



April 27th 2017

Dear Parents / Guardians.

As a school community, we work closely with young people encouraging, guiding and nurturing them to recognise their full talents and gifts. As a Catholic community centred on the teachings of Christ and being people who are hope filled, we want young women to be optimistic about their future. I write with the intent of informing you, that newly released Netflix drama *13 Reasons Why* in Australia, is a cause for some concern. The drama is based on a novel of the same name and some students may have read or viewed it.

Headspace (the National Youth Mental Health Foundation) and Mindframe Media (an organisation primarily concerned with how to appropriately report around suicide and self-harm in all media) have both come out strongly in response to this very confronting drama. Dr Michael Carr-Gregg, who spoke with the MSJ community last year, has also slammed the drama (see, for a succinct summary, <http://www.3aw.com.au/news/mental-health-experts-slam-netflix-series-13-reasons-why-accuses-show-of-glamourising-suicide-20170419-gvnjns.html>).

A main concern is that the series makes self-directed violence - suicide, suicidal thoughts and other forms of self-harm - seem to be a legitimate option for young people. The show is very graphic in its depiction of self-directed-violence, as well as other violence depicted towards young women. It also does not provide any mediating possibilities, such as talking to adults or professionals. The potential for causing harm in our population of young people is therefore quite significant.

As parents and as educators, our primary concern is the wellbeing of our young people, we are the people who are trusted by the young people, who know us to be able to discuss issues - big and small - in a manner which helps guide them make good decisions for their own lives.

The warnings and concerns about this drama issued by major mental health organisations are warnings both educators and parents do need to take seriously.

While there have been a number of news reports about *13 Reasons Why*, I would encourage you to look at the following websites, which also offer ways in which to discuss these issues with your daughters or other young people in your lives.

<https://www.headspace.org.au/news/dangerous-content-in-13-reasons-why/>

If the issues raised here cause you any other concerns, please do make the most of the publically available support on any of the following:

Lifeline <https://www.lifeline.org.au/> Ph: 13 11 14

Kids help line <https://kidshelpline.com.au/> Ph: 1800 55 1800

Reach Out <http://au.reachout.com/>

Our College Counsellors, Ms Susha Vance and Ms Ana Gasparis continue to be available to all students and may be contacted by any parent with concerns.

Your faithfully

Steven Mifsud
Deputy Principal Student Wellbeing