

**Laurel High School**  
**Department of Athletics**

**Student-Athlete**  
**Parent-Athlete**  
**Handbook**

**2018-2019**



**Dwayne Jones, Principal**  
**Donald Cleveland, CAA**  
**Athletic Director**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>INTRODUCTION</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>ATHLETIC PROGRAM</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>SPORTSMANSHIP</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>ELIGIBILITY</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>ACADEMIC STANDING</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>EXCEPTIONS</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>SMOKING, SUBSTANCE USE/ABUSE AND STEROIDS</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>EQUIPMENT AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROPER CARE</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>PARTICIPATION AND OUTSIDE TEAMS</u>	<u>7</u>
<u>HAZING</u>	<u>7</u>
<u>EMAIL AND SOCIAL MEDIA SITES</u>	<u>7</u>
<u>HANDBOOK FOR PARENTS OF ATHLETES</u>	<u>8</u>
<u>PLAYER-COACH RELATIONSHIP</u>	<u>8</u>
<u>THE PARENT-COACH RELATIONSHIP</u>	<u>8</u>
<u>ATHLETIC CHAIN OF COMMAND</u>	<u>9</u>
<u>RELATIONSHIP WITH OFFICIALS</u>	<u>9</u>
<u>EXPECTATIONS FOR SPECTATOR BEHAVIOR</u>	<u>9</u>
<u>PARTICIPATION AND SELECTING THE TEAM</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>THE PURPOSE OF JV TEAMS</u>	<u>11</u>
<u>PRACTICE SESSIONS AND GAMES</u>	<u>11</u>
<u>DISMISSAL AND PICK-UP FROM PRACTICE AND GAMES</u>	<u>11</u>
<u>SPORTS BOOSTERS CLUB</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING</u>	<u>13</u>

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this handbook is to describe the rules, policies, procedures and framework within which the Laurel High School Athletics department functions. This content should be carefully reviewed by both the prospective student-athlete and his or her parents/guardians. Upon reviewing the contents, the student and his/her parents/guardians should sign the attached form of understanding and submit it to their coach prior to the first contest.

### Athletic Program

The Athletic Department of Laurel High School consists of the following sports:

- Fall:** Cheerleading (Varsity and JV)  
Cross Country (Co-ed Varsity)  
Football (Varsity and JV)  
Soccer (Boys Varsity and JV)  
Soccer (Girls Varsity and JV)  
Volleyball (Girls Varsity and JV)  
Corollary Softball
- Winter:** Basketball (Boys Varsity and JV)  
Basketball (Girls Varsity and JV)  
Cheerleading (Varsity and JV)  
Indoor Track (Co-ed Varsity)  
Swimming (Co-ed Varsity)  
Wrestling (Boys Varsity)  
Corollary Bocce
- Spring:** Baseball (Boys Varsity and JV)  
Cheerleading (Varsity)  
Softball (Girls Varsity and JV)  
Tennis (Co-ed Varsity)  
Track (Co-ed Varsity)  
Boys Lacrosse (Boys Varsity)  
Girls Lacrosse (Girls Varsity)  
Corollary Track

# **Prince George's County Public Schools**

## **Mission**

The mission of Prince George's County Public Schools is to ensure that all students acquire knowledge and develop skills and understandings that will enable them to become productive citizens and lifelong learners in a technological, diverse society. This mission is accomplished by identifying and nurturing strong instructional leadership; establishing high expectations for all students, parents, teachers, staff, and administrators; implementing a rigorous, technology-infused curriculum; emphasizing effective learning strategies for students at all performance levels; maintaining a safe and orderly school environment; monitoring students' progress, resulting in appropriate adjustments to instructional programs; developing high levels of accountability; and cultivating meaningful family and community involvement.

## **Laurel High School**

### **Mission**

Laurel High School's mission is to develop college-and career-ready students in a diverse learning community by fostering a culture of **Pride, Respect, Involvement, Dependability, and Excellence.**

## **Laurel High School Athletic Mission**

The athletic program at Laurel High School will serve as a vehicle to be used to help promote the self-esteem and preparation of scholar-athletes for their post-secondary life through a tradition of success through interscholastic athletic contests.

