

Laurel High School Handbook

School Processes & Rules

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This handbook is intended to help students and parents navigate the policies and practices particular to Laurel High School. It is understood that students also fall under the guidelines of the [Viroqua High School Parent/Student Handbook](#).

Mission

Our mission is the intellectual, social, and emotional growth of responsible, self-motivated students through a partnership with staff, families, and the community.

We challenge and empower students to meet and exceed state and national high school educational standards through individualized hands-on curriculum planning.

Students evolve the essential skills of academic performance through realistic goal setting, personal evaluation, and flexible time management, as well as effective social communication through the development and maintenance of positive, respectful, and trusting relationships with peers and facilitators.

A Laurel education fosters successful post-graduate transition for every student according to their interests and personal expectations, including preparation for university and technical college, and employment exploration and success.

The ultimate goal is that each Laurel graduate is a passionate life-long learner and strong local, national, and international contributor.

About Laurel High School

Laurel High School (LHS) is a charter school affiliated with Viroqua High School (VHS) offering an individualized program for students. The success of Laurel High School and its students depends on student respect and responsibility. Laurel High School students are part of the Viroqua Area School District and therefore students are responsible for the rules and regulations of the VAS Parent-Student Handbook. This Laurel Handbook highlights important policies and those specific to Laurel High School.

Contact Information

Laurel High School
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Viroqua Area Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, sex, (including gender status, change of sex or gender identity), or physical, mental, emotional, or learning disability (Protected Classes) in any of its student program and activities, including employment opportunities.

Laurel Application Process

Prospective students must follow the following application process:

1. Complete an application, available the January preceding the desired school year. (Apply for [Open Enrollment](https://dpi.wi.gov/open-enrollment) if applicable: <https://dpi.wi.gov/open-enrollment>)
2. Applications are due on the last school day of February.
3. Interview with a Laurel panel composed of Laurel staff, current Laurel seniors, and other VAS staff members. Applicants will be contacted for an interview in March.
4. If the number of students seeking admission exceeds the capacity of the open seats available, then a lottery shall be conducted by Laurel High School Governance Council and LHS Director/Staff to select the individuals who will be assigned the open seats. A totally random selection will ensure fairness and equal access without regard to ethnicity, national origin, disability, gender, or income level.
5. Those students not accepted by the lottery, will be placed on a priority waiting list in the order drawn. If or when openings occur, students will then be contacted in the order established by the lottery, or if no lottery is required, in the order applications were received.

6. Exemptions from the lottery shall be granted, in the following order:
 - Applicants who are siblings of students currently attending LHS.
 - Applicants who are children of LHS faculty and staff (this includes part-time faculty and staff)
7. Laurel High School will not be required to admit any student who is under a current expulsion order from a school district.
8. Students cannot be placed at Laurel High School by the District.

Applications may be picked up from the Laurel High School or Viroqua High School offices. They may also be downloaded from the Laurel HS website. The application consists of an admission form, self-evaluation of academic performance form, extracurricular inventory, and student and parent essays. Along with the application, two letters of recommendation should be included, as well as a portfolio. The portfolio should be a collection of items that will help the interviewers understand who the applicant is, personally and academically.

Typically, there is only one application period. Laurel High School is a public high school, part of the Viroqua Area School District, and therefore there is no fee to attend.

Accepted applicants are notified as soon as possible and invited to an informational meeting, traditionally held before the school year ends.

Attendance Policy

School attendance is vital to success.

Laurel is founded on the individual student's personal responsibility and autonomy to pursue individual goals. To maintain this autonomy, every student is responsible for attending school every day.

1. Every student is to be physically on time and present for attendance at the beginning of each block of Laurel study unless they have prior permission otherwise.
2. Every student is required to blog daily about each Laurel class (see Self-Attendance/Blogging). This includes days when a student is absent, but not non-attendance days.

If a student needs to miss school due to an illness, a parent or guardian must inform the Viroqua High School office, (608) 637-3191, and leave a message. If a student must

leave during school hours, they must sign out in the Viroqua High School office. The student is then responsible for meeting with all their teachers to determine what work was missed and to make up that work. **A note from a doctor, school nurse, or county nurse will be required after three consecutive absences.**

If a student needs to sign out during the day, they must sign out in the Viroqua High School office. When the student returns, they must sign in; if applicable, please bring a note from the doctor appointment. A doctor's note must also be supplied after ten absences.

If a student knows *in advance* that they will be absent, it is their responsibility to let their teachers know *in advance* and receive any assignments. The parent(s) should inform the Laurel Director *in advance* of this occurrence with a note, email, or phone call.

