

**Laurel Public Schools  
Student Transportation  
Handbook  
2024-2025**

**406-628-7630**  
**[www.laurel.k12.mt.us](http://www.laurel.k12.mt.us)**

## **Student Transportation Policy #8100**

Transportation by school bus is not mandatory. This service is provided for those who wish to ride under the terms set up. Riding the school bus is a privilege and NOT a "right" and the privilege can be revoked at any time due to misconduct.

The following information for parents and students states the regulations governing riding. Rules are for the safety of students and must be followed. Non-compliance may be met by refusal to transport. It is expected that all concerned will read this handbook. In case there are questions, please call for an explanation in order that there be no misunderstanding.

Information regarding school bus service may be obtained by calling:

Zada Stamper  
Transportation Director  
300 East Maryland  
Laurel, MT 59044  
(406)628-7630

The district may provide transportation to and from school for a student who:

1. Resides three (3) or more miles, over the shortest practical route, from the nearest operating public elementary or public high school;
  2. Is a student with a disability, whose IEP identifies transportation as a related service;
- or
3. Has another compelling and legally sufficient reason to receive transportation services.

Service given to those students who reside within three (3) miles of school will be given on the basis of the distance they reside from school and identified safety concerns for walkers.

The bus operation will be similar to the plan followed last year. Buses which meet the State Highway Patrol Inspection are used and drivers are certified according to the regulations of the State Department of Public Instruction.

These procedures are not in place to create a hardship on parents or guardians. They are in place to provide for the safety of all students who are transported by Laurel Public Schools. They will not supersede, but are in addition to all Board adopted policies, and school level student handbooks as the bus is an extension of the classroom.

We carry the most precious cargo in the world: our children. We ask that you appreciate the efforts being put forth to care for your children and to cooperate with school administrators/directors in their pursuit of safe transportation.



## **Title IX**

Title IX is a federal civil rights law passed as part of the Education Amendments of 1972 in the United States, which states: "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." This law applies to all public education institutions.

Laurel Public Schools takes violations of Title IX very seriously and will investigate all complaints immediately. If you feel your student has been the victim of a Title IX violation, whereas the harassment or discrimination is sexual in nature, you are urged to immediately reach out to your school principal or the Title IX Coordinator. When a school receives a complaint that could be a potential violation of Title IX, it is required to act promptly and effectively to investigate and resolve the complaint. The school's actions must be in compliance with Title IX regulations and guidance from the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) and District Policy 3225.

Here are the steps our district takes upon receiving such a complaint:

1. Immediate Action: The school takes immediate action to ensure that the parties are safe. This might involve temporary measures such as changing class schedules or providing extra support. The school will notify the Title IX Coordinator.
2. Formal Investigation: The Title IX Coordinator will initiate a formal investigation into the complaint. This investigation will be fair, impartial, and provide both parties an opportunity to present their side of the story and any evidence they have. If the Title IX Coordinator deems that it does not rise to the level of Title IX, the matter will be forwarded to the principal of the school for a Code of Conduct violation.
3. Resolution Process: Based on the investigation, the Title IX Decision Maker will determine whether a Title IX violation occurred. The determination will be based on a preponderance of the evidence (whether it is more likely than not that a violation occurred).
4. Taking Action: If a Title IX violation has occurred, the district will take appropriate action to stop the discrimination, prevent its recurrence, and remedy its effects. This may include disciplinary actions against the respondent, providing support services to the parties, and implementing school-wide training or policy changes, if necessary.
5. Right to Appeal: Both parties will be informed of the outcome of the investigation and will have the right to appeal the decision if the conditions of appeal are met as outlined in District Policy 3225.

Title IX Coordinator

Peggy Pollock

peggy\_pollock@laurel.k12.mt.us

406-628-3360, ext. 3352

Visit our district website ([www.laurel.k12.mt.us](http://www.laurel.k12.mt.us)) for more information. Click on 'Title IX' on the quick links menu.