## Sportsmanship

An important mission of the interscholastic athletics program is to teach and reinforce values relating to sportsmanship, competition and fair play. It is expected that team personnel, parents and spectators respect this mission by exhibiting appropriate behavior at athletic events.

## Eligibility

Students must meet the following requirements to be eligible to participate in interscholastic athletics. Participation of an ineligible student shall result in individual and team sanctions, including forfeits for the team.

- Students must achieve a minimum 2.0 grade point average for the most recently completed marking period. Academic eligibility is determined on the date report cards are issued and remains until the next report card is issued.
- Students must submit complete online registration at [formreleaf.com](http://formreleaf.com). Coaches are to inform those athletes whose parents are divorced and have joint custody that permission forms must be signed by both parents.
- Student must be present in school in order to participate in a practice or contest on that day. If the principal or designee grants an excused absence in advance for a prescheduled activity or an unforeseen emergency, the student may participate on that day.
- If during the season a student has an unexcused absence, he/she may not compete in the next contest after the violation has been verified.
- In addition to other infractions, a student may be suspended or removed from a team for chronic unexcused absences and tardies.
- A student must not have reached his/her 19<sup>th</sup> birthday prior to August 31 of the present school year to compete.
- Students may participate in an individual sport for a maximum of four seasons.
- A student who is ineligible for any season may not practice, try-out or play during the period of ineligibility.
- A student may not participate when he/she is serving an out-of-school suspension. The student regains eligibility on the next school day following the suspension.
- Students whose legal residence is outside of the designated boundary of a particular school may not participate unless they received an official transfer.

## **Academic Standing**

The following guidelines apply regarding a student's academic eligibility to compete.

- Students who have a 2.0 average in the previous marking period will be eligible to participate or practice in any extracurricular activity governed by this regulation during the next marking period.
- A student may regain his/her eligibility status at the start of the next marking period if they have achieved the required GPA of a 2.0.
- A marking period begins on the day that a report card is issued and continues until the day that the next report card is issued.
- Students who do not achieve the 2.0 minimum requirement in the final quarter of the school year will not be eligible to participate in fall sports. Students may repeat the failed course in summer school; however, if the failing course is not offered during the summer session, the student will be allowed to take another course in the same subject area. The summer session grade will replace the lowest course grade from the previous marking period and be factored in to determine if the 2.0 minimum GPA standard is met.

## **Smoking, Substance Use/Abuse and Steroids**

The use of alcohol, tobacco and controlled dangerous substances, including steroids, is an extremely serious health issue. Such use places the quality of life of the student-athlete in jeopardy. If the student-athlete is using alcohol, tobacco, or illegal drugs not prescribed by a licensed physician and placing the student in serious jeopardy. If the use, distribution or possession of these substances by a student-athlete on school property or at a school-sanctioned event is verified, he/she will be suspended from the team for 30 calendar days. If a second violation occurs, the student-athlete will face a 12 month ban from participation of any interscholastic sport. This punishment is in addition to what the county mandates for such offenses.

## **Equipment and Responsibility for Proper Care**

Most uniforms and equipment are assigned to student-athletes strictly on a loan basis for the duration of the sport season. It is the responsibility of the student-athlete to maintain that equipment/uniform in the same condition in which it was received. Any damage or loss of equipment/uniform will be considered the direct financial responsibility of the student-athlete responsible for its care.

Any athlete withholding property from one sport is suspended from participating in any other sport until the equipment is returned. He/she is also ineligible for any sport award until the property is returned.

Student-athletes will be charged the replacement cost of any equipment or uniform not returned. This cost must be paid before participating in any other sport.

## **Participation and Outside Teams**

The MPSSAA is very specific on this issue. Students, while participating on a school team, are permitted to participate in the same sport outside of school during the sport season. Such participation must meet the following criteria:

1. The outside participation may not conflict with the sports schedule of the school, including district, regional and state championship play. (Sports schedule includes game and practices)
2. A student who elects to participate on an outside team and does not participate on the school team during the designated sport's season is ineligible to represent his/her school in all meets and games that determine county, regional or state championship.

## **Hazing**

Hazing is prohibited at all times. Hazing involves any act that subjects teammates to mental or physical discomfort, embarrassment, harassment or ridicule. In some instances hazing constitutes a criminal act. At a minimum, hazing may lead to immediate dismissal from a team.

