



MONTGOMERY BLAIR HIGH SCHOOL

A Nationally Recognized School of Excellence
51 University Boulevard East • Silver Spring, MD 20901
Montgomery County Public Schools



Main Office – (301) 649-2800
FAX Number – (301) 649-2830

Principal's Office – (301) 649-2806
Academy Office – (301) 649-2880

Renay C. Johnson
Principal

May 17, 2018

Dear Montgomery Blair Parents/Guardians:

Netflix has announced that 13 Reasons Why, season 2, will be released on Friday, May 18, 2018. Season 1 of this show was very popular with adolescents, many of whom watched the show without adult knowledge or presence. Season 1 dealt with mature themes, including a graphic death by suicide, date rape, bullying and harassment, alcohol and drug use, and driving under the influence, among other sensitive topics. The final episode also included a student shooting another student and suggested the possibility of an active shooter scenario may be explored in season 2.

We encourage you to talk with your children prior to the release of season 2. It also has been reported that many adolescents are re-watching season 1 in anticipation of the upcoming episodes. The following guidance for families is quoted from the National Association of School Psychologists and may help you support your children:

- Ask your child[ren] if they have heard or seen the series 13 Reasons Why. While we don't recommend that they be encouraged to view the series, do tell them you want to watch it with them or to catch up, and discuss their thoughts.
- If they exhibit any of the warning signs [below], don't be afraid to ask if they have thought about suicide or if someone is hurting them. Raising the issue of suicide does not increase the risk or plant the idea [emphasis added]. On the contrary, it creates the opportunity to offer help.
- Ask your child [ren] if they think any of their friends or classmates exhibit warning signs. Talk with them about how to seek help for their friend or classmate. Guide them on how to respond when they see or hear any of the warning signs.
- Listen to your children's comments without judgment. Doing so requires that you fully concentrate, understand, respond, and then remember what is being said. Put your own agenda aside.
- Get help from a school-employed or community-based mental health professional if you are concerned for your child's safety or the safety of one of their peers.

Some of the warning signs that an individual, even a child, is in emotional distress or thinking about suicide are:

- Direct ("I am going to kill myself") or indirect ("I wish things would stop") threats of suicide, both verbal and in writing. Many of these threats are made online or using social media.



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- Giving away prized possessions.
- Dramatic change in eating or sleeping habits (either too much or too little).
- Withdrawal and isolation from friends and family.
- Changes in behavior, appearance, hygiene, thoughts, or feelings. A person who typically is sad and suddenly is very happy or at ease is a warning sign.

All warning signs should be taken seriously. Community supports are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week and always are available for consultation if you are concerned about your children.

Montgomery County Crisis Center Montgomery County Hotline 301-738-2255
1301 Piccard Drive National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 800-273-8255
Rockville, Maryland
240-777-4000

Your school counselors and school psychologist are available in you have any questions about how to support your children. I thank you for partnering with Montgomery County Public Schools to support the social-emotional health and wellbeing of students.

Sincerely,
Renay Johnson
Principal