## **Registration of Riders**

Each student must be registered as a bus rider before they can ride a school bus. The Laurel Transportation Department Student Bus Rider Registration Form is available on the school website ([www.laurel.k12.mt.us](http://www.laurel.k12.mt.us)) click on Departments then Transportation). Online registration is the only option, if you need assistance, please contact the Transportation Director. Address must match those on Infinite Campus. Parents/Guardian must complete this form and return it to the transportation office. Your electronic-signature on the Registration Form acknowledges that you have been advised where to locate the Laurel Public Schools Student Transportation Handbook, and that you and your student will comply with the rider policies which have been approved by the LPS Board of Trustees.

## **Transportation Transfer and Route**

Students will ride only their assigned bus. Students will only get on and off the bus at their assigned stop. Permission may be granted to ride another bus or get off at another stop on a case-by-case basis and only in an emergency. An Emergency Rider Waiver form must be filled out and approved by **both** the building **Principals** and **Transportation Director** before changes are permitted.

In town students will have the option of riding as a school-to-school transfer rider. A school-to-school transfer rider is a student who rides in the morning, from the school closest to his or her home to the school he or she is enrolled in for the school day and to return in the evening from the school he or she attends to the school that is closest to his or her home. Students riding transfer buses inside the no ride zone from one school to another may only ride to their designated school. Students will not ride the bus to a stop outside of the no ride zone unless an Emergency Rider Waiver has been granted.

## **Responsibility—Parent**

The interest and assistance of each parent is a valued asset to the transportation program. Parents' efforts toward making each bus trip a safe and pleasant experience are requested and appreciated. The following suggestions are only three of the many ways' parents can assist:

1. Ensure that students are at the bus stop in sufficient time to efficiently meet the bus.
2. Properly prepare children for weather conditions
3. Encourage school bus safety at home. Caution children regarding safe behavior and conduct.
4. Register for the Parent App.



## **Responsibilities- Students**

Students must realize that safety is based on group conduct. Talk should be in conversational tones at all times. There should be no shouting or loud talking which may distract the bus driver. The student should instantly obey all commands or suggestions from the driver and/or his/her bus aide.

## **Bus Rules:**

The violation of any of the following rules will place the student into the bus discipline system. THE BUS DRIVER IS IN CHARGE OF THEIR BUS (just like the teacher in a classroom).

1. No cell phones will be allowed out of the student's backpack while on a school bus. This includes watches and other electronic devices. The school bus is just a classroom on wheels and follows the same rules.
2. Students should be respectful to the driver, aide, and other students while riding the bus. Language and gestures should be the same on the bus as it is in the classroom.
3. Students will be assigned a seat. Changes to the seat assignments can be discussed with your driver and approved by the Transportation Director. Seating charts are kept for safety reasons.
4. Students shall ride only their assigned bus. Students will only be allowed to get on or off at their assigned stop location. Permission may be granted to ride another bus or get on or off at another location on a case-by-case basis. This requires a parent/guardian signed form and approved by both the Principal and Transportation Director before a change can take place.
5. When requested by the driver or aide, students need to immediately and correctly identify themselves.
6. Students need to arrive at the bus stop at least five (5) minutes prior to the designated bus pick-up times and wait in a safe and orderly manner out of the roadway and off private property. Students are asked to wait to approach the bus until it has come to a complete stop and are signaled by the driver to board the bus.
7. Please enter and leave the bus in an orderly manner in view of the driver. If they must cross the road, do so in front of the bus (never behind it) and wait for the driver to signal the student when it is safe to cross.
8. For the safety of our students, we ask that they remain properly seated (seat to seat & back-to-back) facing the front of the bus at all times. No standing, moving seats, facing backward, sitting on knees, sitting on backpack or other personal items.
9. If seatbelts are provided, please wear them and wear them correctly. It is for your safety that we enforce this rule. Wearing the shoulder strap behind you is not safe.
10. For the extended safety of our students' head, hands, arms or any other body part needs to be kept inside the bus at all times whether the bus is in motion or parked.
11. The school bus (including the bus seats) is considered District Property. Students/families are responsible for damage to the school buses resulting from student misconduct.
12. Students will refrain from excessive noise, shouting, boisterous behavior, fighting, vulgar or obscene language or gestures, racial or sexual harassment, sexual misconduct and bullying.
13. Students must not have anything in their possession that might cause injury to another, no weapons of any kind, including but not limited to knives, guns, sharps, fighting gear, etc.
14. No smoking, vaping, chewing, or spitting of tobacco or use of any type of flame or sparking devices. Illegal substances or alcoholic materials or their paraphernalia are not allowed on the school buses.
15. For safety reasons (choking and allergies) food and drink are not permissible, this includes gum, candy, pop, pastries, other types of food or confectionaries. In hot weather a water bottle with water is permitted. Exceptions to this rule only apply to documented medical needs.
16. Bus aisles must be kept clear per state law. Large items which cannot be held in the student's lap will need to be transported by other means; this includes large band instruments and football bags.

