May 1, 2017

Dear Middle School & High School Families,

The social and emotional health of our community is an important aspect of the work that we do in school.  Therefore, we are writing to ensure that you are aware that *13 Reasons Why,* a recently released Netflix series, which has quickly become popular with many middle and high school students, may be a cause for concern. The series’ themes include suicide, sexual assault, bullying, and drunk driving. Experts believe that impressionable young viewers may romanticize the choices made by the characters, and caution is urged for vulnerable individuals.  This online series is based upon the 2007 young adult novel of the same name by Jay Asher, but is different in some aspects, and contains graphic visuals (see [this link to Common Sense Media’s review](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/tv-reviews/13-reasons-why) for information).

While it is unusual for Shrewsbury Public Schools to communicate regarding popular media, we feel it is important to make parents aware of this series and provide resources that might be helpful in having conversations with their children.  It is vital that young people who watch the series have the opportunity to process what they have seen.  Parents can provide this opportunity, reinforcing the message that suicide is not a solution to problems and that help is available.

We encourage you to ask your children if they have watched *13 Reasons Why* and if so, to have a conversation with them about the series’ content and their reaction to it.  Talking points are included in resources from the National Association of School Psychologists [here](http://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources/school-safety-and-crisis/preventing-youth-suicide/13-reasons-why-netflix-series-considerations-for-educators), from the JED Foundation [here](https://www.save.org/13-reasons-why/),  and from the Riverside Trauma Center [here](http://riversidetraumacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/13ReasonsWhy.pdf).  If children have not watched the series or discussed it with other children, it is an opportunity to discuss your expectations about the series with them.

Our schools have resources available for all students, including those who are struggling with emotional and mental health issues.  Please encourage your children to reach out to adjustment counselors, school psychologists, school nurses, guidance counselors, health teachers, or other trusted adults in school if they are struggling themselves, or if they have a concern about a friend.

Please do not hesitate to reach out yourself to school counselors, nurses, or administrators if you have concerns about your child.  To do so, please call the school’s main line or email one of us at the addresses listed below, and you will be directed to someone who can best assist you.

Respectfully,

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