

Laurel Middle School

Student Activities Handbook

Revised June 2026



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Mission Statement

To provide student-athletes the best possible education-based athletic experience through the invested stakeholders of the Laurel Public Schools District.

Philosophy of the Activities Department

Athletics are an integral part of the district's program of education to provide experiences that will develop students physically, mentally, socially, and emotionally. By creating tomorrow's future one student-athlete at a time.

Participation in athletics is a privilege that carries with it responsibilities to the school, the team, the coaches, the community, and the student.

The rules of the Laurel Public Schools, the Montana High School Association (MHSA), and the Eastern 'A' Conference shall apply to all interscholastic activities. In addition, the Laurel Middle School Student Handbook policies shall govern any topics not listed in this handbook. Other district policies shall govern any issues not listed in either handbook.

Sports Offered

- Fall Sports
 - Football 7th and 8th grade
 - Volleyball 7th and 8th grade
 - Cross Country 6th, 7th, and 8th grade
 - Softball 6th, 7th, and 8th grade
- Winter Sports
 - Girls Basketball 6th, 7th and 8th grade
 - Boys Basketball 6th, 7th and 8th grade
 - Wrestling 6th, 7th, and 8th grade
- Spring Sport
 - Track 7th and 8th grade

Athletic Eligibility

Montana High School Association Eligibility All rules and regulations of the Montana High School Association may be found in the MHSA Handbook for the current year. Below are summaries of the regulations dealt with most often.

Enrollment/Attendance: To be eligible to participate in an Association Contest, a student must be regularly enrolled in school, must be in regular attendance from the enrollment date, and received a passing grade in at least twenty periods of prepared classwork or its equivalent in the last previous semester, at the school where the student participates.

Non-public or home school eligibility: students who meet the requirements of MHSA policy 20-5-109 can participate in Laurel Public Schools extra-curricular activities with the following stipulations:

1) The same standards for participation must be met as those required of full-time students enrolled in the school (besides enrollment).

2) The same rules of the MHSA apply, including age, semesters, academics (see #3) and transfer. Only enrollment is waived.

3) The academic eligibility for extracurricular participation for a student attending a non-public school must be attested by the head administrator of the non-public school. The academic eligibility for extra-curricular participation for students attending a home school must be attested in writing by the educator providing the student instruction with verification by the Laurel Middle School principal.

4) The student must live in the LPS attendance area in order to participate.

5) A home school or non-public school student who participates at LPS is not eligible to concurrently participate in the same sport/activity that he/she participates in at the member school in any other league (non-public or home school).

Academic Policy

Students in grades 6TH, 7TH, and 8TH grade are eligible for all extra-curricular involvement including sports and clubs by meeting the following requirements:

- Students in grades 6, 7, and 8 are eligible for activities/sports if they are in regular attendance and no “Fs”.
- Grade checks will be performed Monday morning, students will have until the end of the day to raise the grade(s).
 - If they are not off the F list, by the end of the school day on Monday, they will not be allowed to participate in any events until the following grade check.
- Students on the ICU list will be required to go to the ICU Rescue Room daily for one half hour before school, during lunch, or after school until they are off the ICU list. With a note signed by the ICU Rescue Room staff, a student may be allowed into practice or a team meeting and is considered excused.
- Students on the ICU list on Wednesday will be required to go to the ICU Rescue Room from 2:30-3:45. With a note signed by the ICU Rescue Room staff, a student may be allowed into practice or a team meeting and is considered excused.
- All 6th, 7th, and 8th grade 4th quarter grades will carry over to determine eligibility for fall activities.
 - A grade check will occur 3 weeks into school to determine eligibility for the remainder of the fall sport season.
- All athletes must have a signed pledge form on file in the school office for each school year or they will not be eligible to participate in practices or events . A student will only have to sign one athletic pledge sheet for the school year.
- If Students get a major write up that results in ISS or OSS the student will not be able to participate in current week's events or events or the next game or event in the case there isn't one that week.
- After the second major write up that results in ISS or OSS the student will be removed from the team.
- The athlete needs to be able to participate in the practice the day before the game. In order for the student to participate in practice the student needs to be present in all classes. Student athletes also need to be present in all classes to be able to participate in the next day's games if morning practice takes place.
- If a student does not participate in Physical Education PE, they are not eligible to participate in extracurricular activities or events until participation in PE resumes.

