

TEAM 1538 / THE HOLY COWS

2015-2016 Team Handbook

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Introduction

About This Handbook

The purpose of this handbook is to detail the rules, expectations and policies for Team 1538 / The Holy Cows. These have been developed and refined over the team's history. For clarification, questions or concerns please ask a team mentor.

About Team 1538 / The Holy Cows

What Is Team 1538 / The Holy Cows?

Team 1538 / The Holy Cows is the robotics team for High Tech High, High Tech High International and High Tech High Media Arts. The team was established in the Fall of 2004 by David Berggren, an Engineering Instructor at High Tech High. Each year, The Holy Cows participate primarily in the FIRST Robotics Competition (FRC). FRC is an international robotics competition aimed at getting young people excited about Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM).

Over the team's 11 year history it has grown from one of the smallest programs in FRC to one of the largest and most recognizable in the world. The team's goals reach far beyond building a competitive robot. The Holy Cows work year round to reach out into the community, spreading the FIRST message and showing people the importance of STEM and STEM Education.

There is no prior experience necessary to become a member of The Holy Cows. However, team members are expected to be dedicated and hard working. This is a demanding program however, it's also one of the most rewarding things a student can do while in high school. Students who have graduated from Team 1538 have gone on to attend some of the nation's top engineering schools such as Olin, Harvey Mudd, UC Berkley and RPI. Many have gone on to have successful careers at some of the world's biggest technology companies like Google, Yelp!, Uber and General Dynamics.

FIRST Robotics Competition Hall of Fame

In April of 2013 Team 1538 / The Holy Cows received FIRST's highest honor, the Chairman's Award. FRC created the Chairman's Award as a way to keep team's focus on the 'big picture' of culture change and building an appreciation of STEM. As FIRST puts it, the Chairman's Award goes to the team that is a "Role model for other teams to emulate".

This accomplishment also put Team 1538 in the FIRST Robotics Competition Hall of Fame. The FRC Hall of Fame is comprised of all the past Chairman's Award winners. With only one team winning each year, this is a very small group of teams. Out of the ~5500 teams to have ever competed in FRC only 23 have ever won the Chairman's Award.

Being in the Hall of Fame also means that The Holy Cows are automatically qualified for the FIRST World Championship every year. However, team members should not take this honor for granted and should continue working hard to continue making Team 1538 / The Holy Cows a 'role model for others to emulate'.

Mission / Goals

The 'big picture' goals of Team 1538 / The Holy Cows are as follows:

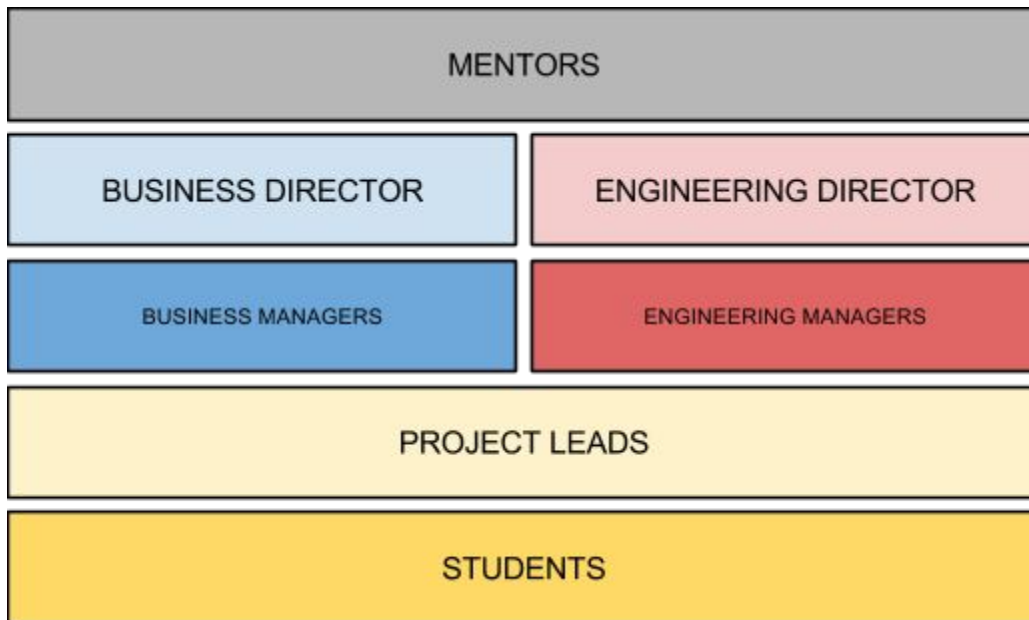
- To Grow An Appreciation For Science, Technology, Engineering and Math In The Students And The Outside Community.
 - Support other robotics and organizations that aim to excite people about STEM and STEM education.
 - Create and grown an awareness with local, state and national policy makers to help support STEM education in schools.
 - Support other FRC teams in a way that helps make sustainable, long lasting programs.

