Parent Information

A Program of the Marin County Office of Education
Mary Jane Burke, Marin County Superintendent of Schools

Marin County Outdoor School ~ Walker Creek Ranch
1700 Marshall-Petaluma Road ~ Petaluma, CA 94952
(415) 491-6602 • Fax: (415) 663-8854 • www.walkercrekranch.org
In a few weeks, your child will be attending the Marin County Outdoor School at Walker Creek Ranch. While in residence, students will participate in activities designed to develop academic and social skills. The program utilizes the outdoors as a laboratory to provide students with hands-on science experiences in a variety of habitats including forest, pond, grassland and stream. Heavy emphasis is placed on ecology, agriculture, geography, and natural history.

These outdoor experiences combined with social interactions, and evening activities often make this experience one of the most memorable events in a student’s elementary years. We know that your child will enjoy his/her week at the school. This packet will provide some basic information about the program to assist you and your child in preparing for the Outdoor School experience. After reading through this information, if you have any questions or concerns, or would like any additional information, please give us a call at (415) 491-6602.

Cost of the program – You may obtain information on fees for food, lodging, instruction, supplies, equipment, and transportation by contacting your child’s school.

Medical Care and Special Needs – Your child’s classroom teacher acts as the primary care giver for your child in terms of providing basic first aid, administering medication, and otherwise ensuring that any specific special needs are met. Please be in close communication with your child’s teacher regarding any special needs that your son or daughter may have, and be sure to clearly articulate specific concerns and/or instructions on the Student Health Form so that Naturalist and Cabin Leader’s will be informed as well.

Vital Health and Dietary Information – Please take special care in thoroughly completing and signing the attached Student Health Form and Dietary Questionnaire, and return them to your child’s school right away. It is vital that we receive this information in a timely manner. Thank you! We do everything possible to properly care for each student who participates in the Outdoor School Program. If your child has been under a doctor’s care recently, please obtain a statement signed by a doctor, which will allow your child to participate in the program. This statement must be presented to your student’s classroom teacher prior to leaving.

Student Health Updates / Doctor’s Clearance – In some cases, student health issues or concerns may
Update Form (which you can obtain from your child’s classroom teacher or from our website). In some cases a doctor’s clearance for participation may be required.

Poison Oak and Ticks – All students will be familiarized with how to identify Poison Oak. If a student comes in contact with Poison Oak, they will be instructed to carefully remove and quarantine clothing (in a garbage bag), and to take showers to remove oils. Students will also be reminded to perform “tick checks” every night before going to bed. If a tick is discovered, your teacher will be notified.

Location, Facilities and Living Accommodations – Walker Creek Ranch is located in West Marin County, about 15 miles West of Novato, and 5 miles East of the small town of Marshall. Facilities consist of large classrooms, kitchen/dining room, showers, lavatories and dormitories. The dorms are carpeted, heated and contain beds furnished with mattresses. Students are divided up into separate boys and separate girls cabins of 8-12 students per cabin.

Homesickness, and sending mail – For many of the students attending the Outdoor School, this will be their first time away from home for an extended period of time. Our staff is very sensitive to issues of homesickness, and takes great care in helping students work through the challenges of being away from home and family. We encourage family members to send letters or postcards to students attending the Outdoor School. A letter from home can be the perfect remedy for a bout of homesickness. Please send mail early in the week, or perhaps even the week prior to your child's attendance. You should address all mail as follows:

Attn: YOUR CHILD’S NAME and SCHOOL
Marin County Outdoor School
Walker Creek Ranch
1700 Marshall/Petaluma Road
Petaluma, CA 94952

Arrival Day – Please have students prepared by having them wear long pants and close toe shoes for arrival day hike. Also, bring a backpack with their bag lunch, water bottle, sunscreen, and sweatshirt or jacket for arrival day hike.

Emergency Phone numbers – Please do not call your child except in the event of an emergency. The Outdoor School phone number is (415) 491-6602. After hours, you may call the pay phone in the Teacher’s Lodge at (415) 663-9905.

If your child becomes sick or is injured - In case of sickness, injury or an emergency at the Outdoor School, your child’s teacher or the Outdoor School Manager will contact you directly. If you are unavailable for any reason, we will contact your child’s school, appointed guardians or emergency contact person. Be sure you have signed the emergency medical treatment section of the health form and have included contact phone numbers.

Supervision – Classroom teachers, Cabin Leaders, and/or our Outdoor School Instructional staff work together to provide around-the-clock supervision of students.

Food Service – Well-balanced meals, prepared by trained food service personnel, are served “buffet style.” If your child has a food allergy, indicate so on the Student Health Form, and the Dietary Questionnaire. Please discuss any serious food allergies with your child’s classroom teacher, and include clear, detailed instructions on your student’s Dietary Questionnaire if any special meal preparations are required. Our Food Service Manager will contact you directly if she has any questions.

Insurance – Your child is covered by a health and accident policy carried by the Outdoor School. A portion of the outdoor education fee is used toward the insurance premium.

Money – Please do not send money with your child. There is no place where he/she can spend money, and it can create problems of theft and loss. For a complete list of what to bring, and what not to bring see the attached packing list.

Parent Volunteers for Arrival Day Hike – We ask all of our attending schools to bring a minimum of 1 parent volunteer per 20 students, to assist during the arrival day hike. Parents must be prepared to hike with
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Parent Volunteers for Arrival Day Hike – We ask all of our attending schools to bring a minimum of 1 parent volunteer per 20 students, to assist during the arrival day hike. Parents must be prepared to hike with long pants, hiking shoes, sunscreen, water bottle, and a bag lunch. We are sending the students out on trail much earlier and Parents need to be prepared upon arrival to Walker Creek Ranch. Parents will have lunch out on trail with the students.