- All 8th graders playing on High School teams under Laurel Public Schools 8th grade protocol must adhere to all middle school rules and regulations for athletic eligibility

Laurel Schools Eligibility

All students meeting the eligibility requirements of the Montana High School Association and the local requirements of Laurel Middle School are eligible to compete in extra-curricular activities.

In general, students are eligible by meeting the following requirements and the Montana High School Association regulations, Laurel High School/Middle School student handbook, and student pledge:

1. Students are in regular attendance and are enrolled in and receiving a passing grade in all subjects.
2. 4th quarter grades will carry over to determine eligibility for Fall Sports.
3. Students may apply to play a sport that misses the start of the season within **10** practice days. Transfers eligible for participation may start a sport at any reasonable time if the Admin Team agrees.
4. 8th graders are eligible to participate in HS sports if the Activities Director and Coach deemed numbers are needed to fill competition squads. Activities Director and Coaches will follow the current 8th Grade Participation protocol approved through the school district.

Ineligibility WILL affect playing time, may lead to missing events, or removal from the team.

Absences

Students absent during the day and/or part of the day of an activity or practice will not be permitted to participate in that event. If a student is absent the afternoon before a weekend or holiday, they may be permitted to take part in the activity during that weekend or holiday with the consent of the parent/guardian, the administration, and the head coach or group advisor of the event. On overnight trips when the team leaves before a holiday, students who are absent on the day before may not be allowed to accompany the team. Approval for participation will be considered if the absence in question results from a previously scheduled medical/dental appointment, an appointment that satisfies the requirements of the law, attendance at a school related activity, or if the absence results from some family emergency as deemed excusable by the coaches and/or administration. A student will not be excused from assigned detention time or Saturday School for a practice or school activity. This policy does not apply to band and choir concerts as they are a required part of the curriculum.

Excused absences are not limited, but may result in less playing time or being removed from the team.

Absences will only be excused for the following reasons:

Excused Absences

- Illness (After 3 excused absences due to illness all other absences due to illness must have a doctor's note).
- Family emergency/doctor's appointments (with note submitted to office)
- Academic reasons (i.e. getting help from a teacher/makeup work/test must have signed note)

Unexcused absences (examples, but not limited to)

- Haircut
- Babysitting
- Tardiness in classes (**10 minutes or later to any class**)

If you are going to be gone for family reasons please let a coach know at least 3 days ahead by sending a note signed by the parent/guardian.

Any student who is absent from any part of the school day cannot practice or participate in a game, unless they have doctor's appointments, school-related activities, or family emergencies.

If you are injured, you are still required to attend practice. It is important that you at least see the drills and procedure and hear any announcements.

On game days, if you are sick or have a family emergency, please get a hold of one of the coaches as soon as possible. So we know you are not going to be riding the bus or participating in the game.

- Any excused absence = potential decreased playing time
- 1st and 2nd unexcused absence = missing the next event
- 3rd and 4th unexcused absences = missing the next 2 event
- 5th unexcused absences = removal from the team

Students Arriving Home Late

1. Students arriving home after midnight are expected to be in school that day. Any exceptions must go through the activities director or principal.

Participation Conflicts

1. Activity performances take precedence over practices with no undue pressure of threat or threat of exclusion by either coach/sponsor in the event of a conflict.
2. In the event of performance conflicts between Laurel Public School Activities, the student will be allowed to choose with no undue pressure or threat.
3. 8th grade HS athletic participants involved in the postseason will take precedence over regular season activities.

Responsibility for Equipment Return

The student must agree to be responsible for the safe return or replacement of all athletic and/or activity equipment issued by the school. Students are financially responsible for lost items.

Notification of Parent/Guardians

Parents/guardians need to be notified by the coach when a given discipline action or other failure on the athlete's part will have a substantial or unexpected impact on the athlete's playing time.