- To Prepare Students For The Real World.
 - Foster and grow intangible skills such as teamwork, project/time management and strategic thinking that they will need to be successful beyond high school.
 - Give students opportunities to work with processes and techniques that are used in industry.

- To Field A Competitive Robot That Can Compete For A World Championship.
 - An engineer cannot be created in a 6 week build season. However, fielding a competitive robot creates an excitement about STEM in the students. In addition, it help gives students the confidence that they can be successful in a STEM field.
 - Fielding a competitive robot can inspire other teams and their students to continue improving their own teams.

Team Structure

The team is structured into three 5 levels:



Mentors

The team's mentors are responsible for guiding and directing the team. As of the 2015 season Team 1538 has 9 mentors:

| Name | Years On Team | FIRST Exp. | Primary Areas |
|----------------|----------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Jon Jack | 11 | 11 | All |
| Cathy Schulz | 6 | 6 | Business / Travel / Team Management |
| David Berggren | 11 | 11 | Mechanical / Manufacturing |
| Kiet Chau | 4 | 11 | Mechanical / Controls / Strategy |
| Helen Chau | 4 | 4 | Controls / Strategy |
| Rene Haro | 3 | 16 | Strategy / Website / Social Media |
| Bill Berggren | 11 | 12 | Manufacturing |
| Ken Lai* | 1 | 1 | Controls |
| Nick Kurigian* | 1 | 5 | Mechanical |

*Jr. Mentors

Directors

The directors are responsible for a department on the team. There are two departments on the team: Business and Engineering. The Business Department is responsible for all non-engineering projects such as fundraising, graphic design, social media, outreach and operations. The Engineering Department is responsible for all engineering related projects such as robot design & construction, engineering documentation and the robot's competition performance. Being a director is the highest position a student can have on the team. They're responsible for overseeing all tasks and projects assigned to their department. For the 2015-2016 season the team's Directors are:

| Department | Engineering | Business |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Name | Krizstina Rakosi | Rachel Dunkin |
| Grade | Junior | Senior |
| Years On Team | 2 | 2 |
| Email | krisztina.rakosi@team1538.com | rachel.dunkin@team1538.com |

Managers

Managers oversee a smaller area of a department. Their job is to work with their director, the team's mentors & project leads to execute projects and tasks assigned to their department. Each manager's job is different in respect to workload and time of the year. For example, the Manager

of Scouting & Strategy's job is most demanding during the competition season. Therefore, during the Fall they might not be as busy as the Manager of Fundraising who is working on finishing grants and running fundraisers. There isn't one managers position that is more important than the other. Each position is equally important to the overall success of the team. For the 2015-2016 season the team's managers are:

| Name | Years On Team | Department | Email |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| Haven King (Senior) | 3 | Mechanical Design | haven.king@team1538.com |
| Mario Avila (Junior) | 3 | Controls | mario.avila@team1538.com |
| Dorothy Robertson (Senior) | 2 | Scouting & Strategy | dorothy.robertson@team1538.com |
| Victor Tran (Junior) | 1 | Community Development | victor.tran@team1538.com |
| Jackson Willier (Sophomore) | 1 | Finance | jackson.willier@team1538.com |
| Lexi Colmenero (Junior) | 2 | Documentation | lexi.colmenero@team1538.com |

