

# 2023-2024 Team Handbook



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# HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

This handbook communicates concrete requirements for students to abide by while on the team. It goes hand-in-hand with our Team Description document in describing the expectations for team members.

It is recommended for both students and parents to review this handbook in its entirety before joining the team, to ensure they both understand what will be asked of them.

In all cases, the Mentor team wants to ensure that students have a positive experience, and walk away having learned invaluable life skills to benefit them wherever life takes them. We provide this handbook to ensure a unified mindset oriented toward personal growth.

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out to us! Our email is [frc1736@gmail.com](mailto:frc1736@gmail.com).

Thank you again for participating with us!

## PLANNED OFFSEASON 2023 ACTIVITIES

The following is a high-level description of the activities a full-time student will participate in this year.

**IN ALL CASES, <https://robotcasserole.org/calendar.html> WILL HAVE THE MOST UP-TO-DATE SCHEDULE.**

### **Season Prep Meetings: Aug-Nov**

- In Person Meetings at [the Building AC Practice Facility](#), Tues/Thurs 6-8pm
- Returning students start Aug 22th
- Open House Aug 31st/Sept 5th
- Team Roster announced Sept 9th
- New students start Sept 12th
- Last meeting day of the fall: Nov 17th
- General Meeting Topics:
  - Team orientation & structure
  - Safety Training

- First-year Student basic Mechanical/Software training
- Returning student CAD/Electrical training
- Season preparation

**Parent Meeting: Thursday, Sept. 28th, 6-7PM**

- Team overview & expectations with parents
- Dedicated time to fill out registration forms after the meeting

**Peoria Area Offseason Event: Saturday, Oct 28th.**

- We plan to participate in the Peoria offseason event, "Roboteer Rumble"
- Tremont High School
- *More details to come, watch the calendar*

**Outreach**

- FIRST Lego League Scrimmage Events - Volunteering
- FIRST Lego League Peoria Tournament - Volunteering
- Introduce a Girl To STEM Day - Team Presentation
- Caterpillar Tech Center Family Day - Team Presentation

## PLANNED BUILD SEASON 2024 ACTIVITIES

The following is a high-level description of the activities a full-time student will participate in this coming year.

**IN ALL CASES, <https://robotcasserole.org/calendar.html> WILL HAVE THE MOST UP-TO-DATE SCHEDULE.**

**Build Season:** Jan 7th - Mar 11th (TBD, see below)

- *Normal Meeting Schedule:*
  - Monday-Thursday, 6:00PM to 9:00PM
  - Saturday: 8:00AM to 4:00PM
  - Sunday, Jan 9th, Noon-4:00PM (Special extra meeting)
- *Reduced Meeting Schedule:*
  - Monday-Thursday, 6:00PM to 8:00PM
  - Saturday: 8:00AM to Noon

At a minimum, the first six weeks of our build season on the *Normal Meeting Schedule*. Depending on regional dates and team progress, we will announce moving to a *Reduced Meeting Schedule* later in the season.

**Central Illinois Regional:** March 14-16 - Bradley University, Peoria IL

**Travel Regional: TO BE DETERMINED** - The event selection process should conclude by mid November.

**Championships: TENTATIVE** - Week of April 17-20th - Houston TX

Concrete plans for Regionals will be announced later in November after FIRST's registration opens up. Concrete plans for the Championship will likely not form until after we know if we have qualified to attend it. Exact dates may shift due to travel plans.

The end of the season is whenever we lose our last competition. We will likely continue meeting regularly between competitions. The safest assumption is to assume the reduced meeting schedule will continue through April 17th, though we may be finished earlier.

## STUDENT SCHOOL-RELATED REQUIREMENTS

### Academic Performance Guidelines

School comes first - Students must meet & maintain their school and parental academic expectations. Generally, we would consider this to be a C average or above. We can work with parents, teachers, and students to help ensure academic goals are met. Mentors are available to help students balance responsibilities on the team with responsibilities at home and at school.

Mentors have been known to help with homework in the past. Bringing occasional, specific questions about homework is allowed and encouraged. However, please do not simply bring your homework to the warehouse and spend the whole time working on it, detracting from the time we have together as a team.

### School Absences while Traveling

Students will be required to have a signed excused absence eligibility form from their school counselor to travel with the team.

## ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

### Attendance

Student attendance will be tracked. This is both for student accountability, and safety. Attendance is measured by badge-in time at the team system. Students are required to badge-in to the team system at every meeting.

Please notify a team lead or your sub-team mentor if you know you will not attend a meeting, as soon as possible.

