



May 1st, 2017

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

There has been considerable media attention surrounding a popular new series on Netflix called *13 Reasons Why*. Additionally, we have received communication regarding varied levels of concern expressed by a number of national and regional agencies regarding the potential impact of this series on our most vulnerable youth. These agencies include, but are not limited to, Alberta Health Services, Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Canadian Association of Suicide Prevention, and National Association of School Psychologists (NASP).

This series contains graphic and sensitive content that **may** increase risk for **some** youth, particularly those who are potentially vulnerable. It is important that parents and guardians are aware of the series as many of our students have likely viewed it over the past few weeks or will encounter it in the near future.

Our goal is to provide support for conversation around the themes and issues the show addresses; many youth may need support or help as they process the content they have viewed. Through this conversation, parents and guardians can reinforce the message that suicide is not a solution to a problem and that help is available. This conversation is particularly important for youth who are isolated, under stress or vulnerable to suggestive images and storylines.

We have made information provided to us by our partners at Alberta Health Services, available on our websites at www.sd76.ab.ca, www.mhcbe.ab.ca and www.prrd.ab.ca. This document outlines the content of *13 Reasons Why*, potential risks factors or consequences of viewing this material, ways to reinforce resiliency, as well as resources for students and families. Our intention is not to amplify or intensify the impact this series may have on our students. Nor are we offering comment on the value or ethics of the show. However, we believe that schools have an important role to play in preventing youth suicide, and sharing the concerns and supports provided us by mental health professionals is part of fulfilling that role.

Please take the time to review the resources and connect with your child about this topic. Should you require further information or wish to speak with someone directly about your child, please contact your child's school.

Sincerely,

A blue ink signature of Mark Davidson.

Mark Davidson
Superintendent
Medicine Hat School District

A blue ink signature of Brian Andjelic.

Brian Andjelic
Superintendent
Prairie Rose School Division

A blue ink signature of Joe Colistro.

Joe Colistro
Superintendent
Medicine Hat Catholic Board of Education