If a student does not attend school, they are not eligible to participate in co-curricular events for that night.

A student should not be absent for more than ten (10) days per school year. A doctor's note will be required for every excused absence after the first ten.

Please see the VAS Handbook for more information about attendance and excused and unexcused absences.

Extended School Absences/Leave

For this section, "extended absence" refers to missing more than five (5) consecutive days of school.

Planned Vacations

Laurel High School staff encourage parents to plan vacations during summer break and in alignment with school holidays to avoid impacting their students' attendance during the regular school calendar. Absences for planned vacations during the school year are counted toward the ten days per school year described in the Attendance Policy. High School attendance is essential, and due to the nature of Laurel's class structure, it can be challenging to maintain student and classroom continuity.

Extended Absence Related to Independent Study

Students are encouraged to consider any extended absence related to an Independent Study well in advance (at least one semester before the planned absence). Laurel staff will review student requests regarding an extended absence associated with an Independent Study they are considering enrolling in.

1. The student prepares a proposal that explains how the experience will meet educational goals, including:
 - a. An academic plan/outline for the trip
 - b. A communication plan, including Laurel and VHS staff
 - c. A timeline
2. Once the proposal is completed and submitted to Laurel staff, the student and their parent(s) will meet with Laurel staff to discuss plans.
3. The student will meet with the Viroqua High School Principal and his/her parents before the semester begins. If taking a VHS class(es), the student must also meet with VHS teachers.
4. The student will finalize the trip proposal, adding any changes determined from the previous meetings.
5. The student will determine a communication venue, such as daily blogging, journaling, emailing, or a personal travel blog. A weekly check-in with Laurel staff is also recommended.
6. Once the student has returned, they will share experiences with the Laurel Staff and/or students with a presentation within one month.

Laurel Visitor Policy

The staff of Laurel High School encourage guest speakers to enhance student learning. Also, all guest speakers need to be approved by Laurel Staff 24 hours in advance, and may need to fill out a Volunteer Approval Form. In the effort to maintain student safety and the integrity of student learning, all visitors must sign in at the Viroqua High School office before entering Laurel HS.

Technology Code

Laurel High School students have excellent access to technology with a ratio better than one computer/three students. With this privilege comes the responsibility of taking care of our school's technology equipment and using appropriate internet etiquette. Before a student is allowed to use a computer/the internet at school, the Technology Acceptable Use Policy must be signed by both student and parent(s).

- Students are permitted to bring their personal technology devices, such as iPads and laptops, and use them during Laurel class time so long as they are not disruptive and are used appropriately.
- Streaming websites such as Netflix, YouTube, etc. may be used only for academic purposes. Students should receive approval from a Laurel High School teacher before logging onto one of these websites.
- Students should be considerate towards their peers when using electronic devices: cell phones should remain off, iPads should be used with headphones, streaming sites should be used sparingly so as not to slow down the school's internet connection, etc.

Dress Code

We will follow the [Viroqua Area School Board dress code policy 5511 \(Dress and Grooming\)](#), that begins:

The Board recognizes that each student's mode of dress and grooming is a manifestation of personal style and individual preference. The Board will not interfere with the right of students and their parents to make decisions regarding their appearance, except when their choices interfere with the educational program of the schools.

Accordingly, the District Administrator shall establish such grooming guidelines as are necessary to promote discipline, maintain order, secure the safety of students, and provide a healthy environment conducive to academic purposes.

Medication Policy

The school district has a policy on medication in line with Wisconsin Act 334 concerning the administration of medication to students.

1. Medication prescribed by a physician may be given in school only if the following guidelines are met:
 - a. Written instructions from the physician for the administration of medication are provided.
 - b. A written statement signed by the parent authorizing the school to give student medication and releasing the school personnel from liability arising from the administration of the medication is provided.

- c. Medications are brought to school and stored in the appropriate pharmacy labeled bottle.
 - d. Medications are brought to school by a parent/guardian to provide student safety. Please call the school nurse (637-1509) if other arrangements need to be made.
 - e. Medications are picked up by a parent/guardian at the end of each school year. Again, please call the school nurse (637-1509) if other arrangements need to be made.
2. The following over the counter (OTC) medications will be supplied by the school: Tylenol, Ibuprofen, Benadryl, cough drops, antibiotic ointment, pain-relieving ointment, antacids, and hydrocortisone. Parents must have a consent signed for us to administer these medications to your student. Medications will only be given according to package directions. Parents may bring their own OTC medication to the health office in the original, labeled container and the parent consent form.
3. Students with asthma may carry and self-administer metered dose inhalers. The students must have the written approval from the parent/guardian and the health care provider along with the Asthma Action card. These forms are to be updated annually. If you have any questions, please call the Health Office at (608) 637-1509.