If an absence was communicated and approved by team leadership, it will in almost all cases be considered **excused**. An absence that was not communicated will be considered **unexcused**. The number of excused and unexcused absences is used as part of the basis to determine student travel eligibility.

The official period of attendance tracking starts on the first meeting of the offseason, and continues through the last meeting before our first competition. The period between competitions is more flexible, but students are still expected to communicate their absences.

### **Active Participation**

The primary factor determining a student's success on the team is ACTIVE PARTICIPATION. Just physically being at the meetings and outreach events is not enough, students must contribute their ideas and energy to the team.

An Actively-Participating student will:

1. Enthusiastically take on a task when assigned to one, and complete it to the best of their abilities.
2. Voice issues and bring observed problems to light.
3. Promptly engage another student or mentor when they encounter a problem, in an effort to clear any roadblocks.
4. Provide opinions in discussions, or articulate that they do not currently have an opinion.
5. Communicate with the leadership team if the work assigned is too little or too much, too tough or too easy.
6. Avoid non-productive distractions, especially those related to extraneous websites or cell phone usage.

Communication is the key to success. If you have any concerns about your ability to participate, please reach out to the leadership team to open a discussion.

Students who consistently exhibit a lack of active participation may be removed from the team.

# PROFESSIONAL & PRODUCTIVE ENVIRONMENT

The team consists of a diverse group of individuals, who bring many different backgrounds and points of view to the table. This is a competitive advantage, as it enhances our ability to problem-solve and learn effectively.

We believe every individual who spends time and effort on the team deserves equitable opportunity to contribute, learn, and succeed. We require each individual member of the team to work toward keeping these powerful opportunities available to all who seek them.

Human relationships are complex. We do not seek to give prescriptive instructions on how team members are to interact with each other. We need all students and mentors to:

1. Listen before speaking. Understand the other before challenging or refuting statements.
2. Use prudence when discussing sensitive or emotionally-charged topics. Never make another feel unwelcomed through your words.
3. Limit public displays of affection to that which would be appropriate in a professional, office environment.
4. Dress in a way which is safe, comfortable, and appropriate for the tasks at hand.
5. Ensure at least two adults are present for all conversations between mentors and students..

These environment-building guidelines apply to all team-sponsored activities at the warehouse, outreach events, and during travel.

# STUDENT CLASSIFICATION & TRAVEL REQUIREMENTS

We understand that students have many obligations outside of Robot Casserole - keeping busy is a good thing! As such, we strive to achieve a reasonable level of flexibility to students with complex schedules. We emphasize a few principles:

1. The more you put into your work on the team, the more you get out of it
2. Communication is the key to preventing misunderstandings.

Students will fall into one of two categories:

### **Full-Time Students**

A full time student meets the following criteria:

- By hours, attended 80% of team required meetings
- No more than 2 unexcused absences in any calendar month
- Participated at **two** outreach events between May 1st, 2023, and the first day of travel.

By default, Full-time students will participate in the Travel Regional.

### **Part-Time Students**

All students which do not meet the Full-Time requirements are Part-time students.

By default, Part-Time students will **not** participate in the Travel Regional.

Note that travel privileges are not guaranteed. Team leadership will have the final say as to who is eligible to travel. Active Participation, respect for leadership, and safe behavior are key additional factors in determining travel eligibility.

If you have doubts about your travel eligibility, please open a discussion with the mentor team so we can advise your particular situation.

We plan to make all travel eligibility decisions two weeks before the first date of travel. Students should expect explicit notification around this time. However, this does not preclude the possibility of removing travel privileges within the two-week window.

## **TECHNOLOGY POLICY**

### **Cell Phone & Other Device Usage**

We believe students should have access to technology, and use it appropriately, as a tool to benefit their activities on the team.

We have had issues in the past with students taking images and making social media posts, some of which had offensive and abusive content. This is strictly prohibited and grossly inappropriate. Doing so will incur immediate removal from the team. If there is *any* question in your mind about whether something is appropriate: choose the conservative answer. Do not share it.

### **Taking Photos:**

Though we do not make a general policy to prohibit student-taken photos, we would prefer the Business team or a mentor to take the photo.



Students should only be taking photos on their personal devices for quick documentation when the business team is not available. Photos must be of robot parts or team tools, not of the surrounding facility. They should never be posted to social media. Business team is still responsible for all main team documentation activities.

### **Team Computers:**

The team has a supply of laptops which students use for various pieces of work. We expect you to treat these as your own. Keep them charged, do not drop or otherwise physically abuse them.

### **Internet:**

The team provides an internet connection for student and mentor usage. Members are allowed to connect their personal devices to this connection.

