

May 8, 2017

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As Catholic educators, our first responsibility is for the safety and well-being of your child. Learning cannot take place if a student does not feel secure in their school environment. As you may be aware, a popular Netflix series has caught the attention of people of all ages, but especially teens and pre-teens. *13 Reasons Why* is a popular fictional series based on a young adult novel targeted to pre-teen and teen audiences.

The show and novel tells the story of a 17-year-old girl, Hannah, who commits suicide and leaves behind audio tapes explaining the reasons why she took her own life. The show has received criticism from mental health professionals for its depiction of suicide. It also contains graphic scenes of the suicide itself as well as rape, bullying, alcoholism, and other risky behaviors. Of particular concern is that many teens may have watched this without the guidance and/or permission of an adult. While it is not recommended that teens be encouraged to watch the series, it is important to be aware if your child has seen or read about it and to engage in a conversation about suicide, mental health and ways to get help.

**A Few Things for Parents to do:**

1. Ask your child if they have heard about or have seen the series *13 Reasons Why*. While we don't recommend that they watch the series, we do encourage that you view the series along with them and enter into discussions about what they are seeing or feeling.
2. If they exhibit any of the warning signs shared here, don't be afraid to ask if they have thought about suicide or if someone is hurting them. Raising the issue of suicide does not increase the risk or plant the idea. On the contrary, it creates the opportunity to offer help.
3. Ask your child if they think any of their friends or classmates exhibit warning signs. Talk with them about how to seek help for their friend or classmate. Guide them on how to respond when they see or hear any of the warning signs.
4. Listen to your children's comments without judgment. Doing so requires that you fully concentrate, understand, respond, and then remember what is being said. Put your own agenda aside.
5. Get help from a school-employed or community-based mental health professional if you are concerned for your child's safety or the safety of one of their peers.

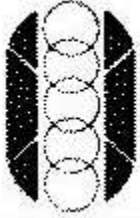
**More Resources**

- Jeff Veley, Radio Personality on 99.3 will be hosting a [live Question and Answer Session this week](#).
- Here is an article by Catholic News Service: [Catholic Leaders Urge Extreme Caution for New Netflix Series](#)
- [Here is an excellent video by Life Teen](#)

God bless,

Miss Abby Giroux  
Middle School Principal

Our Community Partner of the week is:  
Thomas R. Bastien Chiropractic, 616-363-2822



**THOMAS R. BASTIEN, D.C.**

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