Project Leads

The project leads are students who are responsible for the planning and execution of projects and events. They are awarded by the mentors, directors and managers on a volunteer basis. Students can request to be in charge of a specific project by notifying the team's mentors and directors. Examples of what a project lead would do would be:

- Planning our FLL Qualifying Tournaments (setup, jobs, creating handouts, etc)
- Writing a grant (collecting information, filling out the application, etc)
- Robot Modifications (planning, acquiring materials, implementation, etc)

Sponsors

Sponsors are an integral part of Team 1538 / The Holy Cows. Without their support, our team would not be where it is today. It is important for all members of Team 1538 to remember that they are extremely fortunate to have the sponsor support they have and to not take that support for granted.

Students

While the team has its own requirements, rules and expectations for students, all school rules still do apply. For example, if something is not covered in this handbook, but there is a school rule or policy - the school rule or policy still applies.

Student Requirements

Student members must meet all of the following criteria to be on Team 1538 / The Holy Cows:

- Be enrolled in one of the following schools:
 - The Gary & Jerri-Ann Jacobs High Tech High
 - High Tech High International
 - High Tech High Media Arts
 - High Tech Middle (Case By Case Basis)
 - High Tech Middle Media Arts (Case By Case Basis)

Note: Any student who has been expelled or suspended from school will be suspended from all team activities. Once the expulsion or suspension has been lifted, the student can resume team activities, with the permission of the team's mentors.

- Have at least a C grade in all of their classes.
 - Any students who have below a C (including a C-) will be suspended from team activities until the grade has been raised.

Students are required to complete a monthly grade check. The grade check form will be sent out at least a week before they are due. It is the student's responsibility to get the required teacher signatures *prior* to the grade check's due date. Any late or incomplete grade checks will result in the student being suspended from team activities until the grade check has been turned in.

If there is an issue getting a teacher's signature (teacher is sick, out of town, etc) the student must notify a team mentor as soon as possible.

- Complete a minimum of 40 hours of community service through team events.
 - Each year, there are enough events planned that students can easily complete over 80 hours of community service. These events not only build team unity, but also help the team accomplish some of its 'big picture' goals of inspiring culture change, supporting STEM programs and growing awareness and appreciation of STEM.

Any student who does not meet this requirement will not be allowed to compete with or travel with the team to competitions.

- Attend 80% of team meetings during the Fall.
 - These meetings are critical to students being engaged and active participants on the team. Over the team's history, students who have failed to show up to at least 80% of team meetings during the Fall have a hard time keeping up with team events and activities.
- Complete a minimum of 80 hours during build season.

Collectively the student and mentors on Team 1538 spend over 7,000 hours designing and building the team's robot. It's important that students are active participants in this process.

- Regularly attend practices during competition season.
These practices prepare students for jobs at competition. Students who do not regularly attend practices will not be given a job at competition. Some competition jobs such as pit crew and drive team require students to attend practices 5-6 days a week.
- Have an active CowNet account.
CowNet is the online system Team 1538 uses to track and manage students and projects. Students who do not have an active CowNet account will not receive credit for events they attend. This includes community service events, build season events and team meetings.

Rules & Expectations

The following are the rules and expectations each student must follow in order to be a member of the team.

Behavior

- Students are to respect each other as well as the team's mentors, parents and sponsors at all times. Students who routinely disrespect one of the aforementioned will be asked to leave the team.
- Students should conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times. This means dressing appropriately for an event or meeting, using appropriate language, etc.
- School should be the first priority for all students on Team 1538 / The Holy Cows.
On days when the team meets, the High Tech High Engineering Lab will be a quiet study hall from 3:40p - 4:30p. Students are encouraged to take advantage of this time to do their homework or seek help from other students and mentors.

