

RECTOR'S eNEWS



MICHAELHOUSE

NEWSLETTER 28/2026: Wednesday 2 September

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Rector's Message

One of the core principles of a Michaelhouse education is that we do not shy away from doing difficult things. In fact, we embrace challenges because we will learn lessons from them that those who do not step up to the challenge will never learn.

As we prepare to send the C Block boys on their Journey this weekend, I am reminded of the words of the post World War II psychologist, Viktor Frankl. Not for one moment am I suggesting that our boys will be subjected to the hardships that confronted Frankl in Auschwitz, but they will have moments where they will find things hard and where they may well have to dig deep.

There is a reason why the Journey is as long as it is because were it to be shorter, the temptation is to brace oneself – to proverbially hold one's breath – until it is all over. Holding your breath does not teach you how to adapt or to embrace the challenge – only to endure it and to wish it away. We want our boys to be out for long enough where they are forced to make adjustments and to adapt – holding your proverbial breath is not an option. Acclimatising to the challenge is the intention. Learning to get comfortable in discomfort is the point.

That is not to say that the boys won't have a brilliant experience and I expect that they will create many good memories, laugh a lot, have fun and deepen their friendships – all positive things – but Frankl's teachings based on his experience as a holocaust survivor are poignant and relevant for our boys. He said this:

“...everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms – to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way.”

I hope each boy will remember those words that regardless of the circumstances the freedom to choose a response is entirely their own.

Frankl's work was called Logotherapy a type of psychotherapy that focused on finding meaning and purpose. His work is best summed up in a short but immensely impactful book called *Man's Search for Meaning* – a book I recommend most warmly. As our boys undertake this challenge – along with the various other challenges undertaken by different year groups – the purpose remains clear: to get to know



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themselves and their peers better; to test themselves and to gain confidence in their own ability to ensure and to overcome, and even to thrive when things are hard.

I also very much hope that the boys have a tremendous amount of fun and make memories to last a lifetime.

Medication

On a separate note, if your son is taking any form of medication, it must please be reported to the Sanatorium as it needs to be checked by our San Sisters. The boys will then be advised if they are able to keep their medicine in their rooms (i.e basic cold/flu remedies etc) or if the Sanatorium needs to keep and administer accordingly. This is very important to ensure our ongoing duty of care for your sons.

STEER Affective and Social Tracking – Mr Tim Jarvis, School Counsellor

As you will know, we continue to use *Steer Tracking*, a programme used by many top UK schools, as well as other organisations such as Chelsea Football Club, to monitor and support the mental health and well-being of our boys. For your interest here are some of the key statistics from the latest round of data:

- **Priority Pupils:** The number of boys flagged as “priority pupils” has decreased from **9% to 5.9%** between March and August - an encouraging trend showing fewer boys in need of extra support.
- **Self-disclosure:** One of the key risk factors for all teenagers is low self-disclosure (battling to be themselves or struggling to share how they really feel). This is especially true in E Block, but we see steady improvement as boys settle into Michaelhouse. From Grade 10 onwards, our boys consistently perform *better than global STEER norms* in this area. It seems that boarding (eventually) helps them feel comfortable in their own skin. This reflects the culture of care and helpful signposting at school.
- **Over-regulation:** This is the social-emotional equivalent of continually driving on dangerous, busy roads without ever getting a chance to park the car. It yields a persistent state of hyper-vigilance, threat management and over-thinking leading to emotional depletion and longing for emotional dysregulation to self-soothe. Over-regulation has been a long-standing risk factor due to high expectations, but thanks to consistent messaging, modelling and awareness across classrooms, sports fields and boarding houses from our staff, we’ve seen remarkable improvement. In 2023, **37.9%** of boys were identified as over-regulating; by 2024 this dropped to **24.4%**, to just **19.6%** in 2025. This year is holding steady at around the same mark.
- **Targeted support:** Between March and August nearly **61 boys** quietly received additional support (with a light touch) based on their March STEER data. Encouragingly, the most recent assessment (August) shows that **84%** of these boys are now in a better place than at their earlier assessment – often without even being aware of the intervention.

Looking ahead, after our third and final assessment for 2026 (next term) each boy will receive an email with feedback on his results and some simple, personalised tips on how to “steer” himself positively into 2027.