Lunch Options

Lunch time is open campus for Laurel High School students, with many options. A kitchen area with refrigerator and microwaves are provided at Laurel, as well as an eating area. The use of these items is based on responsible behavior. Students must supply their own utensils, however. Students may also leave the school to go home or to town, or eat in the VHS lunchroom. Students are NOT supervised during this time.

The Viroqua High School operates a lunch program which is approved by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. Choices are offered daily for students along with a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables. Laurel students are welcome to use this option; please see the VAS Handbook for more information.

Laurel Graduation Requirements

Laurel High School students are required to take 30 unit/credits: 18 core classes and 12 elective classes (which includes the units earned from community service); a student receives a “UNIT” to show that the class was taken successfully (a “unit” is comparable to a “credit” at a public school). (Special circumstances will be considered on an individual basis.)

The core class requirements are as follows:

- English = 4 units/credits
- Social studies = 3 units/credits (US History and World History required)
- Math = 3 units/credits
- Science = 3 units/credits (Physical Science and Biology required)
- Foreign Language or Computer Science = 2 units/credits
- Physical Education = 1 ½ units/credits (in three different years)
- Introduction to Probability and Statistics = ½ unit/credit
- Personal Finance = ½ unit/credit
- Health = ½ unit/credit
- 36 hours of community service per year = ½ unit
 - This will account for two (2) elective units for four years' attendance

Class Scheduling

A typical Laurel student's schedule contains a mix of classes between Viroqua High School and Laurel High School. Students sign up for the Viroqua classes before the previous school year ends (for example, students fill out forms in January 2025 for the 2025-2026 school year; new students sign up for classes as soon as they are accepted). Those schedules are available about two weeks before school starts.

Laurel classes are scheduled during the first two days of school. While this is hard to understand in theory, it does work. It is necessary to know when students are scheduled for VHS classes in order to complete the Laurel schedule. Every effort is made to make sure each student is able to have the classes they need and want.

Earning Units

Laurel students may take a maximum of four units per semester of attendance at Laurel (excluding individual physical education and community service).

If a student has successfully completed previous classes, above minimum requirements, they may submit a written petition to take up to one additional unit.

Passing a class at a minimum performance level (or earning a “No Pass”) in any class during the previous semester will disqualify a student from petitioning for an extra half or whole unit for the next semester.

Pass/Fail Policy

Laurel works on a **pass/fail basis** and therefore students are not given a grade point average, a class rank, nor are they eligible to earn grade-based awards, i.e.: National Honor Society. The lead teacher has a very close relationship with each student and would be able and happy to provide information on each student’s performance. A Laurel student earns “units” rather than credits towards their graduation. Units are the equivalent of credits earned in a traditional high school.

There are three “pass” designations a student may earn for a Laurel class. While only pass or fail will show on the official Laurel transcript, each student has an unofficial transcript which will show the High or Low Pass.

Traditional Teacher- and Facilitator-Led Classes

Low Pass: A student who completes 60% to 75% of the work for a class and earns a blogging percentage of 80%, earns a “Low Pass.” A Low Pass will appear as a Pass on an official Laurel transcript and is understood to be the equivalent of a C/C-.

Pass: A student who completes 76% to 95% of the work for a class and earns a blogging percentage between 80% and 89%, earns a “Pass.” “Pass” will appear on an official Laurel transcript and is understood to be the equivalent of a B/B+.

High Pass: High Pass is defined as work and responsibilities undertaken by the student that exceed Pass standards for a given class. The qualifications and materials for High Pass are determined by the student and Laurel Staff member. A student who completes over 95% of the work for a class, earns a blogging percentage greater than 95%, and completes the predetermined extra work, earns a “High Pass.” A High Pass will appear as a Pass on an official Laurel transcript and is understood to be the equivalent of an A/A+.

No Pass: Students who do not meet the “Low Pass” standards for projects and the minimum standards of attendance/self attendance do not pass the class or receive the

unit for that semester's class. Students have up to one week after semester's end to complete these standards unless granted an extension for extenuating circumstances.

Student Folders for Independent Studies

For every Laurel independent study course (ISC), the student must pick which *level* they strive to work towards — Low Pass, Pass, or High Pass — defining standards and requirements for passing. This decision will be detailed in the planning paperwork completed for each Laurel ISC, signed by the student, their parent(s), and the teacher facilitating the class, and kept in their completed folder at Laurel.

Note: See [Laurel Independent Study Course FAQ](#) in the Addendum section of this handbook.

