

# Marin County Office of Education

## Walker Creek Ranch Employee Handbook

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**MARIN COUNTY**  
**OFFICE OF EDUCATION**  
Supporting Learning for ALL Students

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# Introduction

Welcome to [Walker Creek Ranch](#) (WCR), a program of the Marin County Office of Education (MCOE). This supplemental handbook accompanies the [MCOE Employee Handbook](#) and provides information and guidance specific to employees who work at WCR. The document extends MCOE's major policies and values while reflecting the unique environment and responsibilities of working at the Ranch.

All employees at WCR are expected to follow the policies, procedures, and standards outlined in both this handbook and the MCOE Employee Handbook, as well as the [California School Employees Association Walker Creek Ranch Collective Bargaining Agreement](#) (CSEA-WCR CBA), [Superintendent Policies](#) (SPs), the [Personnel Commission Handbook](#), and employees residing on-site are also subject to the Walker Creek Ranch Housing Agreement.

WCR is an MCOE-owned facility that serves as both an outdoor education center and a conference venue. Since 1990, the Ranch has welcomed thousands of students and guests each year for outdoor learning programs, retreats, conferences, reunions, and community events. The Ranch's mission aligns with MCOE's commitment to educational excellence, environmental stewardship, and community connection.

As a member of the WCR team, you contribute to creating meaningful experiences that inspire learning, foster belonging, and connect people to nature and one another. Whether serving in outdoor education, hospitality, food services, or operations, each employee plays an important role in supporting safe, inclusive, and memorable experiences for our students and guests.

The MCOE is here to support every WCR employee. If you have questions about the policies or procedures described in this handbook, please contact your supervisor or the MCOE Personnel/HR Department.

## Walker Creek Ranch Employment

### Guidelines and Policies

Employees at Walker Creek Ranch (WCR) are expected to uphold the same standards of professionalism, integrity, and conduct that apply to all Marin County Office of Education (MCOE) employees. The policies and procedures outlined in this supplemental handbook address work practices and expectations specific to Ranch operations.

All employees, students, visitors, and guests are required to comply with all municipal, state, and federal laws. Walker Creek Ranch maintains a zero-tolerance policy for illegal activity and the possession or use of illegal substances. Employees engaging in such activity are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination, and may also face prosecution under applicable law.

Employees who reside on-site are responsible for ensuring that their guests follow all Ranch policies and safety requirements. Guests are expected to respect the property, operations, and community standards of Walker Creek Ranch.

These guidelines support MCOE's commitment to maintaining a safe, professional, and inclusive workplace where every employee contributes to a positive and respectful environment for students, guests, and colleagues.

#### [SP 4019.21 Professional Standards](#)

Refer to the MCOE Employee Handbook: Professional Standards and Conduct

## Hours of Work

Supervisors establish work calendars and hours of employment, including break schedules, for all employees. Work schedules and shifts are determined by program needs and remain consistent with the [Walker Creek Ranch Collective Bargaining Agreement](#) (CSEA-WCR CBA).

Weekly schedules are typically posted by Wednesday for the following week. Adjustments may occur with at least 72 hours' notice when unforeseen circumstances arise.

A standard workweek includes five days within the Sunday–Saturday period.

If an employee needs to leave the worksite during scheduled hours, prior approval must be obtained from their supervisor.

## Overtime

Overtime work at Walker Creek Ranch (WCR) is occasionally necessary to support programs, special events, or operational needs. Supervisors are encouraged to schedule work within regular hours whenever possible, and overtime is authorized only when required to meet program or public service obligations.

Hourly employees may become eligible for overtime when work exceeds established thresholds, including

- more than ten hours in a single day,
- more than forty hours within a Sunday–Saturday workweek,
- more than five days in a workweek,
- or five consecutive days of work.

Under these circumstances, work performed on a sixth or seventh consecutive day is compensated at the applicable overtime rate.

All overtime requires prior approval from a supervisor or the Ranch Director. Compensation and the use of compensatory time off follow the provisions outlined in the [Walker Creek Ranch Collective Bargaining Agreement](#) (CSEA-WCR CBA) and relevant sections of the Education Code.

## Staff Overnight Policy

Non-residential employees who work consecutive late evening and early morning shifts may stay overnight in designated Ranch accommodations when lodging is available, and advance approval has been granted by the Ranch Director or designee.