STEER is just one piece of our pastoral care jigsaw puzzle to ensure that Michaelhouse continues to be a place where boys can flourish academically, socially and emotionally.

World of Work Day

Last Wednesday, the Makan Centre was buzzing as our B Block boys took part in the third annual World of Work Day. Michaelhouse hosted 21 guest speakers both in person and online, covering a rich cross-section of industries.

The event serves as an invaluable foundation in the B Block syllabus, giving the boys plenty to consider as they prepare for their job shadow week this September. A massive thank you to our Old Boy network and guest speakers who generously gave their time and expertise to support the boys.

Key Highlights

- **Keynote Insights:** Mr Paul Bushell (Raising Careers) opened the day in the Chapel, urging the boys to align their career choices with their personal values and strengths. Careers specialist Mr Tim Jarvis closed the event by breaking down common misconceptions surrounding degree choices and university applications.
- **Diverse Career Paths:** Boys selected four interactive sessions throughout the day. Popular fields included aviation, corporate law, global healthcare, international studies, sports scholarships, film and drama and mineral exploration.

The day was a wonderful success and the boys thoroughly enjoyed listening to all the diverse presentations.

Click [here](#) if you are interested in the programme that we had on the day. Please contact Mrs Leigh Kotze (leikot@michaelhouse.org) if you would like her to assist in putting your son in contact with any of the guest speakers if they are interested in asking further questions or advice in a particular field.



Basketball Court Opening

It's not often that a week captures over fifty years of a sport's story in just two evenings, but that's exactly what happened last week for Michaelhouse Basketball.

On Thursday, first team Head Coach Mr Nkanyiso Ngcobo sat down for a special podcast conversation alongside First Team Captain **Cameron Schwegmann** and Vice-Captain **Nkateko Mathebula**, hosted by Mr Teddy Khuzwayo (East, 2004), former Basketball Captain and now an Old Boy returning to reflect on the game he once led. The conversation ranged across the club's history, how far the programme has come since its early years on a couple of outdoor courts, through the milestones along the way, to where the current squad would want it to go next. Click [here](#) to watch the vlog.

On Friday night, that history met its future, where the Rector, Mr Bart Wielenga, officially opened the new outdoor floodlit basketball court, a facility that will let the club train and play well beyond daylight hours. The evening began with a curtain-raiser between the Basketball Coaches versus the U16A team, before the main event: the first-ever Old Boys vs First Team basketball game. For many of the Old Boys returning to the courts, it was a full-circle moment, seeing a sport they once played on far more modest facilities now thriving with the kind of investment and support that would once have seemed unimaginable.

Basketball parents and the Michaelhouse community turned out in numbers to support and share in the occasion, and the atmosphere under the new lights made for a genuinely special evening.



Co-Curricular and Individual Achievements

Choir

A new music festival, the South African Music Festival, was inaugurated this year, and Michaelhouse was delighted to enter 31 boys and ensembles across a range of musical categories.

Each entry is submitted online and receives a formal adjudication, together with a certificate. Outstanding performances are further recognised with a medal. We are extremely proud to announce that the Michaelhouse entries performed exceptionally well, achieving an impressive overall average of 84%.

The awards were distributed as follows:

- Platinum (90–100%) – 5 winners
- Gold (80–89%) – 19 winners
- Silver (70–79%) – 4 winners
- Bronze (60–69%) – 3 winners

The five Platinum winners were:

1. **Luneziwe Mshengu (Voice)** – 94%
2. **The Michaelhouse Concert Choir** – 94%
3. **Keamogetswe Noge (Voice)** – 93%
4. **Darren Phala (Voice)** – 92%
5. **Khumo Ntumba (Drums)** – 92%

These results are a wonderful reflection of the talent, commitment and hard work of our boys and the dedication of those who support and develop their musical abilities.

Congratulations to all our performers on these outstanding achievements!



Platinum winners: The Michaelhouse Chapel Choir with the individual winners (L-R): **Khumo Ntumba**, **Darren Phala**, **Luneziwe Mshengu** and **Keamogetse Noge**

Squash

On Saturday, we concluded the 2026 School Championship Competition. The final match saw **Connor Hatfield** take on **Graeme Higginson** in unusually hot conditions for this time of the year, making for a fast and bouncy court that tested both players.