Process

Each student is responsible for maintaining an accessible file of individual work. Each file should include the following for Low, Pass, and High Pass:

1. Clearly defined standards for every Laurel ISC per semester, stating whether the student will earn a Low, Pass, or High Pass; updated to reflect any changes during the course of the semester
2. ALL semester material that demonstrates completion of any and all standards whenever possible.
3. The student accounts for their own self-attendance (blogging) percentages so that Laurel staff may readily access this information.
4. A three-part evaluation of the student's work in each class. This evaluation will include:

Planning/Expectation (first week) – Student will report, in writing, on how they envision their semester's work will proceed and how they will meet the "Pass" standards. This report will be filed in each student's folder.

Unit Assessment – Student will assess, in writing, their progress and accomplishments at the end of each Unit. Student must assess both their strengths and weaknesses; how they have met the goals/expectations for the class or how the goals/expectations have changed; and what they plan to accomplish for the remainder of the class. This report is to be completed and filed with the student's Planning/Expectation evaluation.

Final/Semester Assessment – During the last week of the class, the student will assess their progress and accomplishments. Student must assess both their strengths

and weaknesses; how they have met the goals/expectations for the class or how the goals/expectations changed; and what they would have done differently from the beginning. Final Assessment must explicitly state what level of Pass the student has earned.

Ways To Earn High Pass

To earn a high pass, students need to go “above and beyond” basic class requirements. Students are encouraged to follow their interests within the subject material (for example: for Geometry, showing how trigonometry is used when building a house). Material should be included in the student class file.

Process

Plan and schedule what they hope to accomplish and possibly invite other students to participate.

Define how their project is inter-related to their class.

Evaluate how their project helped their educational experience.

Present their project to the class or school.

1. **Excellent self-attendance** by utilizing the blog as a tool to fully communicate the learning process and articulating an evolving personal involvement in this process.
2. **Excellent class participation** through attendance, preparation, participation, and involvement in class activities, assignments, and discussions.
3. **Classroom leadership** demonstrated through preparing and leading classroom/school activities, leading classroom discussions, etc.
4. **Tutoring class/individuals**, such as assisting other students in their study (mentoring, tutoring, peer editing).
5. **Specific student initiatives:** Any activity associated with a student’s learning experience that brings enrichment to the class/school learning environment.

Self Attendance/Blogging

Students are required to blog 80% of their class time (generally four out of five days) — making an individual attendance record of their Laurel class time on the school blog

detailing how they utilized the block time — for every class block taken at Laurel as a condition of passing the class.

Self attendance must be done daily for EACH Laurel study block (independent OR facilitated study). Self attendance not completed on the day of the class block will not count towards the minimum percentages needed to earn Laurel credit.

Self attendance is recorded on the student's personal blog page. This page is viewable only by the student, their parent(s), and Laurel staff. Parents seeking access should contact a Laurel Staff member via email.

A student is responsible for self attendance for EVERY day of the academic school year (every day Viroqua High School holds classes during the year). If a student is not at school (illness, vacation, appointment, etc.), they are still responsible for self attendance for each of their Laurel study blocks.

Students who, during the semester, fall below 80% self attendance for an independent class or a facilitated class, will be given a warning and will be required to remain in their seats during Resource. Students are allowed two warnings per semester. If a student falls below 80% self attendance for an independent class or a facilitated class a third time during a semester, this student will not pass that class in that semester. That student also forfeits the right to an independent study class for the next semester.

Students are not responsible for self attendance reports for class blocks taken at Viroqua High School, unless all classes are with VHS.

Community Service

All Laurel High School students are required to successfully complete 36 hours of community service during each school year. However, only 18 hours may be recorded for any one service project. This means each student will do two (2) or more projects each year.

Community service activities are those performed to benefit at least one *unrelated* community member for which no payment is received.

Typically, the service work will be under the auspices of a non-profit organization (see list below). Work to help a friend, family member, or neighbor will not qualify as community service without prior approval due to extenuating circumstances.

Service to benefit for-profit businesses may qualify on a very limited basis with *prior* approval and there must be extenuating circumstances as well as clear evidence the assistance provided is tied to the organization's charitable activities. Approval may be requested through appeal and/or via an interview with the Laurel Governance Council.

Community service involving cooperation with faith-based or political organizations may be approved; however, Laurel High School will not award credit for time spent directly involved in promoting religious/political doctrine, proselytizing, or worship. Students may request *Special Consideration Approval* of non-proselyte community service with faith-based or political groups subject to approval by the Laurel Advisory Council.

Community service for which a student receives academic credit as part of a separate course, or which is court-assigned, will not qualify for the Laurel High School graduation requirement.