Travel

You must follow all of the rules of the bus including

- Staying in your seat
- Keeping voices to a conversational volume
- Keeping the bus clean
- Respecting others
- Keeping all hands, feet, and garbage in the bus
- Cell phones are at coaches' discretion

The bus will leave as scheduled, so remember to be early. If you are not on the bus when it is time to leave, you will be left.

Players must ride the bus to the game. If you miss the bus and come up on your own, you will not be allowed to play in the game. If you just don't show up, it will be counted as an unexcused absence.

While visiting other schools, you are expected and required to represent Laurel in a positive manner. Do not leave the building without permission from the coach!

For an athlete to ride home from an out of town match with a parent/guardian, the parent/guardian must sign a parent release form in front of the coach. Once the release is signed, we are no longer responsible for the player. If other arrangements need to be made, the Athletic Director at the high school must be contacted to get permission for a player to ride home with anyone other than a parent or legal guardian.

Practice Policies

- Must attend all practices
 - Unless approved to miss or be late by the head coach. (reasons for missing: doctor's appointments, school field trip, school event, family emergency)
 - Any excused absence = potential decreased playing time or participation in event
 - 1st and 2nd unexcused absence = missing the next event
 - 3rd and 4th unexcused absences = missing the next 2 event
 - 5th unexcused absences = removal from the team
- Practice will start on time - show up prepared.
- If you are not going to be at practice an email needs to be sent to the coach.
- Appropriately dressed
 - T-shirt (no tank tops)
 - Shorts (school appropriate length)
 - Gym shoes only worn inside
- Show up ready to learn with a positive attitude.

- Everyone is responsible for equipment.
- NO CELL PHONES at practice or in the locker rooms. Respect the privacy of others.
- Make sure that the gym is clean of all garbage when you leave practice and home events.
- Take pride in your school and pick up after yourself.

Playing Time

- All playtime is determined by coaches
- While we love having parents at events for support, we are a team and so support needs to be for all athletes on our team.
- If an issue needs to be addressed
 - The Student-Athlete needs to come to the coaches first.
 - If the issue is not resolved a meeting with parents can be set up at an appropriate time.
(at least 24 hrs after the event)

Bench Conduct

- When you come in and out of the game, **HUSTLE!**
- Be prepared to sit next to the coach for instructions.
- There is no pouting, crying, slamming of the seats, or any unbecoming behavior on the bench during the game or in the stands after the game.
- If you are taken out or not playing, show support for your teammates. Treat one another as you would like to be treated. Other behaviors will not be tolerated.
- Be kind and considerate to officials and opponents.
- Pick up loose balls and DO NOT talk back to the officials. (This applies if you are in the game or on the bench.)
- When a time-out is called, players need to hustle to the bench.
- Players and coaches will shake hands with opponents after the game.

Expectations of Parents/Guardians

Athletic events are learning experiences for student-athletes. A ticket to a contest is a privilege to observe athletic tests of skills, not to verbally assault others or be obnoxious. Audiences may forget that middle school athletes have not reached mature physical performance, so errors can be expected. Moreover, audiences who learn the rules of the sport are less likely to criticize officials, players, or coaches.

- Remember that you are at a contest to support and cheer for your team and enjoy the skill and competition, not to intimidate or ridicule the other team and its fans.
 - Use only those cheers that support and uplift the teams involved.
- Remember that interscholastic athletics are learning experiences for students and that mistakes are sometimes made. Praise student-athletes in their attempt to improve themselves as students, as athletes, and as people, as you would praise a student working in the classroom.
- Learn the rules of the game so that you may understand and appreciate why certain situations take place.

- Refrain from taunting or making any kind of derogatory remarks to your opponents during the game.
- Respect the integrity and judgment of game officials. Understand that they are doing their best to help promote the student-athlete and admire their willingness to participate in full view of the public.
- Recognize and show appreciation for an outstanding play by either team.
- Refrain from the use of any controlled substances (alcohol, drugs, etc.) before and during events and afterward on or near the site of the event.
- Recognize and complement the efforts of school and league administrators for their efforts in emphasizing the benefits of educational athletics and the role of good sportsmanship.
- Be a positive behavior role model through your own actions and by censuring those around you at events where behavior is unbecoming.
- Show respect for the opposing players, coaches, fans and support groups. Treat them as you would treat a guest in your own home.
- Keeping Activities In Perspective.
- Emphasize that academics always come first.