Connor took an early 2–0 lead, but Graeme mounted an impressive comeback in a hard-fought battle, ultimately securing a 3–2 victory. Congratulations to **Graeme Higginson**, our 2026 School Champion.



Connor Hatfield (left) and 2026 School Champion, **Graeme Higginson** (right) after a hard-fought final

Following the finals, the squash club hosted its annual squash lunch to celebrate the season's achievements. A special congratulations goes to **Harry Porter**, who was awarded both the Most Improved Player and the Best Sportsmanship Trophy for 2026.



Well done, Harry!



Tennis

Last week, the Michaelhouse U15 Top 8 hosted Maritzburg College's Top 8 in a Denness League fixture, with the boys competing in both singles and doubles.

The team produced some excellent tennis throughout the tie, securing an impressive result with just one loss across all the matches.

Last week also saw Michaelhouse host boys from Jeppe for a weekend of competitive tennis. More than 20 Michaelhouse players had the opportunity to take on the Jeppe boys over the course of the weekend, resulting in some superb matches, excellent wins and valuable match experience for our players.

This week has also provided plenty of opportunities for social tennis. Seven senior boys travelled to Epworth for a social mixed-doubles afternoon with players from Epworth and St John's DSG, while Michaelhouse also hosted girls from TWC and Epworth for a fantastic afternoon of social doubles.

It has been a particularly busy few weeks for Michaelhouse Tennis, with our boys competing against competitive teams from a number of leading schools, gaining valuable match experience and enjoying the social side of the sport.



The Michaelhouse and Jeppe tennis teams

Swimming

The hard work, dedication and perseverance of our swimmers continues to produce excellent results. Their commitment to training does not go unnoticed, and this determination is reflected not only in their medal success, but also in the personal best times they continue to achieve.

The KZN Short-Course Championships, held over two weekends on 15/16 and 22/23 August, provided an excellent opportunity for our swimmers to test themselves against strong provincial competition. **Samuel Gilson** had a fantastic championship in the 14/15 age group, competing in nine events and securing seven medals. He claimed four bronze medals in the 50m Freestyle, 100m Breaststroke, 200m Breaststroke and 100m Individual Medley, as well as three silver medals in the 50m Butterfly, 50m Breaststroke and 200m Individual Medley. This was an impressive all-round performance across a demanding programme of events.

Campbell Turner also enjoyed an outstanding championship in the 12/13 age group. Competing in nine events across the two weekends, Campbell medalled in every race, an exceptional achievement. He won two gold medals in the 100m Breaststroke and 200m Breaststroke, three silver medals in the 50m Freestyle, 100m Individual Medley and 50m Breaststroke, and four bronze medals in the 50m Butterfly, 100m Freestyle, 200m Freestyle and 200m Individual Medley. Campbell also recorded five personal bests, demonstrating the continued improvement that comes from consistent effort and perseverance.

These performances are a reflection of the commitment shown by both swimmers in training and competition. Their continued progress and willingness to challenge themselves is a credit to their work ethic and determination.



Congratulations, Campbell

Soccer

Our 1st team travelled to Hilton to participate in the FA Cup with the following results:
vs St Nicholas won 4-0, vs Umvuzo lost 3-4 and vs Treverton lost 4-5

Our other teams played against a tough opponent in Maritzburg College on home soil with the below results:

2nd XI won 2-1, 3rd XI won 5-1, 4th XI won 2-1, 5th XI drew 2-2 and 6th XI lost 1-2

U16A lost 1-2, U16B drew 2-2, U16C lost 1-2, U16D lost 1-5, U16E won 2-1 and U16F drew 1-1 against Michaelhouse U15F

U15A lost 1-2, U15B drew 1-1, U15C lost 1-4, U15D lost 0-2, U15E lost 2-5,

U14A lost 1-2, U14B lost 1-2, U14C lost 0-2, U14D won 4-3, U14E won 3-2 and U14F lost 0-10



Rugby 7s

Some of teams travelled to Durban to participate in the Clover Durban High School Sevens Tournament, whilst others travelled to Greytown to take part in the Wembley College Sevens Tournament.

