

WELCOME

Welcome to Laurel Ridge Elementary School! Our school is composed of an enthusiastic student body, supportive parents, and a talented and dedicated staff. This handbook has been prepared to answer questions about school policies and procedures. If at any time you have questions concerning these items or about our school, please call us at 703-426-3700 or visit the school's eb site at www.fcps.edu/LaurelRidgeES/.

COMMUNICATION

Good communication between home and school is vital to a successful school experience for each child. Questions relating to your child should be directed to the classroom teacher. A school newsletter containing school news, a calendar of upcoming events, and other important information, will be sent home monthly. Wednesday is "take home day". Newsletters, notices, progress reports, and work samples will be posted electronically on 24-7 or sent in the Wednesday Folders. Please be sure to check for this "take home envelope" each Wednesday and remember to return the envelope to school the next day.

Progress Reports

Progress Reports are issued four times per year at the completion of each grading period.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Conferences may be requested by either the parent or the teacher to discuss a specific concern or a child's general progress. Parents requesting a conference are asked to write a note to the teacher or call the office so arrangements can be made. Drop-in visits or conferences in the hall during the school day or after school hours are unfair to the teacher, the class, and the individual student. Please make an appointment. A parent-teacher conference is scheduled to discuss student progress at the end of the first grading period.

Work Folders

Work folders are another means of communication between school and home. A student's work samples with progress notations from the teacher are included in the work folder. Reviewing this student work is a good way to keep abreast of progress.

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

Curriculum

The task of providing education of the highest possible quality for all Laurel Ridge children is achieved through a balanced instructional program. The **FCPS Program of Studies (POS)** covers the same curriculum as the **Standards of Learning (SOL)** set by the Commonwealth of Virginia and in many cases goes beyond state standards. Teachers use a variety of instructional strategies and materials to promote student mastery of appropriate **Program of Studies (POS)** and **Standards of Learning (SOL)** objectives.

Homework

The purpose of homework assignments is to enrich, enhance, and/or extend the school experience. The amount and type of work will be determined by the teacher, who considers the level, maturity, and ability of the child. The work assigned for home study supplements and reinforces the work done in school.

Textbooks

Textbooks used at Laurel Ridge Elementary School are provided to students on a loan basis. Students are expected to be responsible for taking the best care possible of texts and other materials. Students will be charged for any books or loaned equipment lost or damaged beyond normal usage.

Field Trips

Field trip experiences expand instructional opportunities for students. Signed parental permission forms are required for all trips. Parents frequently accompany students; however, siblings may not.

Standards of Conduct

Children have the right to learn in an environment which allows them to acquire the best education available. Students are expected to conduct themselves properly. Proper conduct is defined as behavior that will reflect favorably on the individual and the school, shows consideration for fellow students, and creates a harmonious school atmosphere. At Laurel Ridge, teachers and staff assume responsibility for creating and maintaining an atmosphere that is conducive to learning.

The development of discipline and respect for self and others is considered critical and is an important component of the learning process. The rights and responsibilities of students as outlined by the Fairfax County School Board and contained in the booklet and Regulation 2601 **Student Responsibilities and Rights**. Since it is critical that students be aware of their responsibilities and rights and the very serious consequences that occur should any rule be violated, the contents of this document are reviewed and emphasized with all students.

Students and their parent/guardian sign the acknowledgement that they have reviewed the booklet. All procedures are consistently implemented.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Advanced Academic Resources: Students in grades 3 through 6 who have been identified as gifted and talented are given the opportunity to participate in a school-based program at Laurel Ridge. Special direct instruction is provided by a GT resource teacher to extend these students' learning. In addition, the GT resource teacher provides support to additional students in specific areas of strength. Opportunities for these students may include different content assignments and/or instructional groupings.

Band: Instruction in band instruments is provided for interested students in grades 5 and 6. Classes meet once a week for a 45 minute period during the school day with an itinerant instrumental music teacher.

ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages): Two ESOL teachers provide support to identified students in their English language development.

Guidance Counselor: A guidance counselor provides direct assistance to students, parents, and the educational staff to promote a positive school environment. Student counseling, parent-teacher consultation, and guidance instruction are provided.

Learning Disabilities: Students who are identified as having learning disabilities receive assistance in coping with and remediating learning difficulties based on an individual assessment of their needs. Services provided by a learning disabilities specialist may include adapted instruction within the regular education classroom, alternative strategies, small group instruction, remedial instruction, cooperative learning, and/or intensive individualized diagnostic prescriptive teaching.

Library Media Center: Laurel Ridge's media center contains a variety of resources including multimedia stations, as well as a large collection of books for pleasure reading and research. The media center is used regularly by classes for instruction in library/research skills, storytime, and book selection. In addition, the library is always open for book circulation, 9:00 AM – 3:30 PM. A computerized checkout system and online catalog are available. The Librarian serves as a resource to students, teachers, and parents.

Reading: A full-time reading specialist is a member of Laurel Ridge's faculty. This specialist coordinates the total reading program, provides diagnostic services for students, and serves as a resource to teachers and parents.

School Psychologist: Laurel Ridge is served by two school psychologists who work with several schools. The psychologists administer diagnostic tests and psychological evaluations to assist in special education and program placement. In addition, the psychologists are available for consultations and conferences.

Spanish Partial-Immersion: Identified students in first through sixth grades spend half their instructional day being taught language arts and social studies in English and the other half being taught mathematics, science and health in Spanish.

Speech: Two speech and language clinicians provide services directed toward remediation or problems in oral language, articulation, voice, and fluency. Students receive assistance individually and/or in small groups at all grade levels. In addition, the speech and language clinician routinely screens all students new to Laurel Ridge to assess speech and language development.

Strings: An itinerant instrumental music teacher provides instruction in string instruments for interested students in grades 4, 5, and 6. Classes meet once a week for a 45 minute period during the school day.

Social Worker: Laurel Ridge is served by two social workers. The social workers meet with parents of students who are being considered for special programs. In addition, the social worker assists families, teachers, and students in identifying and resolving emotional, social, and behavioral problems that interfere with academic performance.

SCHOOL PROCEDURES

Arrival and Dismissal

For pupil safety, it is requested that students **NOT** arrive more than 15 minutes before school begins. Teachers are busy setting up classrooms and materials for the day, and are therefore, not supervising students who arrive early.

If a child is detained after dismissal time for any reason, the parent will be notified. Any change in a child's usual routine for going home from school must be explained in a note from the parent to the principal. If the change involves going to another student's home, the other student must also bring a note indicating parental agreement. If notes are sent via e-mail, they must be sent to the classroom teacher and to *laurelridgees.attendance@fcps.edu*.

Absences – Tardiness

If your child will be absent or tardy, please notify the office by calling the attendance line 703-426-3737 or send an e-mail to

laurelridgees.attendance@fcps.edu or send a note via a sibling. Absences or tardiness should be reported by 9:15 AM.

The school is required to account for all absences; therefore, school personnel will call to check absentees not accounted for in advance. Since this is a time-consuming process, your call is greatly appreciated. This procedure does not relieve the parent of the need to write a note supporting the absence. Virginia State Law and the Fairfax County School Board Policy require that a written note of explanation from the parent or guardian be presented to the classroom teacher when the student returns to school.

Students who are not in their classrooms by 8:50 AM are considered tardy and must report to the office before going to their classrooms.