Occasional overnight stays outside of this condition may be permitted on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the Ranch Director or designee. Overnight lodging is intended to support operational needs and ensure staff safety during extended or back-to-back shifts.

Employees staying overnight are expected to respect shared spaces, follow all established facility guidelines, and maintain a professional standard of conduct consistent with Marin County Office of Education (MCOE) expectations.

These arrangements reinforce WCR's commitment to employee safety, program continuity, and the responsible use of housing resources.

[Requirements for Staff Overnights at Walker Creek Ranch](#)

## Workplace Conduct and Professional Standards

### Alcohol

Walker Creek Ranch (WCR) maintains a professional environment consistent with the Marin County Office of Education's (MCOE) commitment to a drug- and alcohol-free workplace. The possession or consumption of alcohol on school property or during student programming is prohibited.

Employees are prohibited from consuming alcohol or being under the influence while on duty on the WCR premises. The consumption of alcohol by individuals under the age of 21 is prohibited in all circumstances.

Off-duty employees and guests who are of legal drinking age may consume alcohol responsibly within private residential areas or during approved conference or event activities, provided such consumption occurs outside of student programs and does not interfere with work responsibilities, public safety, or the professional standards of the MCOE.

The MCOE reserves the right to take disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, for violations of this policy or any related laws and regulations.

[SP 4020 Drug and Alcohol-Free Workplace](#)

Refer to the MCOE Employee Handbook: Drug-Free, Alcohol-Free, Tobacco-Free, and Smoke-Free Workplace

## Tobacco

Walker Creek Ranch (WCR) follows the Marin County Office of Education's (MCOE) Smoke-Free Workplace Policy, which prohibits the use of tobacco products on all MCOE-owned or operated properties, including the WCR property. Smoking includes the use of any tobacco or nicotine-based products such as cigarettes, cigars, pipes, chewing tobacco, e-cigarettes, and other electronic smoking devices.

Employees who choose to use tobacco products are expected to do so only off-site or in designated residential areas assigned to staff housing and outside of student or guest activity spaces. The use of tobacco products is not permitted during work hours or in areas visible to students, campers, or visitors.

This policy supports MCOE's ongoing commitment to providing a safe and healthy environment for students, guests, and staff, consistent with state and federal workplace safety laws.

[BP 3513.3 Tobacco-Free Schools and Facilities](#)

[SP 4020 Drug and Alcohol-Free Workplace](#)

Refer to the MCOE Employee Handbook: Drug-Free, Alcohol-Free, Tobacco-Free, and Smoke-Free Workplace

## Internet and Social Media Use

Employees at Walker Creek Ranch (WCR) are expected to use discretion and professionalism when engaging in online activity that is consistent with the Marin County Office of Education's (MCOE) policies on confidentiality, student privacy, and appropriate boundaries. Personal and professional conduct in online spaces reflects on WCR, the MCOE, and the broader educational community.

Employees are cautioned that online activity – including public profiles, comments, photos, and shared content – can be viewed by parents, students, campers, colleagues, and community members. Employees are encouraged to maintain a professional and respectful online presence that reflects integrity and good judgment and furthers confidence in their ability to perform their role.

Photographs, videos, or other digital media depicting students, campers, or program participants are not to be posted or shared on personal or public websites, including social networking platforms, without written authorization from a supervisor.

Personal contact with students or campers under 18 years of age through social media sites, texting, phone calls, email, or other forms of direct communication outside of work-related settings is not permitted.

Violations of confidentiality, privacy, or boundary expectations may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

This policy aligns with MCOE's standards of professional conduct and supports a safe, respectful, and educationally focused environment for all students and participants.

[SP 4019.21 Professional Standards](#)

[SP 4019.23 Unauthorized Release of Confidential/Privileged Information](#)

[EC 49076](#)

[SP 4019.24 Maintaining Appropriate Adult-Student Interactions](#)

[SP 4040 Acceptable Use of Technology](#)

Refer to the MCOE Employee Handbook: Technology Use, Student Confidentiality, Conflict of Interest, Professional Standards and Conduct, and Professional Boundaries

## Walker Creek Ranch Property Safety

Public nudity, possession of firearms, and the use of fireworks are strictly prohibited on WCR property. These restrictions apply to all employees, residents, visitors, and guests at all times.

These expectations reinforce MCOE's dedication to providing a secure and welcoming environment that prioritizes the well-being of everyone on site and complies with local, state, and federal safety regulations.

