

April 27, 2017

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Over the last few days, the District has received calls from school staff, voicing concerns over the Netflix series, *"13 Reasons Why"*. This series targets the adolescent population and focuses on 13 tapes left behind when a youth commits suicide. While there are some powerful messages around seeking help, negative implications of substance abuse, body shaming, sexting and assault are presented. The images in this series are extremely graphic and disturbing.

Our concerns are that the subject matter can be extremely triggering to youth, particularly our more vulnerable students. Secondly, the series does not clearly address the influence that mental illness can play in suicide, and could be viewed as romanticizing death by suicide.

This series is currently the most watched show in Netflix history. It is quite likely your son or daughter has heard about the series if they haven't watched it. We have attached resources to support conversations you may have at home about this series and the questions it raises. We have also asked schools to be particularly vigilant in watching out for students who may be triggered.

Our hope is that this event can lead to some positive conversations both at school and home around critical thinking, misinformation in the media, sensationalism, stigmas around mental health, healthy coping, and when and how to seek help.

Further information regarding this program, including guidelines and suggested resources around suicide and suicidal ideation, can be found in a recent article (April 2017) from the National Association for School Psychologists: <http://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources/school-safety-and-crisis/preventing-youth-suicide/13-reasons-why-netflix-series-considerations-for-educators>

Further contacts and resources available to you and your teen:

Mental Health Concerns: Saanich 250-952-5073, Victoria 250-356-1123, Aboriginal 250-952-4073

Vancouver Island Crisis Line: 1-888-494-3888 <http://www.viccrisis.ca/>

1-800-SUICIDE

<http://mindcheck.ca/>

<https://www.anxietybc.ca/>

<http://keltymentalhealth.ca/>

Please contact your child's school administrator or counselor should you require further support or information.