Do not use robotics as an excuse for not turning in an assignment or turning in an assignment late. If you need to miss a meeting or event to do school work, please let a student leader or mentor know as early as possible.

Students who are traveling or competing with the team should notify their teachers early in the semester so that teachers can try to avoid scheduling important dates (exhibitions, field trips, project due dates, etc) at the same time as a competition.

If a student is absent from school (not for competition or team event) they should not come to an after school robotics meeting.

- It is *highly recommended* that students on the team do not date.
The team has found that over the years the students who are dating become a distraction not only for themselves, but other students on the team. In addition, dating within the team creates many awkward situations both during the relationship and when it ends.

Students who chose to date should notify team mentors early on. It's better to be open and upfront about thing than to try to sneak around and hide it.

Students who choose to date are expected to 'leave the relationship at the door'. This means that while they're at robotics the dating students should conduct themselves as normal students on the team (eg: no PDA, no holding hands, no sitting on each others laps, showing preference, sneaking off to be alone, etc).

Students who choose to date may not be put in positions where they will have to work closely together (ex: driveteam and/or pit crew). This is to protect the best interests of the team and prevent awkward/uncomfortable situations for other students on the team.

- Students are expected to have integrity.

This means being honest to each other as well as the team's mentors and not trying to cover up mistakes or errors in judgement. Team 1538 understands that students, like all people, make mistakes and that's okay. However, students should own up to those mistakes. Being forthcoming and honest is always best.

Stealing from each other or the team is not tolerated and will result in immediate expulsion from the team.

Lying on a grade check (leaving a class off, changing a grade, etc) will result in an immediate one week suspension from team activities. In addition, the student will have to write a letter of apology to the teacher(s), their school administration (Director and Dean of Students) and their parents. Students with multiple offenses will receive additional consequences, possibly resulting in their expulsion from the team.

If you lose a signature or forget to get a parent or teacher signature, please contact a team mentor. Depending on the form, the mentors and student may be able to work out an alternative (email, phone call, etc). However, students should never forge teacher or parent signatures. Students who do forge signatures will receive an immediate one week suspension from team activities. In addition the student will have to write a letter of apology to the teacher(s) (if applicable), their school administration (Director and Dean of Students) and their parents. Students with multiple offenses will receive additional consequences, possibly resulting in their expulsion from the team.

- Students are expected to maintain a team-first attitude.

First and foremost, The Holy Cows are a team and any successes or failures are a result of a team effort. Students are expected to put what's best for the team ahead of their own team-related ambitions. Students should always be asking themselves "What Can I Do To Help The Team Succeed?". In the end, people rarely remember individual performances. What people always remember is what the team accomplishes. Ultimately what *the team* accomplishes together will look far

better on a college application or resume than what you personally accomplished on the team.

- Drug / Alcohol / (illegal) Tobacco use is not allowed
It is important that Team 1538 maintains a safe environment for everyone on the team. Using or being under the influence at robotics puts not only yourself, but other people in danger. Any student who is caught using or being under the influence at a team event will be expelled from the team immediately. If the incident happens while traveling, the student will be sent home at the parent's expense.
- Information about the current year's robot is confidential
Students should not release details (design, strategy, pictures, video, etc) about the current season's robot without the consent of the team's mentors. This is to help build anticipation for the robot's release and maintain a competitive advantage by preventing copying before the end of build season. Releasing information can include posting to social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, SnapChat, etc), emails or texts to friends on or connected with other teams, etc. Once the robot has been released publicly, feel free to post all the pictures and video you'd like.

Communication

- Email is used for most team communication.
Students are expected to have an email account that they check regularly. They should make a point to check their email at least once a day throughout the year, since the team does continue having events during the summer.
- Students should make a point to check CowNet daily.
When the team is really busy CowNet is often updated at least once or twice a day with new event, changes to events, new information about events, etc. Students should get in the habit of logging in and checking CowNet once a day.