The 1st team lost to Northwood in the Plate Final at DHS, the 2nd team won the Wembley Plate Final against Riverwood, the 3rd team lost in the Bowl Semifinal to Howick, the U15A team drew in the Plate Final against Glenwood and the U15B team won the Wembley Cup beating Ferrum in the final.



U15A at the DHS Sevens Festival – shared winners of the Plate Final



U15B after their win against Ferrum to win the Wembley Cup



2nd XV after winning the Plate Final

Cricket

The Michaelhouse 1st XI began their Eston Night Series campaign against Kearsney College at Eston, going down by 14 runs in a T20 contest that stayed live until the final over.

Michaelhouse won the toss and opted to bowl, and the decision looked a sound one as the attack kept Kearsney honest throughout. **Nishay Sudhoowa** was the pick of the bowlers with 2/21 from his four overs, while **Benjamin Heuer** conceded just 21 in a tidy spell of his own and **Rex Wardlaw** and **Adam Cooke** chipped in with a wicket apiece. Michaelhouse lost three wickets for 20 inside the first four overs. **Rex Wardlaw** counter-attacked well for a brisk 29 off 22 balls, and **Jack Campbell** added 23, but wickets continued to fall at regular intervals.

Ben Hughes then anchored a determined late stand, batting through with 27 off 29 and finding support from **Nishay Sudhoowa** (13) as the pair added 34 for the eighth wicket to keep the result in the balance. Michaelhouse were eventually bowled out for 117 in 19.2 overs, falling 14 runs short with four balls remaining.

A tight loss, but plenty of encouragement in the bowling effort and in the fight shown in the back end of the chase. The side will look to build on that as the Series continues.

Michaelhouse hosted Jeppe Boys' High for a full weekend of pre-season cricket, with the U14A, U15A and 1st XI squad all in action. Proceedings got underway on the Friday with a T20 fixture that was ended early due to fading light, but a good start to the weekend nonetheless. Saturday brought 50-over cricket, followed by 100-ball fixtures on the Sunday.

The weekend delivered exactly what a pre-season programme should: time in the middle, competitive opposition and a genuine test of where each side stands ahead of the season proper.

The U15s set the tone and went through the weekend undefeated. **Luke Mallet** was outstanding in Saturday's 50-over fixture, carrying his bat for an unbeaten 112, while **James Buys** fell agonisingly short of a century of his own with a well-constructed 96. On Sunday, **Dan Rees** continued the run of form with 95 not out in the 100-ball match.



Well done to Luke on his unbeaten 112
against Jeppe!

The U14s were not to be outdone, also finishing the weekend undefeated. **Louis Campbell** finished 54* in Saturday's 50-over game, and **Robert Walker** followed up with 55 in Sunday's 100-ball fixture.

For the senior boys, the weekend formed part of the broader 1st XI squad programme, giving a wider group of players meaningful match exposure and a valuable early-season learning opportunity. Opening batsman **Cody Sander** led the way with a fluent 71 in Saturday's 50-over fixture.

Reflecting on the weekend, it was a really good weekend of cricket and a strong learning experience for every side involved and a particularly encouraging start from the U14s and U15s, who played extremely well throughout. Our thanks to Jeppe for making the trip down, and we look forward to hosting them again.

Please click on the relevant links below to access the sports fixtures for this weekend:

[Soccer](#)

[Cricket](#)



The St Michael's Club is a life membership community for past parents of Michaelhouse.

If your son is matriculating this year and you'd like to stay connected to the school, the St Michael's Club offers a wonderful way to do so. As a member, you'll receive the Rector's eNews, invitations to school events, regular updates and the opportunity to attend select Old Boys' functions and future SMC gatherings.

To learn more or to join, please contact us at smc@michaelhouse.org or visit: michaelhouse.org/st-michaels-club

Old Boys' Club News

Congratulations to Old Boys Jean van der Westhuyzen (Farfield 2017) and Pierre van der Westhuyzen (Farfield 2020), who won silver for Australia in the Men's K4 500m at the World Championships in Poland! They were edged out of gold by Germany by just 0.62 seconds.

Looking ahead, if you're based in Cape Town, please join us at the Annual Dinner at the Springbok Arms on 15 October. Click [here](#) to purchase your tickets.

Places are limited to 100, so please sign up as soon as possible to avoid missing out!

With my best wishes

MR BART WIELENGA
RECTOR