## **Email and Social Media Sites**

The use of email messages, blogs, social media sites or other electronic communications to make inflammatory or derogatory comments and/or inappropriate descriptions or pictures regarding another team member, student, coach, another school or team, or other staff member is prohibited. For the purposes of this policy, inappropriate comments may include, but are not limited to inappropriate comments/pictures/descriptions regarding another person's race, ethnic background, culture, religion, gender or sexual orientation"

Possible consequences for violating this policy are: (1) Single game suspension; (2) Multiple game suspension; (3) Dismissal from the team.

## **Handbook for Parents of Athletes**

Being a parent is a heavy responsibility, which can be further complicated when your child is involved in interscholastic athletics. This handbook, with its guidelines and suggestions, will hopefully provide helpful insights into the boundaries and responsibilities that will enable you to form a healthy partnership with the athletics program here at Laurel High School.

### **Player-Coach Relationship**

The player-coach relationship is the most critical relationship in athletics. A parent can have either a positive or negative impact on this very delicate relationship. While you may not agree with all of the decisions of a coach, how and when you express your feelings can have a distinct effect on your child.

If you express a negative opinion in the presence of your child, you need to remember that he or she will return to practice the next day and may carry with them your convictions. Your son or daughter will then have to interact with this coach.

Please note that receiving technical or strategic instruction at home may interfere and conflict with the instructional process at practice sessions and games. This may ultimately impede your son or daughter's progress and affect his or her playing time or even winning a starting position.

### **The Parent-Coach Relationship**

In your role as a parent, you obviously love and are concerned about your child's welfare. You want what's best for him or her, but an athlete can have only one coach. Allowing the coach to instruct and guide the team is crucial in many respects.

Should you have any questions or concerns, do not approach the coach immediately at the conclusion of a contest. At this time, coaches have other responsibilities and it may be an emotional time. Call and make an appointment for a later time and approach this meeting in a calm, courteous and logical manner.

One of the responsibilities which a coach has is at the conclusion of a contest is to have a brief meeting with his or her players. Athletes should not pause to talk to parents or friends immediately after games. These brief meetings are essential to the learning process involved in athletics.

### **Athletic Chain of Command**

At Laurel High School the following chain of command is in effect.

Principal  
Assistant Principal  
Athletic Director  
Head Coach  
Assistant Coach/JV Coach  
Players

If there are any questions or concerns involving some aspect of our athletic program, the athletes should first contact the appropriate coach. If there is no resolution, he or she will then go to the head coach, etc...

### **Relationship With Officials**

There is an age-old refrain often used by irate fans "how much are you paying the officials?" The home school does not get the officials. The commissioner of the particular sport assigns all officials.

So while you may not agree with all of their calls (Who does?), please do not harass and taunt them. It is also important to remember that they are in charge of

the contest and have complete authority to have unruly spectators removed. In many sports, a team will see the same official several times during the season. Coaches, athletic administrators, and schools often work hard to establish a rapport and good working relationship which can easily be damaged by spectators.

## Expectations for Spectator Behavior

- **APPLAUD** players for their efforts
- **ACCEPT** the decisions of officials
- **APPRECIATE** participants for their commitment
- **SUPPORT** school personnel in conducting an orderly and spirited contest
- **MAINTAIN** composure when breaks seem to go against your team
- **RESPECT** the rights of other spectators
- **REWARD** sportsmanlike behavior through cheering
- **FOCUS** attention on positive aspects of competition
- **ENCOURAGE** players by showing enthusiasm and positive recognition
- **DEMONSTRATE** concern for the safety and welfare of athletes

These young men and ladies are students and not professional athletes. They will make errors in the course of competition, as will game officials and coaches. However, all participants are trying their best. Negative criticism and booing will not help them to improve and are unacceptable forms of expression at this event. You can assist in their development as athletes by focusing attention on the positive aspects of their performance. Your cooperation is important and is appreciated.

## Participation and Selecting the Team

It is important to understand that participation on an athletic team at Laurel High School is a **PRIVILEGE**. Being on and maintaining one's membership on the team means accepting all of the responsibilities of an athlete. However, unlike recreation or intramural teams, equal or guaranteed playing time does NOT exist. In an effort to win, a coach will use players best suited to the conditions or demands of the contest at that time.