Participant Guidelines

All students who participate in Laurel Public Schools extra-curricular programs must meet basic program requirements prior to starting practice or competition. The following printed material should be turned into the Middle School Office or completed online management system where noted below:

CONCUSSION FORM (COMPLETED Online)

CHEMICAL USE POLICY/STUDENT PLEDGE FORM (SIGNED Online)

PHYSICAL FORMS (COMPLETED Online):

Physicals are required for all athletics, including cheerleading. Physical forms may be obtained at the Administration Office, High School Office, Middle School Office, or any medical physician's office. Sports physicals must be completed on the approved MHSA physical exam form. All information and necessary signatures must be provided. Students participating in Speech & Drama and Music are required to complete the Parent Permission Statement, but no physical is required.

LOCOMOTIVE CODE OF CONDUCT (SIGNED Online):

I will be the best that I can be and achieve at my highest level.
 I will influence and encourage my peers in all their endeavors and projects
 I will have the courage to take the “right” stand regardless of peer pressure.
 I will conduct myself in a manner that contributes to an orderly atmosphere and ensures the rights of all individuals within the school.
 I will be considerate and respectful of others.
 I will give my best to my academic and extracurricular pursuits.
 I will demonstrate care and concern for school property and the property of others.

I will respond appropriately to the direction of faculty and staff at school as well as school activities.

I will be responsible for my attitude and behavior.

Failure of a student-athlete to adhere to the said above code of conduct may result in a suspension from the program. The Head Coach and AD/Admin will work together using the Laurel Middle School Student Handbook to determine the outcome of said violation.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL RELEASE FORMS:

This form will accompany all teams and groups to all events so that the coach or advisor has pertinent information with them in case of an emergency. The form must be fully completed and signed by the parent or guardian or the student will not be permitted to participate in the activity.

PARTICIPATION FEE:

Middle School student participants will be required to pay a \$50.00 participation fee if they are in a middle school activity. This fee must be paid at the Middle School office. A receipt must be given to the participant.

- Participation fee allows access into all MS and HS events with your student ID and the participation fee sticker associated with that current school year.

Any participant who has not paid the fee by the second (2nd) week of the season will not be able to participate in contests until it has been paid or has made arrangements with the Activities Director to get the fee waived.

Social Media

Athletic participation is a privilege and not a right. As part of that privilege, student-athletes acknowledge they are representing their school, community, and the team at all times, including while participating or not; this includes representation on social media. Social media is an effective tool when used responsibly. Laurel Middle School and the athletic department cannot and will not monitor every instance of social media. However, student-athletes should be aware that there is no expectation on their part of privacy when interacting on social media. Therefore, we expect our student-athletes to hold themselves to a high standard and not engage in inappropriate activities, including but not limited to cyber-bullying, trash talk, posting items with inappropriate language or images, and criticism of coaches, officials, or school administrators, etc.

Derogatory remarks, comments, or pictures posted on any social media site or made by a student toward anyone, including adults, will not be tolerated. This also includes derogatory statements, pictures, and videos made and sent via email, text, or posted to any social media website or an app-based program. Any student found in violation of this policy **may** face disciplinary action. The coach and administration will determine appropriate consequences, including denial of participation or dismissal from the extracurricular. The administration will make the final determination.

Risk of Injury

In spite of the benefits of athletics, participation is not without some inherent dangers. Despite the efforts of manufacturers to improve the safety of their equipment and the efforts of the coaches to be properly trained, injuries do and will continue to occur.

As a result, we believe that our students and parents must be fully aware of the possible injuries inherent in athletic competition. The parent's signature acknowledging the risks in no way deprives them of any legal rights – it merely attests to their understanding of the possible dangers.

