



Robot Casserole

FIRST Robotics Competition Team 1736

Team Handbook

www.robotcasserole.org

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HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

The mentor team wants to ensure that students have a positive experience and learn critical life skills before leaving the team. We provide this handbook to detail the basic rules and requirements set up to ensure that learning occurs.

It is required that students and parents read this handbook in its entirety before joining the team to ensure both understand what will be asked of them.

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

PLANNED OFFSEASON 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](#)
- 6:00-9:00 PM, Thursday
- New students start in August
- Last meeting day of the fall: The Thursday before Thanksgiving
- General Meeting Topics:
 - Team orientation & structure
 - Safety Training
 - Skills Training for New and Returning Students
 - Season preparation

Parent Meeting: Check the calendar for time and date

- 6-7:15 PM (Required) - Team overview & expectations with parents
- 7:15-8 PM (Optional) - Dedicated time to fill out registration forms after the meeting
- Students will stay until 9 pm

Peoria Area Offseason Event: Usually 3rd/4th Saturday in October

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

PLANNED BUILD SEASON 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: Starts with “Kickoff” in January. Concludes, at the earliest, on Mar 22nd (TBD, see below).

- *Normal Meeting Schedule:*
 - Monday-Thursday, 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM
 - Saturday: 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM
 - Sunday after kick-off 1:00 PM-4:00 PM (Special extra meeting)
- *Reduced Meeting Schedule:*
 - Tuesday/Thursday, 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM
 - Saturday: 8:00 AM to Noon

At a minimum, the first six weeks of our build season run 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.

Two Regionals:

Central Illinois Regional: March - Bradley University, Peoria IL

Travel Regional: TO BE DETERMINED - We try to go to different regionals based off drive time.

Championships: TENTATIVE - April - Houston TX. Only attend if we qualify.

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

The end of the season will take place a week or two after our last competition. We will likely continue meeting regularly between competitions. The safest assumption is to assume the reduced meeting schedule will continue through World's.

STUDENT SCHOOL-RELATED REQUIREMENTS

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.

The team can work with parents, teachers, and students to help balance responsibilities on the team with responsibilities at home and at school.

Historically, students have been responsible for getting a signed absence form for competitions where school is missed. The team can sign these.

ELEMENTS OF STUDENT SUCCESS

Attendance

Successful students show up.

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. Repeated absences without communication to team mentors is grounds for dismissal from the team.

The official period of attendance tracking starts with 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.

Attendance and participation in outreach events determine travel eligibility. Excessive absences are grounds for dismissal from the team.

Active Participation

Successful students show up and participate.

An **actively participating** student will:

1. Participate in outreach events; new students must participate in 1 outreach event, returning students must participate in 2 events.

2. Enthusiastically take on a task when assigned to one, and complete it to the best of their abilities.
3. Voice issues and bring observed problems to a team mentor or mentors.
4. Promptly engage another student or mentor when they encounter a problem, in an effort to clear any roadblocks.
5. Provide opinions during discussions or articulate that they do not currently have an opinion.
6. Communicate with the leadership team if the work assigned is too little or too much, too tough or too easy.
7. 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.

Consistent lack of active participation is grounds for dismissal from the team and/or inability to travel.

Professional Behavior

Successful students show up, participate, and help others to do the same.

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 an equitable opportunity to contribute, learn, and succeed. We require each member of the team to work toward keeping these powerful opportunities available to all who seek them.

Human relationships are complex. We cannot prescribe instructions for all situations. However, we ask 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 unwelcome through your words.
3. Limit public displays of affection to those that would be appropriate in a professional, office environment.
4. Dress in a way that 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, during travel, and in the digital environment.

TEAM MEMBERSHIP

Our team is a varsity sport. Like any varsity team, we desire to curate a group of students and mentors to maximize our team's impact on its members.

For this season:

- The team will accept all students (up to a capacity limit) after open house, for the duration of the fall training.
- Mentors will provide in-person or written feedback to all students partway through the fall training on their progress.
- The team roster for the build season will be selected and announced in November.

Criteria for team membership will be based primarily on:

- Safe and professional behavior at all times
- Clear and consistent communication, especially regarding attendance
- Active participation at all times.

All students should view the offseason as a form of "tryout". Bring your best to the practice, so that we may perform our best at competitions.

TECHNOLOGY POLICY

Discord

We use Discord for day-to-day communications. There are different channels for various subteams. Channels are monitored by mentors. The "professional behavior" guidelines apply to communications in Discord. Anything inappropriate should be screenshot and sent to the team email or shown to one of the mentors on the admin team.

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.

Online interactions involving the team (or between team members) are subject to the same

professionalism requirements as all in-person interactions.

If there is *any* question in your mind about whether something is appropriate, choose the conservative answer. Do not share it.

Taking Photos:

The business team has primary responsibility for producing and posting all team-related content. Please work with the business team if you would like to participate in official team social media production.

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.

- August:
 - Robot Casserole Application

- Communicates your contact info and interests. Other questions are used for award submissions and data collection for possible grant requests.
 - Caterpillar Release, Waiver of Liability, and Indemnity Agreement
 - Required legal paperwork
- October
 - 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 from school for team events
 - Student Travel Rules & Expectations Meeting
 - 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 “Friends of Robot Casserole” or sent to PayPal (Friends of Robot Casserole) or VENMO (@Rusty-Casserole-1)
- *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.

Team Apparel: The team will provide each new student with two team shirts and a chef's hat after successful completion of the build season. Additional team shirts (\$25) or a replacement embroidered chef hat (\$20) 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 a few things of each family:

- 1) Bring one dish to pass to one weekend lunch
- 2) Sign up to help with setup/serving/teardown at one weekend lunch

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

DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

Students are expected to be familiar with all rules and regulations for being on the team.

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 to posting *about* the team using *your own* social media accounts:

- Make us look good! Use high-quality photos, proper grammar and spelling, and keep it positive.
- Feed the Algorithm! Use hashtags, tag our accounts, and 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!

Images and videos of students will be taken and used for team-related promotion (social media, presentations, advertisements, etc.). By participating in the team, you agree that your image may be used for these team-related purposes.

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.

Student's Signature

Parent's Signature

Date

Student Name (printed)

2026 Season Robot Casserole Events

October 16th - Required Parent Meeting - 6:00 - 7:15

October 23rd Parenting Meeting #2 for new parents who could not attend the required meeting on the 16th

October 25th - Roboteer Rumble - 7:15 am to 5 pm; All available students; families invited

October 29th - Outreach - Introduce a Girl to STEM - Caterpillar AC Building - 10:45 AM to 12:30 PM

November 8th/15th - Possible **outreach** opportunity FIRST Lego League

November 20th - Last preseason meeting

December 13th - Possible **outreach**; FLL qualifier at Liberty

January 8th - First build season meeting from 6 pm to 9 pm

January 10th - FRC Kick-off - 10:30 AM Families are welcome to attend and watch the kick-off with the team. After the broadcast, the team will digest the rule book and start prioritizing design goals.

February 22 (not confirmed) Engineering Day - **outreach** event at Peoria Riverfront Museum; details coming

March 19 - 21 Central Illinois Regional - Bradley University; Load-in will be on the 18th; 5 students and 2 mentors will be needed

April 2 - 4 Miami Valley - Xavier University; Early crew will leave on the 1st (typically 4 students and 2 mentors)

April 29 - May 2 - Houston, George R. Brown Convention Center