# Bus Rules

- ◆ Everyone has an assigned seat! Be safe and sit back-to-back and seat to seat.
- ◆ Be respectful to the driver, aide and other students. Language and gestures should be the same as in the classroom.
- ◆ Seat belts will help keep you safe, please wear them correctly.
- ◆ For your safety keep your head, hands, arms, or any other body part inside the bus.
- ◆ Cell phones and other electronic devices are not allowed out on the bus.
- ◆ Quiet Zone at all Railroad Crossing!
- ◆ Be safe, please no food or drink on the bus (e.g., suckers, gum)
- ◆ Be on time and stay clear of the “Danger Zone”.



# Transportation Consequence Grid

We will return to Level 1 after 30 calendar days for students in grades K-2 and 45 calendar days for students in grades 3-12.

Offense - # of occurrences	1	2	3	4	5
Disruptive Behavior including inappropriate interactions with students, talking loudly	Warning including discipline referral and parent/guardian contact	3 Day suspension from the bus	5 day suspension from the bus	10 day suspension from the bus	Loss of privilege to ride the bus
Inappropriate Behavior					
Failure to wear seatbelt/correctly					
Boarding or disembarking improperly					
Lack of cooperation with bus driver and/or bus Aide					
Rude, inappropriate language					
Possession of inappropriate materials					
Mo ving or being seated improperly while the bus is in motion including being out of assigned seat					

**Level II**

**Offense- # of occurrences**

Fighting or non-mutual physical aggression, verbal or physical peer to peer conflict	1	2
Harassment/Intimidation		
Flagrant, vulgar, deliberate misbehavior; racial or gender slurs; misbehavior on a trip	1	2
gross disrespect of Faculty/Staff		

**Level III**

**Offense- # of occurrences**

Open and persistent defiance/profane insubordination	Loss of privilege to ride the bus
Indecent exposure of self or others	
Use or possession of alcohol, other illegal drugs, look alike drugs, or drug paraphernalia, including tobacco/vaping materials	
Threatening behavior (written, verbal, or physical)	
Possession of inappropriate dangerous materials	

**Transportation Director has the authority to place student on the grid according to offenses not specifically listed. This grid is a guide and not designed to be all-inclusive.**

