreground) assessing his options on attack, as **Sam Smithers** (background) looks on in support



Adam Collins an attacking threat with ball in hand

On Friday last week, Inter-House water polo took place with Pascoe taking Gold, Founders Silver and Tatham Bronze. Well done to all those who participated.



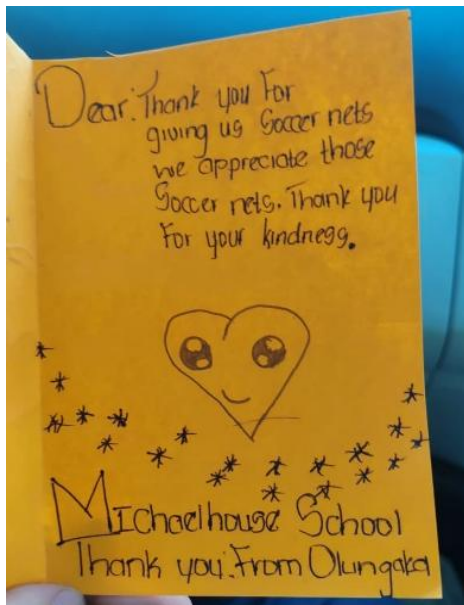
Adam Collins and **Keagan Elliott** representing Pascoe House with the winning trophy

Team of the Week – Mr Ryan Ravenscroft: Head of Sport

What an outstanding weekend for Michaelhouse sport, with exceptional results across the board and a collective win rate of over 75%—a fantastic reflection of the effort, commitment, and competitive spirit shown by our boys. There were several worthy nominations: the U14B Water Polo team, which produced a remarkable performance in beating the St Charles U14A side and securing an *undefeated year*; the U15B Basketball Team, which continued their dominant run and remain unbeaten this season; and both the 3rd and 4th Cricket Teams, whose superb victories added to an already memorable weekend. I was particularly impressed with the 1st Basketball Team, which, after a challenging season, showed immense character, resilience, and a true never-say-die attitude. Their pulsating, hard-earned win was richly deserved and stood out as one of the performances of the day. For these reasons, and after handling the pressure of the cauldron on Saturday with such composure and heart, the 1st Basketball Team the winners of the accolade of *Team of the Week*.

The playground equipment for the new ECD centre at Siyakhula in Rosetta (one of the footprint schools of the Michaelhouse CPT) was beautifully refreshed and repainted last week. Tatham House volunteers from E to C Block helped with much needed sanding and cleaning of the structures and boys from Ralfe House spent the afternoon painting them in beautiful bright colours.

Some of the proceeds from the West House Raffle were used to purchase new soccer nets for Nottingham Road Primary School. The children were absolutely delighted with the gift and wrote beautiful thank you cards and letters to the boys from West.



West boys helping set up the new soccer nets at Nottingham Road Primary School



Tatham and Ralfe boys helping renovate the playground equipment at Siyakhula in Rosetta

2026 Important Dates

Please click [here](#) to read the initial important dates document for the year ahead. This document is intended to assist you in your forward planning and awareness of key periods across the school year.

Please note:

- This is not an exhaustive list.
- The purpose is to highlight events that typically involve, affect, or place pressure on a significant portion of the school. It is not about importance or value of event.
- The official school calendar will remain the comprehensive reference point for all activities, fixtures and events.

Dates may still shift as planning continues, but we hope this provides a helpful framework as you look ahead.



Chairman's Club

The Michaelhouse Chairman's Club, founded in 2000, plays a vital role in supporting the Michaelhouse Bursary Endowment Trust (MBET). All funds raised are managed by the Trust's dedicated Trustees to provide long-term, sustainable support for Funded Places at Michaelhouse.

Today, the Club forms an integral part of our Generational Plan, which aims to build a meaningful, enduring endowment for the School – ensuring that talented boys from all backgrounds can benefit from a Michaelhouse education for generations to come.

We proudly celebrated the Chairman's Club 25-Year Anniversary at Michaelhouse – a truly special occasion that brought together members, Old Boys, parents, and friends to honour the Club's remarkable legacy.

Anthony Hewat (West 1976), Chairman of the Trusts, warmly welcomed guests and expressed gratitude for all that the Club has achieved. Founder James Inglis (Baines 1961) shared inspiring reflections on the Club's history and its ongoing impact in transforming lives through funding and mentorship.

We were deeply moved by **Tumi Motsepe** (A Block West), who spoke powerfully about how his Michaelhouse journey has shaped his life and future. The event concluded with an outstanding performance by the Michaelhouse Jazz Band, recently crowned national champions – a proud testament to our boys' talent and dedication.

As we look to the future, we invite Michaelhouse parents to consider joining the Chairman's Club. Your support directly helps make a Michaelhouse education accessible to deserving boys and strengthens the foundation of our School for generations to come.

If you would like to learn more or become a member of the Chairman's Club, please contact Frances Fleming Bolttler - Head of Development on frabol@michaelhouse.org.

Join the Michaelhouse Chairman's Club – Supporting Future Generations -

<https://www.michaelhouse.org/ways-to-support-michaelhouse/our-causes/the-chairmans-club/>



Chairman's Club 25 year Anniversary Celebration



A collage of photographs from the Chairman's Club Lunch

End of Term Arrangements

Please note that, as per the invitation sent, the Community Carol Chapel Service, open to all parents, will take place at 11h00 on Thursday, 27 November. Parents are encouraged to attend.

On Thursday, 27 November, boys will write their last exam, have a final assembly, complete a full pack-up, and then join the traditional Warriors' Walk ceremony, where our A Block boys walk down Warriors' Walk. We anticipate that this will be completed by 14h30, after which parents are welcome to take their sons home.

As normal, boys are welcome to stay the evening and depart on Friday, 28 November.

Please note that no boys will be allowed to leave before 14h30, and we will not be able to accommodate early-departure requests. Also, note as in previous years, there will be no school transport at the end of year or at the start of 2026.

With my best wishes

ANTONY CLARK
RECTOR