May 9, 2017

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We have recently become aware of the Netflix original series entitled **13 Reasons Why,** which has become popular among high school and middle school students.  This fictional series is based on a 2007 novel written by Jay Asher and tells the tale of a young girl’s suicide.  In the series, Hannah Baker, the main character, dies by suicide and leaves 13 cassette tapes outlining the 13 reasons why she did what she did.  The series contains other mature subject matter including rape, substance abuse, and bullying.  In addition, there are scenes throughout each episode which may prove to be difficult for a teenager or adolescent to appropriately process.   There have been concerns raised about this series by several suicide prevention and mental health organizations about the content and graphic nature of the series.

The show is rated TV-MA, which means it may be unsuitable for children under 17, and three episodes that contain explicit material have “viewer discretion advised” warnings. The Connecticut School Counselor Association is advising that, if students are going to watch the series, it may be best if they had an adult with whom they could process it.  It is also important for students to understand that there are many caring adults who will help if they find themselves in a situation similar to Hannah’s, and they should seek out those supports if needed.

If you choose to have discussions with your child about this series you may find the following resources to be helpful in becoming fully informed about the content series:

[National Association of School Psychologists](https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources/school-safety-and-crisis/preventing-youth-suicide/13-reasons-why-netflix-series-considerations-for-educators) – “13 Reasons Why”: Consideration for Educators

[PreventSuicide.org](http://www.preventsuicidect.org/)  - Prevent Suicide CT

<https://afsp.org/> - American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

<http://www.sprc.org/> - Suicide Prevention Resource Center

Should you have any questions or concerns about your child, please contact your child’s school counselor or school principal.  The safety and well-being of our students is always our first priority.

Thank you,

Jody Ian Goeler

Superintendent of Schools