## **Safety and Emergency Procedures:**

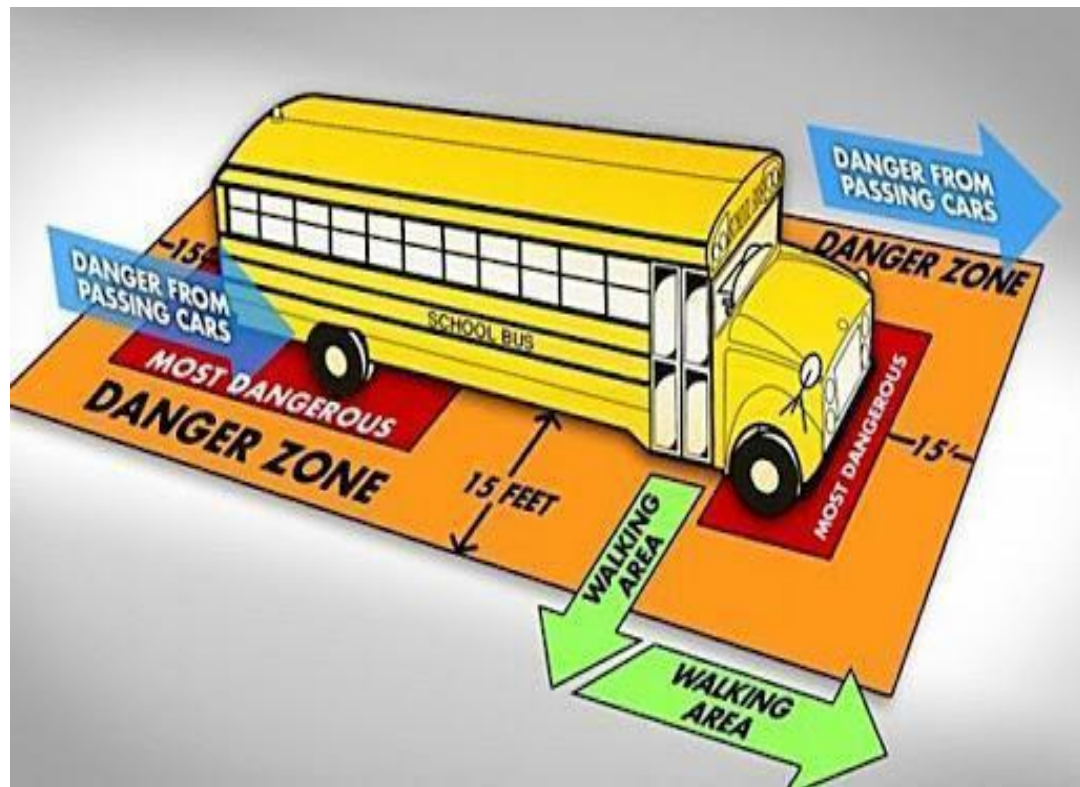
The Superintendent or designated representative will be responsible for canceling school bus routes due to inclement weather. The District will send an "All-Call" to households of bus students and notify the media. Bus service suspension will be for one (1) day at a time due to the weather; it will automatically begin the following day unless there is another announcement suspending the service. There will be no notices sent.

Priority will be given to getting rural students home safely during extreme weather conditions. If buses are to return early due to either a threatening storm or blowing and drifting snow, parents/guardians or emergency contacts of students will be notified before the students are released. Middle School and High School students will be dismissed at the same time as the elementary students. If a road is closed during the morning, it will be assumed closed during the evening run also unless the road has been opened by County DOT or MTDOT. If the road is impassable, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to make other arrangements for their student(s) to get home safely.

In the event that weather conditions become so severe after school has been in session that attempting to run buses poses a threat to the safety of children, buses will be grounded until it is safe for travel. The district will help make provisions for housing students until conditions allow bus travel or until parent/guardian is able to pick up the student.

### **During all driving conditions, the bus driver has the final say.**

Few aspects of school bus loading and unloading are more dangerous than the appropriately named "danger zone". The danger zone includes areas near the bus where students cannot be directly seen by the bus driver, and where incidents involving other vehicles are most likely to occur. The danger zone can be considered up to 10 feet from the bus in any direction, with the most dangerous areas being the immediate front of the bus as well as anywhere within arm's reach of the back half of the bus. Please help keep your students safe by reviewing with them the danger zone areas of their bus.



Visiting our webpage off and on, will help keep you and your students up to date with the Laurel Transportation Department.

Take the time to watch our bus safety videos or meet our drivers. Communication is always welcomed so please call us at 406-628-7630. Let's have a great year and remember to stop for all buses when the red lights and stop signs are out...**students are near!!**

