

Dear Parents and Guardians:

The Bishop Chatard Guidance and School Counseling Office would like to make you aware, if you are not already, of the popular *Netflix* original series *13 Reasons Why*. The rating for this show is TV-MA, which cautions that it is not suitable for children under 17. However, we are aware of its recent popularity among middle school and high school-age students. You may recall the first season was released last year and the second season is due to be released this month.

In the miniseries, which is based on a young adult novel released a decade ago, high school student Hannah Baker leaves behind 13 tape recorded messages detailing why she took her own life, and who was “responsible.” Her former classmates are left to piece together Hannah’s final weeks. Young people watching the show might see suicide presented as a viable or romanticized option. The show’s content is extremely graphic, with disturbing scenes in each episode that may be difficult for impressionable minds to watch and process in a healthy way.

The series includes the following shortcomings:

- There is no mention of mental health or treatment options
- The notion of suicide is glamorized
- There are several scenes depicting serious trauma, in which the teens do not seek help or resources - including rape, bullying, alcoholism and suicide
- The graphic portrayal of Hannah’s actual suicide was unnecessary and potentially harmful to young people facing challenges

We encourage you to speak with your children to determine whether they have read the book or viewed the series. If so, please use the show as an opportunity to talk about some of its complicated issues and open the door to create a safe place for them to discuss their feelings and emotions.

If your children have not seen the show and you make the decision to allow them to watch it, we suggest that you watch it *with* them, and that you avail yourself to the resources attached to this e-mail prior to that viewing. We also do not suggest "binge-watching" the series due to its graphic content.

The end of the year can be a particularly stressful time for students and because the second season is being released just a few days before final exams, we wanted to provide resources for those who may need them right now and also during the summer break. Please view the next page for a list of resources discussing the series as well as local and national mental health and crisis resources.

Bishop Chatard guidance counselors, as well as our social worker, Becky Wilde, are available to help answer questions or provide other assistance as needed. We will be providing our teachers with the resources they may need as well, should conversations about the show come up in the classroom.

Questions can be directed to Becky at bwilde@bishopchatard.org or by phone at (317)251-1451 x2280. Thank you for your attention to this very important matter.

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