In the past, Laurel High School students have completed community service projects involving the following organizations:

- American Red Cross blood drives
- Animal protection and animal welfare groups
- Art and cultural organizations
- Babysitting services during school events
- Child literacy programs including "Reading Buddies"
- Children and youth services groups
- Clothing drives
- Community beautification groups and garden clubs
- County park cleanups
- Food drive/distribution programs
- Habitat for Humanity
- Lions/Lioness Clubs
- Meals on Wheels programs
- Multicultural/diversity awareness events
- Norskedalen Events, such as "Ghoulees in the Coulees"
- Nursing homes – working with the clients, not labor for the home
- Peer tutoring
- Public library projects
- Roadside cleanup (Adopt-A-Highway)
- Rotary Club projects
- Teen Court
- Vernon Memorial Hospital volunteer
- Veterans' organizations
- Viroqua Recreation Department volunteer

The above list is not all-inclusive. Students may create, with approval, a unique community service project of their own or one that involves another group not listed above. The criteria for approval of a unique project are the same as for any other.

There are many reasons why community service is a required part of the Laurel High School program. The key reason is to assist students in becoming confident,

competent, passionate, involved, active citizens. Contributing to community service helps cultivate one's skills, abilities, and vision to make our community a better place for all.

In order for community service hours to be registered and credit awarded, students must supply completed and signed hour logs and write a reflection essay of one to two (1 to 2) pages in length; both to be kept in their student portfolio.

Laurel Service

In addition to the **Community Service** requirement, Laurel students are also expected to volunteer a minimum of 15 hours per year to help with Laurel enrichment. Parents may help contribute to their student's Laurel Service.

Ways to earn Laurel Service hours include, but are not limited to:

- Helping to set up and manage an event, such as a play
- Significant Laurel cleaning
- Setting up/taking down Laurel at the beginning and end of the year
- Serving on a committee
- Hosting a parent meeting (to include any prep work, such as cooking and cleaning) (parents)
- Chaperoning a trip (parents)
- Facilitating a class/tutoring (students or parents)
- Helping with Back-to-School Night (August) or Laurel Open House (January)

Graduation Portfolios

Laurel High School students are required to create and maintain a graduation portfolio. This is the main mode of assessment, designed to demonstrate mastery of knowledge and skills. It is also a helpful tool when applying to colleges.

Laurel High School Portfolio Requirements

Freshmen:

1. Class folders
2. Class plan for high school career
3. Community service log and reflection
4. Resume with three (3) verbal recommendations
5. Testing results, where applicable
6. Academic and Career Planning materials

Sophomores:

1. Class folders
2. Updated/revisited class plan for high school career
3. Community service log and reflection
4. Resume (updated) with three (3) verbal recommendations
5. Testing results: Pre-ACT, Forward, where applicable
6. Academic and career planning materials
 - a. College information (contact with at least two [2])
 - b. Career exploration materials/career survey

Juniors:

1. Class folders
2. Updated/revisited class plan for high school career
3. Community service log and reflection
4. Resume (updated) with one (1) written and two (2) verbal recommendations
5. College information [contact w/correspondence; at least three (3)]
6. Testing results (ACT, SAT, Compass where applicable)
7. Reflection for post high school
8. Academic and career planning materials

Seniors:

1. Class folders
2. Graduation portfolio with representative works of major/important classes
3. Community service log and reflection
4. Resume (updated) with three (3) written and two (2) verbal recommendations
5. Academic and career planning materials

Notes: Resumes are to be updated each year.
Portfolios should also contain any projects (or picture of) completed by the student.

College Application Process

Laurel seniors typically apply to colleges throughout the United States. The Laurel Director acts as the guidance counselor for these applications and will help seniors during the application process. All Laurel staff are very involved in helping seniors apply to colleges.

Laurel Graduation Ceremony

Laurel Seniors may choose to have a private event to celebrate their graduation. The event is planned *exclusively* by the students and their parents, held off campus at a public venue, and funds must be raised by the graduating class. Each year the program represents the uniqueness of that year's graduating class and their academic accomplishments.

As students of the Viroqua Area School District, Laurel students are invited to walk across the stage with Viroqua High School students in a traditional ceremony.

Laurel diplomas are printed with "Laurel High School" and "Viroqua Area Schools" and can be presented at either of the ceremonies.

Mentoring

Senior and junior mentors are available for new Laurel students within their "seating pods." New students are strongly encouraged to talk to all returning students.

