



DIocese OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

128 Cherry Lane, Hicksville, New York 11801



Office of the
Superintendent

May 17, 2018

Dear Catholic School Families:

As you may recall, last spring I wrote you concerning a Netflix series, *13 Reasons Why*. This series was based upon a 2007 novel by Jay Asher and shared the story of a 16 year-old girl who committed suicide after being bullied, abused online, and sexually assaulted. At that time, the series had gone viral with many middle and high school-aged children viewing it.

It has been brought to our attention that Netflix is releasing a sequel to this that will begin on Friday, May 18, 2018. I am sharing the information that I sent last May, to remind you of the content that was in the last series and urge parents to provide guidance to your child(ren) concerning this program. Although I have not viewed it since it will be premiering this Friday, given the content, I want to give this information ahead of time.

Excerpt from May 1, 2017 letter:

You may already be aware of a new Netflix series that has gone viral with youth, especially among middle and high school-aged children. The series is titled, 13 Reasons Why, and it is based on a 2007 novel by Jay Asher. Sadly, the episodes discuss the story of a 16 year old girl, Hannah Baker, who commits suicide after being bullied, abused online, and sexually assaulted. Hannah leaves behind 13 audio tapes, each addressed to a different person who she asserts played a role in her decision to take her life, either by things they did to her, or by things they could have done to help.

13 Reasons Why is a raw, lifelike depiction of a teen's experience, and that is validating for other children. The series depicts the pressures teens face, including the tension between wanting to stand out and wanting to fit in. It is extremely graphic in its portrayal of the incidents that happen, including the sexual assault and Hannah's suicide. The series was released by Netflix on March 31, 2017 and millions of teens have watched it. During breaks and weekends, children may attempt to binge-watch all 13 episodes of the series. As you can imagine, there are numerous concerns about the series.

*If you think your child or a friend of your child is struggling with suicidal thoughts, please ask for help and call the **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline / JED Foundation** at 1-800-273-8255 (available 24 hours, 7 days per week). You can also text "START" to 741-741.*

Please find resources below to help you understand the series and discuss with your child(ren). I strongly suggest you are proactive if you have a child that is accessing Netflix at any time.

National Association of School Psychologists (NASP)

<http://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: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly – YouTube video by Roy Petitfils

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ngD3PtPt3ac>

In this video Roy Petitfils, LPC a licensed counselor specializing in working with adolescents discusses 1) Why 13 Reasons is so appealing to teens 2) Concerns about the content 3) How adults can use this as an opportunity to create meaningful dialogue about the serious issues presented in the show.

JED Foundation

13 Reasons Why: Tips for Viewing and Discussing New Netflix Series:

<https://www.jedfoundation.org/13-reasons-why-talking-points/>

Netflix 13 Reasons Why - What Viewers Should Consider:

<https://www.jedfoundation.org/13-reasons-jed-point-view/>

You will most likely hear more about the series in the coming weeks and months, but I thought it was important to send you some helpful resources as soon as possible.

In the event you have questions specific to your child/children, please contact your principal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dr. Kathleen Walsh". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D" and "K".

Dr. Kathleen Walsh
Superintendent of schools
Diocese of Rockville Centre