May 18, 2017

Dear Parents and Guardians,

This letter is to inform you of a very serious concern that has come to our attention.

We are concerned about some recent trends circulating nationwide that could potentially have a significant negative impact on our students as they encourage self-harm and suicide. There is a potentially deadly game called the “Blue Whale Challenge” and also the recent media coverage regarding Netflix series “13 Reasons Why.” The “Blue Whale Challenge,” is a challenge posted on social media to harm yourself for 50 days, resulting in suicide. Teenagers are supposed to tag each other on social media, primarily SnapChat, and then challenge each other to participate in this dangerous “game.” “13 Reasons Why” is a Netflix series that has generated much controversy as a result of its content regarding bullying, sexual harassment, sexual assault, rape, and suicide.

Please be aware of inappropriate social media use that could be occurring outside of school. We encourage you to talk with your child(ren) about the appropriate and safe use of technology and social media. We will be addressing with the students in school with age appropriate conversations by the administration and social workers. If you feel your child is affected by inappropriate social media behaviors, their own or others’, which could result in an unsafe situation, immediately contact the police and/or seek out an appropriate medical/mental health professional.

Additionally, I ask for your support in our collaborative effort to best educate and monitor our students in regard to this issue. The concern is the use of social media and the adverse effects it can have on our students. Through a partnership between home and the school, we can best educate and protect our students. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact your child’s principal or guidance counselor.

Thank you and your attention and support on this issue is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Karen A. Tarasevich, M.Ed
Superintendent of Schools

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