Every coach has the responsibility and authority for selecting his or her team. The criteria for selecting the team are developed by the coach. A copy of the written requirements to tryout for the sport is included in the student eligibility packet to be submitted in the clearinghouse prior to tryouts.

It is important to remember that there are NO guarantees. Players from the previous year, do not automatically make either the JV or varsity squad the following year. Having been a member of a team during the previous year or even being a senior does not ensure that an athlete will make the squad.

Parents should expect that every candidate will be treated fairly and given every consideration. Coaches are sensitive to feelings of disappointment, will handle the task as positively as possible, and will be available to answer athletes' questions.

While we understand that being cut is disappointing for many athletes and even for their parents, we unfortunately cannot keep everyone. Anyone cut from a team is welcome to tryout again next season or to try another sport. When parents and athletes understand and support the coach's decision, this difficult process becomes a less painful experience for all.

### **The Purpose of JV Teams**

JV Teams exist to provide those athletes who are unable to participate on the varsity squad an opportunity to develop skills and gain experience. While the athlete's age, size or skill level may be the limiting factor in not making the varsity team, participation on the JV team may enhance the athlete's potential to make the varsity team in the future.

However, a caution must be given. Being a member of a JV team does not guarantee that an athlete will automatically move up the following year to the varsity team. The athletes best suited for varsity competition will make the squad each year.

Striving to win is important in athletics. However, compiling a great record or winning a championship should not be the primary objective of a JV team. The development of athletes should be the ultimate purpose of a JV team, while at the same time acknowledging the value of winning, learning and enjoying being a member of a team.

### **Practice Sessions and Games**

Practice sessions are normally closed to spectators and there is a very sound reason for this. These sessions are the equivalent of a teacher's classroom and

there is real, quality instruction taking place. Interruptions and interference to an athlete's concentration and focus in practice cannot be allowed any more than a disruption would be tolerated in an academic setting. Education in any setting cannot be compromised.

At Laurel High School, practice sessions:

1. May start and end at different times due to the schedule of the coach or our facilities.
2. Will not be held when school is dismissed early due to inclement weather.
3. Will not be held when school is not in session due to inclement weather.
4. May be held on Saturdays and over holiday periods.

Positive and nurturing support of teams can be very helpful to performance in athletic contests.

### **Dismissal and Pick-up from Practice and Games**

Due to the fact that most of the coaches and administrators have their only families as well as their professional obligations as coaches, we ask that you do your best to pick up your child in a timely manner from all practices and contests. At the conclusion of practice and games, the student-athlete have 20 minutes to be picked up. If you as the parent are unable to pick up your child in that time frame please make arrangements for your child to be picked up. If this becomes a chronic problem your child may be removed from the team. The progression will go as follows:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Offense- Parent will be notified of the pick-up procedure in this manual
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Offense- Written notification will be sent home informing the parent that if this continues, it will begin to affect their child's playing time.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Offense- The child will be suspended one (1) Practice day
- 4<sup>th</sup> Offense- The child will be suspended one (1) game
- 5<sup>th</sup> Offense- The student-athlete will be removed from the team.

### **Sports Boosters Club**

Laurel High School Booster Club(s) exists to support all teams and the entire athletic program. Our booster club has three primary goals: To raise funds to assist the athletic programs, to increase school spirit and to encourage and promote good sportsmanship.

The Booster club is not a vehicle to remove coaches, advance vested interests or to alter Athletic Department policy. It is a service and support organization, which works in harmony with Laurel High School and its athletic program.

The athletic director serves as the liaison between the club and the school. He also serves as an advisor to the club. All requests for purchases come through the director of athletics who determines their priority. Consideration of requests is given to the budget, strategic plans and an overriding belief that any purchase should help the total athletic program, not just one team. No individual coach or team should directly approach the Booster club without working with the athletic director.

**Memorandum of Understanding**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ have read and reviewed the contents of this handbook with my child \_\_\_\_\_. We have carefully reviewed the Student-Parent-Athletic participation information and I/we understand the conditions for participation.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature or Parent/Legal Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Student-Athlete

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date