Return to Play

In case of an injury where an athlete is removed from the game for a period of time for observation, the athlete can only return to play when released by the Licensed Athletic Trainer and/or Physician.

1. The Licensed Athletic Trainer will briefly explain the athlete's condition to the head coach and when the athlete can expect to return to the activity.
2. If the Licensed Athletic Trainer is unable to inform the athlete's coach of the athlete's condition, the student aide will ask the coach to contact the Licensed Athletic Trainer and/or Physician for information.
3. When an athlete is deemed ready to return to the activity, the Licensed Athletic Trainer and/or Physician will explain to the head coach and athlete what they will be looking for and observing for future injuries. The athlete's protective equipment will be returned at this time.
4. In case of a potential injury in which the athlete is not to return to activity, all protective equipment will be removed and steps 1-4 above will be followed.
5. If an athlete has been seen by a physician due to injury and/or illness, he/she is required to give the athletic trainer a written release to return to athletics. When appropriate, a written rehabilitation and treatment program should also be given to the athletic trainer.

Laurel School District does not carry accident insurance for students; however, student insurance is available for purchase through the school. If interested please contact the middle school or high school office.

WE ASK THAT PARENTS PLEASE BE ON TIME IN PICKING UP THEIR PLAYER FROM PRACTICE AND EVENTS. WE DO NOT AND WILL NOT LEAVE THEM UNATTENDED AND THEREFORE MUST WAIT FOR ALL ATHLETES TO BE ACCOUNTED FOR.

The managers must follow all the same rules as the players do, except for those rules only applying to player situations. Managers are not to leave the gym to do other things unless permitted by the coaches. Managers play a vital role in the program and are to be treated with respect.

We ask that you make a commitment to the sport and participate in the entire season.

Chemical Use Policy

The opportunity to participate in the extra-curricular program sponsored by Laurel Public Schools is a privilege extended to all district students. Students who choose to be part of the program are expected to make the commitment to adhere to the philosophy and rules governing the various activities making up the district's extra-curricular program. The board believes that participation in these types of activities can contribute to the all-around development of our students.

Coverage

These rules cover the use, personal possession, sale, or distribution of alcohol, illegal drugs, tobacco, and the abuse of prescription or nonprescription drugs. The policy is not intended to apply to the use of prescribed medications under a doctor's supervision when those drugs are used in the prescribed manner.

A participant is in violation of this policy if he or she is knowingly in attendance at a gathering or function where illegal substances (except tobacco products) are present unless it is a family or recognized community gathering or function. Even if the participant is not in possession of, or using an illegal substance at the gathering or function, he or she will be subject to the consequences as outlined in this policy.

Seasonal Activities

1st Violation – The student will be suspended from the activity they are currently participating in or the next activity they participate in for two weeks of competition. The offender may practice, but cannot participate in a formal activity or performance. As part of this ban on participation, the student will not be allowed to be part of the team or group during an activity either home or away. The student will be required to meet with a Chemical Dependency Counselor for an evaluation and provide written documentation verifying the appointment.

2nd Violation – The student will be suspended or excluded from ALL extra-curricular activities for the remainder of the school year. The student will also be required to meet with a Chemical Dependency Counselor for additional evaluation services and provide written documentation verifying this appointment. This verification must be provided to the school district before the student is allowed to participate in any activities the following year. If the 2nd violation occurs during the spring activities season or summer, the student athlete will be suspended for the following 1st semester activities the following year.

The student must also complete the entire season of the next activity they participate in order for this rule to apply.

Violations

The district may become aware of infractions through law enforcement or court officers. Otherwise, the student infractions must be reported and/or validated by employees of Laurel School District or members of the Board of Trustees if action is to be taken under this policy. The district reserves the right to conduct its own investigation; make a determination of guilt;

and apply sanctions independent of any pending court action against the student arising from the same offense.

Policy Duration

Policy coverage duration covers the school year including summer months. Continuation and number of violations coverage follow the first day of fall practice through the school year and summer, until the day before the next year fall activities.

School Year 26-27 policy coverage: August 14th, 2026 - August 13th, 2027.