Note-Volunteer Parents should finish up from hiking around 2:30 PM, when the hike ends. If you are interested in volunteering for one of these positions, please contact your school.

Visitation – We do not allow visitation during the program. If you would like to visit the site, you can volunteer for arrival day, or observe the closing ceremony at 10:45 AM on departure day. You can also attend an Open House as described below.

Open House – We hold an Open House for parents and teachers every, Fall and Winter, generally in October and January. You will receive announcements with more detailed information about the Open Houses from your school.

Again, if you have any questions or concerns, or need any additional information, please call us at (415) 491-6602. We look forward to sharing a wonderful week of adventure and learning with your child.

Sincerely,

MARY JANE BURKE
Marin County Superintendent of Schools

Mike Grant
Outdoor School Principal
Marin County Outdoor School

Civil Rights Nondiscrimination Statement

“In Accordance with Federal Law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability.”

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington D.C. 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 or (202) 720-6382 Tuesday through Friday. USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employee.
Packaging List for the Marin County Outdoor School

A note on packing for the Outdoor school – Clothing and equipment should be labeled to help prevent loss and confusion. New or expensive clothing is NOT recommended. The following is a minimal list and additional clothes may be packed. Warm jackets and sweaters are the most important items at any time of the year.

**Essential Items:**
- Bandana (used for holding lunch on hikes)
- Bag Lunch for Arrival Day (in a Back Pack with a jacket or Sweatshirt)
- 1 Liter Refillable Water Bottle (Note: Orders for water bottles are not filled until Day 3.)
- Hat/Visor with brim
- Sun Screen/Chap Stick
- Day Pack

**Sleeping Gear**
- 1 or 2 Single sheets and 2 blankets OR a sleeping bag
- Garbage Bag or 2 for dirty clothes

**Personal Care Items**
- 1 Towel (bath size)
- 1 Wash cloth
- 1 Toothbrush and toothpaste
- 1 Bar of soap
- 1 Comb or hairbrush
- 1 Small box of facial tissue
- Shampoo/Cream Rinse

**Optional Items:**
- Bedroom Slippers
- Pillow (not furnished)
- Flip Flops / Shower shoes
- Bathrobe (for travel to & from showers)

**Clothing**
- 1 Heavy jacket, coat or sweater
- 1 Heavy cotton or wool flannel shirt
- 1 Lightweight long sleeve shirt
- 3 – 4 Pairs of jeans, cords, heavy trousers or slacks
- 1 Pair of shorts (for around campus)
- 1 Pair of pajamas
- 3 – 4 T-shirts
- 5 pair of underwear
- 10 Pairs of socks
- 2 Pairs of shoes (tennis shoes are satisfactory)
- 1 Raincoat / rain poncho (It can rain at any time of year)
- Swim suit for showers
- wool or warm hat

**Do Not Bring:**
- Candy or Snacks (Food is not allowed in the cabins)
- Knives
- Comic books
- Hatchets

- iPods / CD Players
- Game Boys / Electronic Games
- Cell Phones / Pagers
- Money
- Curling Irons
Marin County Outdoor School

Walker Creek Ranch

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Notice to parents of students attending the Marin County Outdoor School regarding the Prevention of the H1N1 Virus

We look forward to sharing a great week with your students at the Marin County Outdoor School. In an effort to maximize student health and safety during their stay, we are requesting that parents assist us with the prevention of H1N1 virus by taking the following measures:

☐ Please do not send students (or Cabin Leaders) to the outdoor school who are exhibiting flu like symptoms (including fever over 100 degrees, sore throat, cough, etc.). Students who have recently exhibited flu like symptoms should remain at home until they are free of fever for at least 24 hours without fever reducing medicines.

☐ Should your child exhibit flu like symptoms during their stay, be prepared to pick them up immediately from the Outdoor School.

For your information, specific training on the prevention of H1N1 has been provided by a Marin County Office of Education school nurse to our food services, custodial, instructional and management staff regarding precautions recommended by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the California Department of Public Health for schools to help protect students and staff. In accordance with this training, the following measures have been implemented:

☐ Cabin Leader and Teacher Orientations include a strong emphasis on the importance of requiring and monitoring hand washing and respiratory etiquette, for all students and staff. Instructional staff also emphasize and reinforce this with students in their trail groups.

☐ Campus wide distribution of hand sanitizer dispensers to all classrooms, meeting areas, Teacher’s Lodge, Dining Hall, etc...

☐ High touch areas such as door knobs, toilet handles, sink and shower faucet handles in the Dining Hall, Bath House, Infirmary, Teacher’s Lodge are cleaned, wiped and disinfected three times per day. All dormitory high touch areas are cleaned / disinfected at least daily.

☐ Disposable wipes are stocked in the Teacher’s Lodge / Infirmary, and Office.

☐ Recognition and isolation of students / staff who exhibit flu like symptoms. These students / staff are sent home, and separate lodging is available if needed, while waiting for parent pick up. Masks are also stocked and on-hand to be worn by students / staff exhibiting flu like symptoms as needed.

We appreciate your understanding and support of our efforts to provide a safe and enjoyable experience for all of the students attending the Marin County Outdoor School. If you have any further questions or suggestions regarding student health and safety at Walker Creek Ranch please feel free to contact us directly at (415) 491-6600.

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