

*Dear Parents,*

*Our classroom will be producing a podcast as a part of our academic work this year. A podcast is similar to a radio or television show, but it is delivered over the Internet. Our classroom podcast will provide our students with a great outlet for research, writing, communication and creativity. This letter and permission form are intended to communicate to you the benefits and responsibilities that go along with classroom podcasting.*

*Because podcasting is an online activity, it is important that we take some extra safety precautions to protect your child's privacy. Our students will use "radio names" so that their actual names and images are never used together. In addition, your student will be instructed to avoid sharing personal information online. All student work will be reviewed by the classroom teacher before it is published online. Our class will have an email address for our listeners to communicate with us. This email account is only accessible by me, the classroom teacher. Students will have no unsupervised online exchanges with anyone outside our classroom.*

*In addition to creating podcasts, we will also be listening to podcasts from classrooms, museums, universities, and other entities. These podcasts are a great new resource for bringing ideas and information into our classroom. All of our classroom's computers have the "Parental Control" feature in iTunes enabled. This will help prevent student access to inappropriate or explicit podcast material. Students will not be subscribing to podcasts themselves, but rather accessing content that I have screened and placed on classroom computers and iPods.*

*iPods and other digital media players can be a useful tool for listening to music, podcasts and other academic material. It is very important that only content appropriate for an academic setting be stored on them or played in school. It is also important that students understand when it is appropriate to listen to these resources. If iPods and other digital media players become a distraction, the privilege of their use will be terminated. For this reason, I have instituted an "open headphone" policy in our classroom. This means that if you have an iPod or other digital media player, teachers, paraprofessionals, and administrators can listen or view the content stored on it to determine whether it is appropriate for the current academic setting. Failure to comply or bringing inappropriate material to school in any format will be grounds for disciplinary action.*

*Copies of all recordings are available for parental review online. An audio CD version can be made available on request. In addition to this permission form, I am enclosing a copy of our "Podcaster Rights and Responsibilities" contract. This is an agreement between you, your student, and myself to make clear the our expectations.*

*Parents are encouraged to visit our class and participate in our podcasting efforts. You may just find yourself on our show! If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact me.*

*Sincerely,*