Including the fall seasons that start before the academic school year.

Use or Possession of Illegal Drugs, Alcohol, or Tobacco: Policy 2155

The board further believes that necessary and proper rules governing the use of illegal substances serve the following purposes:

- To emphasize concern for the health and well-being of students while participating in activities.
- To provide an environment for the participants that is drug, alcohol, and tobacco-free.
- To promote a sense of self-discipline among the students.
- To confirm and support existing state laws governing minors and their use and abuse of illegal substances.
- To emphasize standards of conduct for those students who through their participation are leaders and role models for their peers and younger students.
- To assist students who desire to resist peer pressure to possess and use these substances.

Tobacco-Free Policy (Student Handbook)

All school district property is hereby declared tobacco-free for all students. Use of possession of tobacco products by minors is both against the law and district policy. No use or possession of tobacco will be permitted on Laurel School District grounds and facilities. Limitations or prohibitions on tobacco use are applicable during all hours. Additionally, the high school/middle school includes in this category all e-cigarettes and supplies ,vape 32 supplies, and accessories.

Level IV

OFFENSE-# OF OCCURRENCES	1	2	3
Open and persistent defiance/profane insubordination	1-3 days OSS	3-5 days OSS	Long-term OSS pending suspension/expulsion
Indecent exposure of self or others			
Felony theft/vandalism >\$300/restitution			
Threatening behavior (written, verbal, or physical)			
Possession of inappropriate or dangerous materials			

Tobacco Policy and Vaping Device Violation- Law Enforcement will be notified when necessary. Additional consequences may apply for students involved in activities			
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Chain of Communication

All informal complaints of a minor nature should first be dealt with between player and coach. If this does not work or an understanding is not reached, the parent and coach should meet. If either of the initial meetings are not satisfactory or deemed too contentious to begin with, administration can sit in to oversee the discussion between the concerned parties. The administration will document the complaint and work with the concerned parties to remedy the complaint and/or reach an understanding of position. (See Policy 1700 for more details in regards to complaint process)

All area of concern and complaint should proceed through the proper chain of command as outlined below:

1. Head Coach/Student-Athlete
2. Head Coach/Parent/Student-Athlete
3. Activities Director
4. Principal
5. Superintendent
6. Board of Trustees

High School Events

At high school sporting events students need to be accompanied by their parents or guardians to get into the events. They will also need to be sitting by their parents or guardians during the events and not running around. Admin and school officials will tell them to go sit down with their parents or guardians. Same rules apply at sporting events that apply at school. If you break any rules at the events there can be consequences at school. If you are asked to leave by an administrator, you will not be allowed to attend any other home sporting events during that season.

Ticket Prices

1. Season Passes (work for both HS and MS sports)
 - a. Individual Student - \$35.00
 - b. Individual Adult - \$65.00
 - c. Family Pass - \$160.00
 - i. Two adults
 - ii. Two students
 - iii. ***Cannot be used towards participation fee
2. Single-game or event:
 - i. Student - \$3.00 MS \$6.00 HS
 - ii. Adult - \$5.00 MS \$8.00 HS
 - iii. Preschool – Free
 - iv. Senior Citizens with Gold Pass – Free
 - v. Senior Citizens outside of District - \$3.00 MS \$6.00 HS
3. Tickets will be available for purchase via GoFan before the event or in person at the event. We prefer the use of GoFan, but cash will be accepted at events.

Volunteering

We ask that parents volunteer for one home event. Please let me know when you would like to volunteer! If you volunteer for 4 events you will receive an activity pass for the following year.

Anything not covered in this handbook falls back to the Middle School Student handbook and the High School Activities handbook.

Parent/Athlete Sign Off Page

Parent/Student sign off page needs to be signed and returned before the start of the season.

Please sign and return this form to the coaches by the end of the first week of practice.

I have received and reviewed the Laurel Middle School Handbook and agree to follow the guidelines of the program.

Student Athlete Name (please print):

Student Athlete Signature:

Date: _____

Parent Name (please print):

Parent Signature:

Parent Name (please print):

Parent Signature:

Date: _____