Caterpillar Inc. monitors web traffic to and from our team area. We also use various tracking technologies internal to the team to keep metrics on network usage and websites visited. We can be audited on our internet usage.

Keep all your internet browsing limited to robotics-related websites. If you accidentally access an inappropriate website, please let someone on the mentor team know. We need to ensure we can handle it before an audit catches it at a later date. No punishment will be brought against anyone who brings a concern or mistake forward in good faith.

**FACILITY:** Students are required to stay within the allocated area while at our facility. They are not allowed to explore, go into other areas, or touch any equipment not owned by the team.

## **TEAM REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS AND COST**

### **REQUIRED TEAM REGISTRATION & FORMS:**

The following registration forms (paper and electronic) are required for all students.

- Early September:
  - Robot Casserole Application
    - Communicates your contact info and interests
  - Caterpillar Release, Waiver of Liability, and Indemnity Agreement
    - Required legal paperwork
  - FIRST registration <https://my.firstinspires.org/AccountManager/Account/Register>

- Registration with FIRST - must be done by each individual and their parents.
- February
  - School excused absences forms
    - Permission to be off of school for team events
  - Student Travel Rules & Expectations
    - Specific info and requirements for students traveling with the team.

### **COST:**

The vast majority of the team costs are covered by our sponsors, principally Caterpillar Inc. Each year, they invest around \$900 per student to cover event registration, robot components, tools, food, and apparel. These are costs we do not ask any team member to cover.

### **Travel Fees:**

- *Central Illinois Regional:* No Fee
- *Travel Regional:* **\$100** due by January 31st made out to "Robot Casserole"
- *Championship event:* TBD

Note: If you or your family is unable to meet any of these requirements, or pay the travel fee, please speak with one of our Administration Team Members or email us at [frc1736@gmail.com](mailto:frc1736@gmail.com).

**Team Apparel:** The team will provide each new student a set of team t-shirts and a chef hat upon joining the team. Additional t-shirts or a replacement chef hat can be purchased. Team spirit wear and gear will also be available for purchase.

**Build Season Lunches:** Parent volunteers help keep our team fed during the longer Saturday build season meetings. This year, we are asking two things of each family:

- 1) Volunteer for one lunch - sign up to bring a dish and/or volunteer to setup, serve, and tear down.
- 2) Bring in one case of bottled water for lunches and travel

More details will be distributed later, as build season approaches.

## **DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES**

It is up to the student to read all team documentation to understand their privileges and responsibilities on the team.

Participation on the team is a **privilege**.

When a student does not meet the requirements the team sets forth, the following discipline steps are taken:

- **Step 1:** The student will be advised by a pair of mentors as to the unacceptable actions and asked to make appropriate changes to remedy the situation.
- **Step 2:** The student's parent/parents/guardians will be contacted and a meeting will be scheduled to discuss the situation. The student may not return to the team or participate in team activities until the meeting has taken place.
- **Step 3:** The student will be suspended from the team for the next 2 team functions/events or a period of 2 weeks, whichever is longer. During this time they may not participate in any team activities.
- **Step 4:** The student will be removed from the team.

**If offenses are egregious enough in nature, some steps may be skipped to the point of immediate expulsion from the team.**

## **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

The following requirements apply for posting *about* the team using *your own* social media accounts:

- Make us look good! Use high quality photos, proper grammar and spelling, keep it positive.
- Feed the Algorithm! Use hashtags, tag our accounts, use links
- While at the warehouse, stay focused on the robotics tasks. The Business Team will handle documenting the process for social media purposes.
- While at competitions, work with the committees to help tell our story!

# STUDENT/PARENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

## Robot Casserole FIRST Robotics Team

By signing this sheet, I agree to the following:

I have read through the handbook and understand the responsibilities that being a member of this team involves.

I understand that participation on the Robot Casserole Robotics team is a privilege. I will treat it as such.

I understand that I am required to **actively participate** and the consequences of my actions can ultimately lead to my removal from the team.

I understand that being part of *FIRST* Robotics team can provide me with knowledge and skills that will benefit me for a lifetime. I will treat this opportunity accordingly.

I agree that my image, in photo and video, may be captured at team-related events and used for team promotion.

I understand that, as a member of the Robot Casserole, my actions reflect on not only myself and my family, but also my School, Caterpillar, and other sponsors and supporters of our team. I will act accordingly.

I agree to act with Gracious Professionalism in all that I do while a member of Robot Casserole, Team 1736 and be respectful of mentors and other team members.

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Student's Signature

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Parent's Signature

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Date