Accountability & Dismissal Policy

It is our belief that each student deserves an educational program that meets their needs while not infringing on the rights of other students. Laurel staff prefer to have conversations with parents about their student's progress rather than use the Dismissal Policy. However, it is sometimes necessary to enact the policy to help students understand the severity of their actions.

Reasons To Receive a Warning/Dismissal Step:

1. Failure to meet personal academic goals and/or deadlines to the point of causing concern to Laurel staff, including but not limited to:
 - Not meeting personal class/folder requirements and deadlines
 - Failure to meet Unit deadlines for class/folder paperwork
 - Failure to blog 80% (generally 4 out of 5 school days)
 - Continual easing of personal standards and postponing deadlines to the point of making the class meaningless
 - Detracting from classroom experience via disruptive behavior
2. Misconduct at Laurel or Viroqua High School, to include but not limited to:
 - Fighting: verbal or physical
 - Stealing: money, food, supplies
 - Use or selling of illegal substance(s) during school hours
 - Inappropriate language or behavior
 - Destruction of property
 - Inappropriate use of computers or other devices
3. Unexcused absences [one (1)] or unexcused tardiness [three (3)] in any Laurel or Viroqua High School class
4. Creating relationship problems in school, in person or online, that disrupt another student's learning such as:
 - Bullying
 - Harassment
5. Any infraction that results in student being sent to the office for disciplinary measures

6. Excessive excused absences
 - Elective absences after the first ten (10) absences will result in a step
7. Excessive tardiness
 - Each tardy after six (6) will result in a step

Each instance will be recorded in the student's file and remain for one calendar year.

Dismissal Steps

Probation (Step One): Warning and a call to parent/sponsor; student and parent will receive a written copy of warning detailing concerns. Administration reserves the right to proceed directly to **Step Two** or **Step Three** of Dismissal Policy based on severity of offense.

Step Two: Warning given. Within three days of the warning, a meeting with LHS teacher, parent/sponsor and student (VHS principal informed) is scheduled to take place. Before this scheduled meeting, the student will be required to create a plan for self-improvement, including specific deadlines and a future date to meet and check student progress. This student plan will be the substance of the meeting.

Step Three: Warning and meeting scheduled with VHS principal, LHS teacher, parent/sponsor and student. A new student plan will be created by Laurel staff, in partnership with parents, during this meeting, establishing scheduled benchmarks the student must adhere to in order to remain in good standing at Laurel. All parties involved must realize that the student's adherence to this created plan is the student's last chance.

Step Four: Dismissal from the Laurel High School program.

Field Trips

Field trips are educational opportunities offered by Laurel High School staff. The trips are paid for by each individual student; scholarship opportunities exist for families that face financial hardship. Traditionally there are two extended-day trips (such as a trip to the Milwaukee Museum) and two shorter trips (such as a trip to American Players Theatre) each school year. All Laurel students are expected to participate, as these trips are community builders as well as educational.

Please note: A school trip is only a “field trip” if a *Laurel staff member* is present. If a parent offers other students an opportunity to accompany them somewhere during school time, it is **not** a field trip and the students are **not** under school insurance or guidance.

Co-Curricular Activities

Laurel High School students, as students of the Viroqua Area School District, are eligible to participate in all co-curricular events offered by the Viroqua High School. Laurel High School only offers co-curricular events as desired and directed by the students themselves. While there are Laurel staff available to act as supervisors/chaperones, it is up to the students to make the events happen. Laurel staff will offer advice as asked for, but will not “jump in to save the day.” We value learning from experience and that includes learning from mistakes.

Laurel High School follows the guidelines detailed in the Viroqua HS Activity Code Handbook. Please note the following attendance guidelines as an example of important information.

Attendance

Daily attendance by a student is important and necessary. Parents play an important role in supporting this effort. Students and parents need to adhere to the participation rules listed below for practice and contests.

A student must attend at least three (3) of the four (4) blocks of the day of an activity to participate that day and must attend the entire afternoon unless there has been prior approval by an administrator. Acceptable excuses include medical appointments and family emergencies. The administration may request confirmation about appointments from a health care provider (additional penalties can be given by the coach, advisor

and/or administrator). This attendance can be a combination of on-site or virtual school coursework.

Any suspension, in-house or out-of-school, will make a student ineligible to participate on that day(s).

Excessive absences/tardies by a student athlete will result in a coach, athletic director, and principal meeting for consideration of the student athlete's eligibility status.