Refer to the MCOE Employee Handbook: Health, Safety, and Workplace Environment

## Walker Creek Ranch Footwear Requirements

Consistent with the Professional Appearance and Personal Care Standards section of the MCOE Employee Handbook as related to safety, WCR staff must wear closed-toed and closed-heeled shoes that fit tightly on the foot when working on trails, moving about campus, or performing kitchen, maintenance, and/or conference duties. Open-heeled Croc-type clogs that do not fit tightly on the foot are not allowed. Sport sandals (Teva, Chaco), Croc-type shoes, or water shoes are appropriate only while lifeguarding.

[SP 4019.22 Professional Appearance and Personal Care Standards](#)

Refer to the MCOE Employee Handbook: Professional Appearance and Personal Care Standards

# Operations and Use of Facilities

## Food Use Policy

Walker Creek Ranch (WCR) provides meals as part of the educational and hospitality programs offered at the Ranch. Employees working during a scheduled shift may consume available leftovers after student or guest meal service during their designated meal break.

Outdoor Education Naturalists and Interns receive the same meals that are provided during the Outdoor School program. When available, leftover food from the last day of service may be made accessible to Interns staying on-site for the weekend. These items are to be collected by noon on Friday. Any remaining food that does not meet safe health standards will be composted and repurposed.

Employees are not permitted to remove food or supplies from WCR for personal use.

Conference buffet lines are reserved for guests; however, available leftovers from meal services

may be accessed by employees once placed on the kitchen counter. Leftovers remain accessible for 15 minutes before being properly stored in the designated reach-in refrigerator.

Work-related guests may occasionally be authorized to participate in meal service when prior arrangements have been made with the Food Services Manager.

## Equipment and Supplies Use Policy

Equipment, tools, and supplies at Walker Creek Ranch (WCR) are designated exclusively for work-related purposes that support educational programs, operational needs, and the maintenance of the Ranch property.

Ranch tools and equipment are to remain on the property and are not to be used for personal projects or non-work purposes. Supplies such as custodial materials, kitchen goods, and operational items are intended solely for WCR business and are not to be taken off-site or used for personal benefit.

When equipment or supplies become obsolete or are no longer functional, disposal procedures follow the guidelines established by the Marin County Office of Education (MCOE). Surplus items are handled in accordance with MCOE policies governing the sale and disposal of property.

These practices ensure proper care of public resources, maintain accountability, and support the continued efficiency of Ranch operations.

### BP 3270 Sale and Disposal of Books, Equipment, and Supplies

Refer to the MCOE Employee Handbook: Facilities and Office Operations

## Use of Trails by MCOE Employees

Marin County Office of Education (MCOE) employees are welcome to enjoy the trails at Walker Creek Ranch (WCR) outside of work hours when arrangements have been coordinated in advance with the Ranch Director or designee. Trail use is subject to program scheduling and safety considerations, and access may be limited when outdoor school or conference programs are in session.

All visitors are required to sign in and out at the Ranch office before entering or leaving the trail system. Trails are to be used in a manner that respects the natural environment, ongoing programming, and the safety of all participants on the property.

## Pond Use

Pond access at Walker Creek Ranch (WCR) is available to staff members, residents, and accompanying guests, both while lifeguard(s) are on duty and off duty.

Prior to using the pond, staff members and residents are required to complete a pond use orientation that covers applicable procedures, safety expectations, and established rules. Additionally, visitors are required to sign a waiver annually before accessing the pond, and if

guests are under the age of 18, a parent or guardian is required to provide a written authorization through the waiver process.

All posted pond rules apply during use, including designated swim areas, personal flotation device requirements for boats, and appropriate use of equipment. Staff members and residents remain present with accompanying guests throughout pond use and hold responsibility for guest conduct.

Pond use is scheduled in a manner that does not interfere with student programming, conferences, or other guest activities. Alcohol consumption is not permitted during pond use at any time.

## Unauthorized Visitors

Employees are encouraged to remain aware of unfamiliar individuals on Walker Creek Ranch (WCR) property and to promote a secure environment through professional and courteous communication. When an individual appears to be on the grounds without a clear purpose or official business, the matter should be promptly reported to a supervisor or Ranch Director.

Additionally, any situation that appears suspicious or unsafe should be referred immediately to the Ranch Director or designee.

[BP 1250 Visitors/Outsiders](#)

[Public Access to MCOE Buildings](#)

Refer to the MCOE Employee Handbook: Public Access to MCOE Facilities and Buildings