Release of Students During the School Day

If a student is to be dismissed early, a note should be sent to school stating the requested time of release. Release of children to persons other than parents or guardians is prohibited unless authorized by the parent or guardian. The parent or person designated in the note must come to the office and sign for the child. Help us to minimize classroom interruptions by ensuring that your child know the time he/she is to report to the office for dismissal. **NO child may leave the building without first checking out in the office.**

Safety

The safety of our students is a priority. School security must be everyone's responsibility. All visitors (including parents) must report to the office immediately upon entering the building, sign in, and obtain a name tag or badge to wear within the building. Staff members will challenge all visitors not wearing volunteer name tags or visitor badges. As a safety precaution, students will use the "buddy system" when going from classrooms. To provide the most direct e-mail communication during emergencies, please ensure that all parent/guardian e-mail addresses are correct on school records.

Visitors – Messages

In order to protect instructional time, interruptions are kept to a minimum. All persons entering the building during the school day must report to the office first. Parents are welcome to visit their child's classroom; however, prior arrangements should be made with the teacher and the office. School-age visitors (i.e., family relatives and friends) are not permitted to attend school as classroom guests or to ride the school bus.

Any item (lunch, supplies, etc.) and/or messages for students should be brought to the office to prevent interference with classroom instruction.

Children will not make telephone calls during the school day except in cases of emergency. Please help your child develop a routine of placing things which are to be brought to school in a designated place in order that books, homework, money, etc., will not be left at home. This will help eliminate unnecessary class interruptions and help your child develop responsibility.

Transfers

If you are moving to another school area, please notify the school office in advance so the necessary reports and transfer forms can be prepared.

Emergency Information

It is of utmost importance that we have your correct address and phone numbers. Please keep the office informed of any changes in home, work, or emergency contact information. This must be kept current at all times, especially for emergency contact purposes.

Articles Brought to School

Be sure you know what your child brings to school, particularly items for sharing time. Items for sharing should be of interest and value to the class, in connection with some phase of study. Extremely valuable items or dangerous items should not be brought. Should a teacher take personal property from a student because its use/possession is illegal, against school division policy or regulation, or against school rules, the school or teacher will seek to care for the property but will have no responsibility for its return or replacement if the property is lost, stolen, or damaged by fire, vandalism, or other peril. Live animals may not be brought to school without permission of the teacher and principal. This policy was instituted by the Fairfax County Health Department as a safety measure. Students should not bring any more money to school than needed for the day. The school cannot be responsible for money brought to school. When students need money for lunch or other items, parents are requested to send exact change.

Parties/Birthday Treats

The instructional program is our first priority. In keeping with this, each class will be permitted only two parties on school time. Dates of the parties are at the discretion of the teacher. Often, parents are asked to assist. Please discourage students' requests for surprise parties since these requests will be denied. Birthday "treats" require prior approval of the child's teacher. It is requested that invitations for out-of-school parties not be distributed at school since this often hurts the feelings of those students who are not invited.

Lost and Found

Parents are urged to mark with their child's name all articles of clothing and items which might be misplaced or lost. Articles which have been found are kept near the cafeteria. Encourage your child to check for lost articles. Parents are welcome to inspect this ever-expanding collection of items. Unclaimed items are donated to a charity.

Fire and Tornado Drills

During the first month of school, a fire drill will be scheduled each week. Fire drills will occur monthly during the remainder of the year. Tornado drills will be scheduled three times a year. Teachers will instruct the students on correct procedures for these important safety requirements.

Dress and Appearance

All students are expected to dress appropriately for the educational environment. Any clothing that interferes with or disrupts the educational environment is unacceptable. Clothing should fit, be neat and clean, and conform to standards of safety, good taste, and decency. Additional guidelines and specific prohibitions can be found in Regulation 2613. Students not complying with this code will be asked to cover noncomplying clothing, change clothes, or go home. Repeated infractions will result in disciplinary action.

Food Services

School lunches are served daily at a cost of \$2.65. Milk, white or chocolate, is served with each lunch or may be purchased separately for 60 cents per half pint. If your child is allergic to milk, a doctor's note is required to substitute juice for milk in the lunch. Ice cream and other ala carte items may also be purchased by children but are limited to two "sweets" per meal. Carbonated drinks are not allowed for children.

