Dear parents and/or guardians,

 Your child(ren) will be visiting Elkus Ranch Environmental Education Center on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to participate in our Lunch at the Ranch program. The ranch is located just south of Half Moon Bay, only a couple miles inland from the ocean. Elkus Ranch is a working farm where we raise sheep and goats and also have chickens, rabbits, horses, donkeys, a llama, and occasionally, pigs. There are several gardens where we grow a variety of fruits, vegetables, flowers and herbs. We are surrounded by open space and frequently encounter wildlife. While the ranch is fully accessible, your child (and the adults serving as chaperones) will have several opportunities to venture off the paved surfaces to take advantage of many exciting hands-on learning opportunities. After collecting fruits, vegetables and herbs in the gardens, your child will participate in making a complete meal for lunch guided by our staff and parent chaperones. To insure your child can fully participate, please note the following:

* **Waivers are required** for all participants including parent chaperones, teachers, and siblings. Your teacher will provide a copy for your signature or you may download a copy from our website. Please note **your child will not be allowed to participate without a signed waiver.** [**http://ucanr.edu/sites/elkus\_ranch/http\_\_\_ucanrorg\_sites\_elkus\_ranch\_/Waiver\_Form\_/**](http://ucanr.edu/sites/elkus_ranch/http___ucanrorg_sites_elkus_ranch_/Waiver_Form_/)
* The ranch is located on the coast where the weather can be unpredictable and conditions may change dramatically during your visit. Please have your child wear **closed-toe shoes that can get dirty and wet.** This is not the trip to wear their favorite new shoes. Help your child **dress in layers** with a water-proof/resistant jacket as the top layer. It may be foggy and drippy when you arrive only to have the sun come out and temperatures soar by lunch time. Sunblock is always a good precaution too.
* Your child will be preparing a full meal for lunch that includes a vegetarian pizza, salad with dressing, and a fruit and grain based dessert. Lunch is typically ready by 12:30 p.m. However, we encourage teachers to time their arrival so the children can eat a quick snack from home before the program begins. Please insure your child eats breakfast as well. The program is physically active and when stomachs start to growl children’s attention begins to wane. Chaperones please note there is no prepared food for sale at the ranch so plan to bring your own snack and water too. Lunch is included for chaperones and teachers.
* Please inform your child’s teacher about any food allergies. We are happy to share a list of ingredients and products we use in the program with at least one week notice. You are welcome to provide specific accommodations that will help your child participate in the program (i.e., gluten free pizza crust, dairy free cheese, etc.). Please note our kitchen is not gluten free.
* Sorting trash from lunch into compost, recycling, and land fill bins is a part of our program instruction but it certainly is helpful if children (and adults) can reduce the amount of waste left at the ranch. For ideas on packing a **“no trash” snacks** visit: [**http://ucanr.edu/sites/elkus\_ranch/Waste\_Free\_Lunches/**](http://ucanr.edu/sites/elkus_ranch/Waste_Free_Lunches/)
* Children and adults will be taught how to properly wash their hands before preparing and eating food. **Hand sanitizer is also available** in several areas for use after livestock encounters, if desired.

**For adult chaperones:**

* If you will be driving to the ranch please note that many common mapping applications will direct you to our neighbor. Accurate directions are available on our website. Our physical **address is 1500 Purisima Creek Road** and our **driveway is the second one on the right**. Signs are posted. **PLEASE do not disturb our neighbors!!** [**http://ucanr.edu/sites/elkus\_ranch/About\_Us/map\_and\_directions\_/**](http://ucanr.edu/sites/elkus_ranch/About_Us/map_and_directions_/)
* Please note that our road is a **single lane driveway** accommodating 2 way traffic. There are mirrors strategically placed to alert you to oncoming traffic around bends and blind turns. **Please drive SLOWLY** – no more than 5 mph coming in and out of the ranch. There may be children or animals along the road as well – please exercise caution.
* Parking is limited at the ranch. If the children are taking a school or charter bus and parents must drive separately, please **try to arrange carpools**. Buses and parent cars will park at the conference center (the first left turn after crossing the bridge at the entrance) Your program will begin and end at this location.
* We rely on parent chaperones to assist our program staff during the tour. Your help in focusing children’s attention, escorting a student to the restroom, distributing materials, closing gates to animal pens, and keeping the group moving in the same direction are all extremely valuable to the success of the program. We expect that **adult chaperones will model not only good listening skills but also a positive attitude and openness to new experiences.** With the Lunch at the Ranch program, parents will be assigned to a group of up to 6 children and will be responsible for supervising their use of knives and graters, directing students to collect and measure ingredients, and following recipes. All instructions will be provided and our staff will be present throughout the program. Because we depend on your full attention to the students during this program, we cannot accommodate younger siblings. If you are not able to find alternative care for a younger child, please let your teacher know you cannot chaperone this trip.

We are looking forward to your child’s visit. Please feel free to contact us at either elkusranch@ucanr.edu or (650) 712-3151 if you have any additional questions.

Sincerely, Elkus Ranch Staff

