

# The Ramsey Academy, Halstead

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Dear Parents/Carers

## **Safeguarding Alert**

We want to take this opportunity to draw to your attention the following safeguarding concern. There is 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 picks on vulnerable children and adults and gives them 50 challenges over a period of weeks, which culminates 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 their hand 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.

We also want to draw your attention to a teen drama called "13 Reasons Why" which we are aware some of our students 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 and we thought it pertinent to make you aware. Headspace's Kristen Douglas said "13 Reasons Why" featured "risky suicide content" and may cause "a distressing reaction" among some viewers.

Please be aware that the rating for this programme is 18 and is suitable only for adults as it contains graphic sexual violence and suicide scenes. We are aware there is also a social media game that is linked to this programme. We feel it is important that you are aware of these details in order to make informed decisions about your children's viewing.

Below is a link to an article about the game published in the Times Educational Supplement (TES) which gives additional information.

<https://www.tes.com/news/school-news/breaking-news/schools-warn-parents-about-internet-game-calling-players-suicide>

Yours faithfully

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Safeguarding Lead