Activities Code Handbook:

The current [Activities Code Handbook](https://core-docs.s3.us-east-1.amazonaws.com/documents/asset/uploaded_file/409/Viroqua/5400985/24.25_REVISIED_ACTIVITIES_CODE_HANDBOOK.pdf) can be found at the Viroqua Area Schools main website by navigating to the Documents section then going to the Athletics page. [https://core-docs.s3.us-east-1.amazonaws.com/documents/asset/uploaded_file/409/Viroqua/5400985/24.25_REVISIED_ACTIVITIES_CODE_HANDBOOK.pdf]

Recommended Supplies

Beyond the normal pen and paper supplies, it is highly recommended that each student have their own removable flash drive. Students will also be responsible for their own supplies for special projects, such as index cards, poster board, main lesson books, etc. If a student plans to take advanced level math and science classes, a graphing calculator is a wonderful tool (Laurel does provide graphing calculators for math classes).

Room supplies

If possible, each student is asked to contribute the following:

- Three boxes of facial tissue, to be brought in at the beginning of the school year
- Lunch supplies such as plates, bowls, silverware, and napkins

Parent/School Communication

Laurel staff recognizes the value and importance of communication between parent, student, and school/staff. Many avenues have been created to help parents keep in touch with their student's teachers and vice versa.

Back-to-School Night

Before school starts, one night is provided for parents and students to stop by the school to meet teachers, bring in student supplies, and ask any questions families may have. This night typically takes place on the Wednesday of the week before school starts and runs from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm; the actual date is announced via Skyward, and on the [Viroqua Area School](#) and [Laurel High School](#) websites.

Websites

[Laurel High School](#)'s website contains a great deal of information:

[<https://sites.google.com/viroquablackhawk.org/laurelhighschool/home>]

[Viroqua Area School District](#) maintains a very informative website. It is recommended that parents check Viroqua High School announcements daily and the "Student Services" section periodically.

[<https://www.viroquaareaschools.com>]

Email

Email is a very important tool of communication for school newsletters, updates, and reminders. This may also be used to communicate student absences to the Laurel Director.

Phone

The Laurel phone number is (608) 637-1614; this number is connected to voicemail. As all Laurel staff teach during the day, there is seldom someone available to answer the phone immediately, not even during lunch time. Please leave a message and your phone call will be returned.

If there is an emergency, please call the Viroqua High School office at (608) 637-3191 and explain the situation.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

There is one night set aside each quarter for parent/teacher conferences.

It is not necessary to wait until parent/teacher conferences to discuss student progress with a Laurel staff member. If you would like to meet, please email the appropriate staff member to make an appointment.

School Closings & Delays

On school days when weather conditions or other emergencies make it extremely hazardous or unsafe for students to attend school, school will be canceled or delayed for two hours. An announcement concerning late starting times or closings for the Viroqua Area School District will be announced as early as 5:30 a.m.

It is important that each parent understands that they may make their own decision regarding school attendance and the weather. If you believe it is not safe to send your student to school, please call the Laurel office immediately to report your student's absence. This also pertains to picking students up early.

Addendum A: Laurel Independent Study FAQ

What is an independent study course (ISC)?

A Laurel independent study course is a half- or full-credit course that students complete on their own. An ISC allows students to pursue a longtime passion, explore a new area of interest or study a subject more in-depth. With guidance by the independent study facilitator, you will design and implement your study from start to finish. No matter the topic, an independent study course will **require daily work on the course**, ongoing research, thorough documentation, and regular meetings with the facilitator. **Note: A half-credit = 65 hours; a full credit = 130 hours.**

What are the requirements of an independent study course?

- You will first propose your course to the independent study facilitator in writing, detailing your plan and how you will specifically implement the study.
- You will complete and turn in unit folder sheets and self-evaluations by posted deadlines.
- You will either write a brief daily blog about the course (in addition to the required daily Laurel blog) or a weekly summary of the work completed that week (these must be turned into the facilitator each week). **Both the daily blog and weekly summary are to include the amount of time spent each day on the course.**
- You will meet with the independent study facilitator weekly.
- You will keep notes you've taken throughout the course.
- You will use a calendar or planner to manage and record the activity and the time you spend each day on the course.
- **You will document your work in each unit**, either with a research paper, demonstration, presentation, photo essay or other form of documentation approved by the ISC facilitator. Unless other arrangements are made with the facilitator, **all work completed during the unit must be turned in by the end of the unit.**

Who can take an independent study course?

Students in grades 10 through 12 who meet blogging and meeting requirements may do independent study courses with approval by the ISC facilitator.

Freshmen who meet blogging and meeting requirements for their first semester may be approved to do a foreign language course through Rosetta Stone during the second semester. Freshmen who demonstrate strong self-management skills may, on a case-by-case basis and with approval by the ISC facilitator, be allowed to do an independent study course of their choosing during the second semester.

Who do I give my ISC proposal to?

