



## VALLEY CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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OFFICE OF THE  
SUPERINTENDENT

JOHN P. XANTHIS

May 2, 2017

Dear Parents and Guardians:

This letter is to make you aware of the popular Netflix original series *13 Reasons Why*. The rating for this show is TV- Mature, which cautions that it is not suitable for children under 17. However, we are aware of its recent popularity among our students who are mostly younger than the age suggested.

In the miniseries, which is based on the young adult novel released a decade ago, high school student Hannah Baker leaves behind 13 tape recordings detailing why she took her own life. Her former classmates are left to piece together Hannah's final weeks. During the series, young people and teenagers could interpret the message that suicide is a viable or romanticized option. The show's content is extremely graphic, with disturbing scenes in each episode which 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 behavioral health or treatment options
- The notion of suicide is glamorized
- There are no examples of help-seeking by the teens portrayed in the program
- 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 child to determine whether he/she has 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 your child to discuss his or her feelings and emotions.

We also urge parents to research the series to fully understand what your child is being exposed to. A list of talking points is included to help with the conversation.

Please know that there are resources, support and assistance available to you and your child at their schools through the student support services; Social Worker, School Psychologists, School Guidance Counselors, as well as the Principals, Associate Principals and their teachers.

Thank you for your attention to this very important matter.

Sincerely,

John P. Xanthis  
Superintendent of Schools