



April 2017

13 Reasons Why & Blue Whale Challenge

Dear parents and carers

You may already have been informed about the above, but for those of you who haven't, we thought it would be prudent to be aware of the following:

There is a teen drama called '13 Reasons Why' which some children may have been watching online, which tells the story of a 17-year-old high school student who commits suicide. The Youth Mental Health Foundation, 'Headspace' has urged school communities, parents, and mental health services to be aware of the dangers and risks associated for children and young people who have been exposed to this content.

Headspace's Kristen Douglas states that '13 Reasons Why' features 'risky suicide content' and may cause 'a distressing reaction' among some viewers. Please be aware that the rating for this programme is 18, as it contains graphic sexual violence and suicide scenes. There is also a social media game that is linked to this programme.

We have also received information detailing a dangerous online game called the 'Blue Whale Challenge'. The Blue Whale Challenge is an internet based 'game' that has resulted in many deaths in several countries. The administrator of the challenge calls themselves the 'master' and picks on vulnerable children and adults and gives them 50 challenges over a period of weeks, which culminate in suicide (challenge number 50).

The majority of the challenges involve self-harm, followed by sending a picture to the administrator. A tell-tale sign is challenge number 11, which requires the participants to carve a whale on his/her hand/arm/leg with a razor and send a photograph to the administrator. This has been documented recently in the national press should you require any further details.

Most schools in the area are aware of the above and may be issuing their own warnings or speaking to the children.

Should you require any support or assistance, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'H Norton-Lawrence'.

Hannah Norton-Lawrence
Assistant Head and Safeguarding Officer