A computerized cash register system in our school cafeteria enables a student to have a personalized account with a bar-coded I.D. number to use for meals and ala carte purchases. Our computer keeps track of the amount of money in the student's account. A check (payable to Laurel Ridge Cafeteria) should be sent to the school cafeteria on any morning (preferably Monday morning) to enter money in an account. Please include a note to indicate if the money is to be used only for full meals, ala carte items, or a combination of the two. Parents are encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity to eliminate the need to remember lunch money daily. Menus are sent home monthly to assist parents in planning.

Charging lunch is NOT permitted. When a student has forgotten lunch or lunch money, the PTA provides lunch for that day. An envelope will be sent home and payment is expected on the next school day.

Applications for free or reduced-price lunches are available at the school. All requests remain confidential, the guidelines prescribed by the state are applied.

Health Services

Clinic: Clinic Services are provided at Laurel Ridge by a Clinic Aid. A child who does not feel well at school is sent to the clinic. A temperature is normal and there is no obvious cause for discomfort, the child may lie down for a short time. If, after resting, there is no improvement or there is a rise in temperature, the parent or person designated as the emergency contact will be notified and asked to transport the child home.

Medication: No medicine, including preparations such as aspirin, Bufferin, gargles, ear drops, eye washed, ointments and the like, may be given to students by school personnel. This provision is made by the School Board to prevent possible harm to pupils through improper administration of medicine or treatment and to avoid possible liability on the part of the School Board and its personnel. Exceptions allowed under School Board Policy may be made only with written clearance and certain stipulations. Please contact the Clinic Aide for proper procedures, regarding exceptions for prescribed medication, for antibiotic medication, for "over-the-counter" medication, for epinephrine injections, and for inhalers. **Under no circumstances should medication be in the classroom, in teachers' desks, or in students' lunch boxes. Parents are required to bring the medication to the clinic and to submit the proper signed forms on the morning of the first day medication is to be taken at school. All medication must be brought to school by parents in the original container.** All medication will be counted and completed forms will be verified when they are brought to the clinic.

Transportation

Bus Riders: Bus service is provided for students who live more than one mile from school or where walking is hazardous. Schedules for bus riders are mailed to students prior to the first day of school. Students are expected to cooperate with safety patrols and bus drivers, behave in an orderly manner, obey safety rules, remain seated and talk quietly after boarding the bus. Students who persist in disruptive behavior can be denied temporarily (or permanently in extreme cases) the privilege of riding the bus.

Safety Patrols: Responsible students have been selected to participate in the school safety program directed by a teacher sponsor with assistance from Fairfax

County Police. The primary objective is to promote safety among children. Patrols have neither the authority nor the training to stop or direct traffic.

Walkers: Students who walk to school should be reminded to follow safety rules. Prescribed routes which are monitored by safety patrols should be taken. Students should walk on sidewalks, avoiding neighborhood yards.

Car Riders: When students must be transported by car the Kiss and Ride area is to be used. Kiss and Ride safety procedures as outlined on a separate flyer must be followed. During arrival and dismissal times, cars must exit from the school parking lot by making RIGHT TURNS ONLY. For safety reasons, U-turns will not be permitted on Commonwealth Blvd.

Emergency School Closing – Delayed Opening

The school system has several schedules set up to deal with special conditions (such as severe weather) that would close schools all day or early, or delay an opening. Announcements are provided to the media as soon as a decision is made. Please do not phone the school. As a result of busy phone lines, the school often receives the announcement after it has been made on the radio, Channel 21, Keep In Touch, or on the FCPS website, www.fcps.edu. Parents may request to receive e-mail emergency announcement messages by registering on the website at "Keep In Touch". Parents are responsible for making arrangements for care of their children when schedule changes occur. Please make your children aware of these plans.

LAUREL RIDGE ED PROGRAM

The ED Program for students with emotional disabilities provides special education services for identified students. Services are provided in individual and/or small group settings by specialists based on individual student needs.