Dear parents and/or guardians,

 Your child(ren) will be visiting Elkus Ranch Environmental Education Center on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. 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. 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.
* Send a healthy snack and a lunch with a bottle of water. There is **no prepared food for sale** at the ranch. Depending on the season your child may be able to taste some fruits and vegetables in the garden but it will not replace a meal. The program is physically active and when stomachs start to growl children’s attention begins to wane. We encourage teachers to arrange to arrive a few minutes early to allow children to have a snack before the program begins. We typically break for lunch no later than 12:30. **Encourage your child to eat breakfast** on this morning.
* 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” lunch** visit: [**http://ucanr.edu/sites/elkus\_ranch/Waste\_Free\_Lunches/**](http://ucanr.edu/sites/elkus_ranch/Waste_Free_Lunches/)
* Children and adults will have **opportunities to wash their hands** before meals and before sampling food in the gardens. **Hand sanitizer is also available** in several areas for use after livestock encounters, if desired.

More

**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 will be parked at the conference center (the first left turn after crossing the bridge at the entrance) but cars may come all the way up to the ranch and park near the picnic area. If you are transporting lunches for the group, please check with one of our staff to find out where your group will be eating lunch. When necessary, we may use the ranch house or conference center for lunch. It is helpful to have the lunches nearby to avoid a long trek to another part of the ranch to retrieve them.
* 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.** While we understand that on occasion parents may need to bring a younger sibling please be aware that the program may not be developmentally appropriate for your younger child. If the child becomes restless and disruptive you will be asked to remove the younger child from the group so the rest of the students can attend to the program.

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