



Fairport Harbor Exempted Village School District

329 Vine Street, Fairport Harbor, OH 44077

(440)-354-5400

info@fhevs.org Learning Today, Leading Tomorrow

May 3, 2019

Dear Parents,

As you may know, May is Mental Health Awareness month. We have experienced a recent increase in student curiosity about self-harm such as "cutting" and also intercepted conversations about the show *The 13 Reasons Why*. Although these issues have been directly addressed with parents as necessary, I feel it pertinent to bring awareness to the very serious issue of mental health. This is a great time to begin an open, developmentally appropriate, dialog about mental health with your child. We encourage you to talk with him/her using the resources provided with this letter. You can begin by taking notice of your children's moods, behaviors, and emotions. Early intervention is critical because mental health conditions often get worse without treatment.

Many conditions are cyclical and periods of strong symptoms may come and go. Symptoms aren't visible all the time. Children may also hide certain symptoms by saying and doing what they believe is expected of them. If you think you notice symptoms, schedule an appointment with a licensed psychiatrist or psychologist as soon as you can, or if that is not possible, then with your pediatrician or primary care physician.

We also encourage you to carefully monitor your child's online activity. This includes social media and YouTube. We also recommend that you read the attached district position letter regarding the very harmful show on NetFlix, *The 13 Reasons Why*.

We are working diligently to provide supports to students with mental health needs, in conjunction with the Fairport Harbor Fire and Police Departments. They have all received crisis training and can help you if you are not comfortable reaching out to the school. You can also call the Compass Line (ADAMHS Board) at (440)918-2000 or (440) 350-2000. You can also contact Crossroads directly at (440)255-1700. If you have a concern about your child and are unsure how to handle it, please contact the school and we can make recommendations for community resources. We are here to support you and your learner as they navigate the wonderful and often challenging road of adolescence. Please view the attached resources and contact us with any questions.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Polak, Principal
jpolak@fhevs.org



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Dear Fairport Harbor Schools students and families,

The Fairport Harbor School District would like to take this opportunity to address concerns that have been shared in the media regarding the Netflix series titled, "Thirteen Reasons Why." The series is based upon Jay Asher's 2007 novel that tells the fictional story of Hannah Baker, a high school student who commits suicide and leaves a series of thirteen audio recordings addressed to certain individuals with whom she believes played a part in her decision to take her life.

The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) have issued a warning to parents in regards to the viewing of this series by "vulnerable, fragile youth." They are concerned that some adolescents without the support of adult supervision could be placing themselves at greater risk for self-harm, especially those that may be struggling emotionally and/or are more impressionable by the experiences portrayed. NASP is in agreement that the series accurately displays that there is not one cause that would sway an individual to commit suicide, but are concerned that the graphic scenes depicted may be extremely difficult for some students to process. There are concerns that some youth will view suicide as glamorous when in fact this view is completely opposite of the truth.

The series, which is rated MA17+, for mature audiences takes a very serious, emotional, and graphic look at the realities of rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment, underage drinking, body image, and bullying. Fairport Harbor Schools are asking parents to open a dialogue with their children to answer any questions they may have or contact the schools at any time for added support.

Educating yourself on these tough issues combined with open communication between all parties is vital when helping students in crisis. For more information, or questions/concerns, please feel free to contact us 440-354-5400.

If you or someone you know is needing help, the following resources in the community can also be utilized: **The Lake County Crisis Hotline is available 24/7 at 440-953-TALK (8255), The Compass Line at 440-918-2000, or The Crisis Text line, which is available 24/7, by texting "HOME" to 741741. If there is an immediate danger, call 911.**

Sincerely,

Mrs. Michelle Jurick, School Counselor
Mrs. Katie Rumbarger, Harding High School Principal
Mrs. Doreen Fischer, Harding Assistant Principal
Mrs. Jennifer Polak, McKinley Elementary Principal