Dear Families:

We are about to start an exciting new project to promote enthusiasm and excitement about reading and writing!

Your children will use Learner Blogs (http://www.learnerblogs.org) to create and maintain their own student blog. Our blogs will be used as a personal reflection of individual learning, as well as a way to communicate and connect with students in other classes here at ISB, as well as partner classes in other international and public schools around the world.

Ms. Cofino, our 21st Century Literacy Specialist, will be working with us on this project to help facilitate this new learning environment. Please feel free to read more about what Ms. Cofino is doing with other classes here at ISB on the Connect 2.0 blog: http://connect2.edublogs.org

How it Works
Each student will have their own blog on www.learnerblogs.org. This website is dedicated to educational use only and has been created specifically for student users.

Students may want to work on their blog outside of class. All that is required is an Internet connection and a web browser. Students may also utilize the library before, during and after school. Students are able to *save their work as drafts* before publishing it to their blog.

Having a real audience is one of the key components to this program. In addition to receiving comments from their classmates, students will receive comments from other classes who visit their blogs. Parents are also invited to visit the blogs and respond.

Requirements to Participate
In order to create their individual student blog, each student will need their own e-mail address. If your child does not have an e-mail address now, Ms. Cofino can help s/he create one during class time. Please fill in the form below with your child's e-mail address or confirm that you would like Ms. Cofino to assist your child in creating an account.

Online Safety and Responsibility
Please note that absolutely no personal information about your child will be shared during the course of this project. We will use only first names or nicknames and each student will choose an avatar (a personal icon that is not their picture) for their learnerblogs account. Online safety will be infused throughout the entire project.

It's important to note that because these blogs are posted on the internet, they are accessible to the world at large and students may receive inappropriate comments. Please assist students and teachers in monitoring all comments.

More About Blogs
A blog is a special type of online journal, in the form of a web site, that can be created and easily updated using a web browser. The exciting thing about a blog is that students can take full advantage of the wealth of resources available on the internet by actually publishing their own work online. Students can also read and comment on other children's blogs.

Blogs created by Elementary teachers and students around the world:
- http://itc.blogs.com/minds/
- http://classblogmeister.com/blog.php?blogger_id=40878
- http://ithink.edublogs.org/

News articles about blogging
- Gilbert, Alorie. "Blogging 101 – Web logs go to School" CNET News. 17 October 2004. <http://news.com.com/Blogging+101--Web+logs+go+to+school/2100-1032_3-5895779.html> (16 August 2006).
- Stach, Michael. "Introduction to Blogs and Blogging" TechLearning. 1 April 2004. <http://www.techlearning.com/story/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=18400984> (16 August 2004).

Permission
We have discussed these blogging terms and conditions with your child in class today. Before your child may start posting to their blog, we are asking for you and your child to discuss and sign the following form.   Please return the form to your classroom teacher.

Blogging Terms and Conditions

1. Students using blogs are expected to act safely by keeping personal information out of their posts. You agree to not post or give out your family name, password, user name, email address, home address, school name, city, country or other information that could help someone locate or contact you in person. You may share your interests, ideas and preferences.

2. Students using blogs agree to not share their user name or password with anyone besides their teachers and parents. You agree to never log in as another student.

3. Students using blogs are expected to treat blogspaces as classroom spaces. Speech that is inappropriate for class is not appropriate for your blog. While we encourage you to engage in debate and conversation with other bloggers, we also expect that you will conduct yourself in a manner reflective of a representative of this school.

4. Student blogs are to be a forum for student expression. However, they are first and foremost a tool for learning, and as such will sometimes be constrained by the various requirements and rules of classroom teachers. Students are welcome to post on any school-appropriate subject.

5. Students blogs are to be a vehicle for sharing student writing with real audiences. Most visitors to your blog who leave comments will leave respectful, helpful messages. If you receive a comment that makes you feel uncomfortable or is not respectful, tell your teacher right away. Do not respond to the comment.

6. Students using blogs take good care of the computers by not downloading or installing any software without permission, and not clicking on ads or competitions.

7. Students who do not abide by these terms and conditions may lose their opportunity to take part in this project.

❑ My child, _____ already has an e-mail address, it is:

_____. S/he knows the password.

❑ My child, _____ does not have an e-mail address, please help him/her set one up in class.

I have read and understood these blogging terms and conditions. I agree to uphold them.

student's signature:_____   date: _____

parent's signature _____   date: _____

Adapted from the Blog Policy at http://budtheteacher.jot.com/WikiHome/Blog%20Policy

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