

Dear Parents,

I wanted to let you know that we're planning on using voice technology in our classroom. I want to share more about why this is important, and some background on the technology.

In the next 10 to 15 years, more automation will be in our workplaces, doing work in ways that we've not seen before. Voice technology is a new way of interacting with computers. Right now we're at the beginning of this change, what some call simple artificial intelligence. Understanding more about this technology, and interacting with it, will prepare my students to be ready for new jobs and ways of working. Your students will learn about why they are using it, when to use it, and how it works.

AskMyClass is the name of the software that will run on Alexa, and we'll use that in our classroom to (1) Take care of frequent and simple tasks to improve the class flow; (2) Enable fast access to additional resources to support class activities; and (3) Explore new ways of connecting our class with home.

Below is more information from the AskMyClass team.

Thank you,

(NAME)

INFORMATION ABOUT ALEXA and AskMyClass

About the Amazon Echo and AskMyClass:

As you may know, the Amazon Echo is a voice-controlled speaker, which has now found its way into many homes, due to the quick, convenient and easy handling of simple tasks. For many, they have replaced the smartphone and laptop for everyday tasks, such as asking for the weather, playing music, checking the news, and setting alarms and timers.



AskMyClass brings classroom-specific functions to the Amazon Echo, like quick brain breaks and mindfulness activities. We're also exploring easy ways for teachers to communicate to parents with short updates, like *tomorrow is pajama day*. Or to make suggestions for chatting with kids, like *today we learned about spiders* (as an alternative to the mostly ineffective "How was school today?").

How the Amazon Echo works:

The Amazon Echo Dot is a physical speaker, about 3-inches across and 2-inches high. It is activated by using one of four different wake words (most commonly set as "*Alexa*"), followed by your ask. For example, "*Alexa, what is the weather today?*" functions much the same as *Siri* and *Ok, Google* on a smartphone. The main difference being that there's no screen at all.

How the Echo device handles information:

- When there's no blue light ring, and people are speaking nearby, the Echo device is not recording or streaming that information to Amazon.

- When the Echo device hears a person saying the wake word, “*Alexa*”, the blue light ring turns on.
- Tapping the mute button on the Echo device turns off the Amazon Echo’s microphone, showing a red light ring.
- The Echo device also speaks out loud, based on information that was requested. For example, when you say, *Alexa, how do you spell ‘curious’?* the blue light ring turns on from the moment it hears “*Alexa*” to the end of saying “Curious is spelt, c-u-r-i-o-u-s”. Then, the blue light ring will turn off. Again, when it is off, there is no recording or streaming.
- When the blue light ring is on, Amazon records what is being spoken and converts that into written text for processing by apps or skills that work on the Echo device. The AskMyClass software does not have access to the raw voice recording that Amazon stores, and only receives the written text of what the user spoke after processing by Amazon.
- As the Echo device is used in a shared environment, the voices that are recorded by Amazon for processing are not identifiable to a single person. What is recorded by Amazon is available to be heard by the Echo device’s account holder, for example the teacher, and the account holder can delete all recordings that Amazon stores. This control can provide increased privacy protection for both teachers and students.
- AskMyClass is primarily for use by teachers. In some cases, a child might interact with AskMyClass software, for example, if a teacher has created a class quiz using the software, and a child speaks an answer to “Alexa”. Our software will only process the written text that Amazon provides, and we cannot personally identify the person’s voice who spoke to Alexa. For certain activities, like the class picker, teachers may upload a child’s first name and first initial. No other personal information about the child will be collected, such as birth date, contact information (including phone numbers and e-mail addresses), voice recordings, photos, and videos.
- Finally, for more information on the Alexa or Echo device, please visit: [Alexa FAQ](#). If you wish to review the privacy policy for the Amazon Echo visit [Echo Privacy](#), please review Amazon’s [Children’s Privacy Disclosure](#), or for AskMyClass please visit [AskMyClass Privacy](#). To learn more about revoking permission on an Amazon Echo device for a child or how to review or delete Child Personal Information, please visit [Manage Parental Consent](#).

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to email team@goAskMyClass.com.