Proposals are to be submitted either in person or via email to the ISC facilitator by the announced due date.

When are ISC proposals due?

Proposal deadlines will be announced at the middle of each semester. At the latest, planning and preparation for an ISC should be finished during the semester prior to the one when the study is to be done. The aim is to start the course as soon as the new semester begins. Proposals should be turned in the last month (or sooner) of the preceding semester. For instance, the proposal for an ISC planned for the second semester should be turned in during the last unit of the previous semester; for a study in the first semester of the school year, the plan should be submitted during the second semester of the previous school year.

I missed the ISC proposal deadline. Can I still take an ISC this semester?

Late proposals will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Proposals received after the start of the semester may not be approved for full credit.

What would potentially prevent me from being able to take an ISC?

- Past history of blogging below 80 percent
- Past history of failure to complete or turn in folder sheets and evaluations for facilitated and/or ISCs
- Past history of failure to attend meetings with the ISC facilitator
- Past history of failing or only earning partial credit for previous ISCs
- General poor academic standing in other classes
- Incomplete, poorly detailed, or late ISC proposal

How will I know if my ISC has been approved?

Once you have submitted your proposal to the ISC facilitator, you will work together throughout the planning and preparation process. If all criteria are met, your proposal will likely be approved.

Remember: An ISC requires the same amount of time, work and commitment as a core class. When planning semester classes, required (core) classes always take precedence over elective classes (which include ISCs). A student's priority when planning should be the core classes before considering electives.

Addendum B: Blogging Requirements

Laurel students have a unique requirement for documenting their classes: writing a daily blog.

In addition to serving as an account of the student's daily classwork, blogs also may be used to share concerns, observations, questions, or whatever the student wishes to include. The student is required to blog only about Laurel classes and not those they attend at VHS (although many students do include a summary of those classes as well). Only Laurel teachers, facilitators, the student's parents and the student have access to their personal blog.

There are minimum blogging standards each student must meet in order to pass their classes that year and to graduate from Laurel High School.

1. Students are expected to blog on at least 80% of the school days per unit (there are eight units in the school year; the average for each is 19-21 days). While this may be achieved by blogging four out of the five school days (80%), if the unit has fewer than 20 days, this practice does not reach the minimum requirement. For best results, the student should blog every school day; then if a day or two are missed during the unit, it shouldn't cause the percentage to fall below the required number.
2. Students are expected to blog every day school is in session, which means if the student is absent (sick, on vacation, etc.) he or she is still expected to blog that day, even if it's a sentence explaining "I am sick today" or "I am on a trip today." On delayed start/early release days (due to weather or other circumstances), the student is expected to blog. On days school is canceled (due to weather, teacher in-service, unforeseen circumstances), the student may choose to not blog that day (though see # 3 for more details). Blogging also is required on Flexible Learning Days (when students are not attending in person but have assignments to do at home). Failure to blog on a required school-attendance day counts against the student's blogging percentage.
3. If a student misses a day, he or she may not go back and write a blog for that missed day. For example, if a student forgets to blog or has a sporting event on a Tuesday night, he or she cannot write a blog for that school day on Wednesday (or later). Instead, he or she can write a blog on a weekend day if homework was done that day or blog on days that school is not in session (holidays, other days school is canceled due to weather or in-service, etc.)

4. What should the blog include? The minimum is a few sentences about each of that days' classes, although students often enjoy writing paragraphs describing their day. For example, a minimal blog might say "I attended my first block math class and learned about polynomials. We are studying for a test on Wednesday. In English, we discussed "The Red Pony" and practiced writing a thesis paragraph. I'm writing mine about Gabilan's death and how it affects each member of the Tiflin family. In US History, we learned about the Gettysburg Address. I've heard parts of this speech before, but it's been fun to learn more about the entire document." Students may always write more, but less is not sufficient.
5. When is the best time to blog? Every student's school day is different, but the best time is to blog before leaving school for the day. There is a 35-minute Resource period at the end of each school day that is an ideal time for students to blog about that day's classes, while they are still fresh in their minds. Completing it during the school day means it won't be forgotten later that evening. However, many students have extracurricular meetings that happen during Resource, and Laurel often has a trivia contest on Fridays during Resource; on those days, students who typically write a blog during Resource should remember to do it at another time during the day. In all cases, for the blog to count, it must be written before midnight of the same day.
6. Some students may prefer to keep a daily school journal or diary instead of writing an online blog and this is acceptable, with permission from the head teacher. All blogging rules apply to a "hard copy" account, including the minimum 80% percent rule. A "hard copy" blog must be submitted by 8 a.m. the next day.