Safety

- While at robotics, your safety and the safety of those around you should be a top priority. Most injuries at robotics come from not knowing how to use or misusing a tool. Anytime you are not sure how to do something, you should ask someone who does (veteran student, mentors, etc).

In regards to any heavy machinery or power tools, students who have never used a specific machine should ask about how to use a tool, even if they've used similar equipment outside of the team.
- Students must wear safety glasses at all times when working on or near a FRC Robot or using machine tools.
Each rookie student will be given one (1) pair of safety glasses at the beginning of the school year. It is the student's responsibility to bring their safety glasses whenever they are at robotics. Loaner pairs are not available, however students can borrow a pair from another student and/or purchase another pair of safety

glasses for \$5 from a team mentor. It is not uncommon for students to purchase a few pairs of safety glasses to keep in different places (car, bags, etc).

Students who do not have their safety glasses will not be allowed in a room where an FRC robot is being worked on or where machine tools are being used.

- Students should report any injuries that happen at robotics to a team mentor ASAP. Depending on the severity of the injury, it may need to be reported to the school for insurance purposes. Please do not try to hide or cover up an injury that happened at robotics.
- Power tools should not be used without the permission of a team mentor. The team's mentors are the ones responsible for your safety while at robotics. They may not be comfortable with you using a specific tool, or with how you wish to use the tool. As always - "No means no".

In addition, no student should use a power tool without first being trained on how to safely use it. This includes any power tools you may have used outside of robotics.

- Students are not allowed to drive themselves and/or other students to/from team events without first completing the HTH Student Driver Form. The safety of the students on the team as well as the protection of High Tech High is taken very seriously. Students who fail to comply with this rule will first receive a warning. Repeated violations may result in suspensions from the team, eventually leading to removal from the team.
- If a student is sick, they should stay home from robotics. This is especially true during build season when the team works in close quarters. Students who come to robotics sick can easily get other students and mentors sick. Please be respectful of others and stay home. Any student who comes to robotics and is sick will be signed out and sent home.

Travel / Competitions

Traveling and competing with the team is the apex of the season and is the culmination of everyone's hard work and dedication. In order to get the most out of the team, each student should make it a point to attend one or more competitions each season.

- Students who have met all of the participation requirements will be given the option of traveling with the team to competition. Traveling with the team is not a requirement to be a student on the team and is a privilege. The team's mentors reserve the right to refuse any student from traveling if they regularly violate team or school rules and expectations.
- Students are responsible for raising the money required for them to travel. The team will provide opportunities for students to raise money, however it is up to the students to raise the money. All deposits and payment due dates will be made available between December and January.

Families who wish, can pay for travel in small increments from September to June can arrange to do so with a team mentor.

Depending on the team's financial situation, there may be scholarships available to students who wish to travel. These scholarships can be used to cover part or all of a student's travel costs. Students who wish to receive a scholarship must have made an effort to raise the money on their own, be active participants on the team and be on free & reduced lunch. Students who think they may need financial help to travel must notify a team mentor ASAP.

- While at competition students are expected to be professional, work hard to be the best and exhibit good sportsmanship.
Students who are competing with the team are representing the High Tech Village (HTH/HTHI/HTHMA), the team's sponsors and themselves.

The team prides ourselves on its professional appearance and demeanor during competition. In addition, the team also wants to compete in a way that inspires others. This means working hard to rise above the competition, instead of trying to bring down our competition.

- While traveling there will be additional rules for students to follow. Students who do not follow these rules may be sent home at the discretion of team mentors and/or not be allowed to travel in the future.
Students travel as a group with the team. The team takes care of all airline tickets, hotel reservations, transportation, etc. Students who are traveling with the team cannot make arrangements on their own, outside of the team.

Rooms and room assignments will be announced prior to the team leaving for competition. Rooms will consist of 3-6 students per room (depending on the number of students, size of the hotel rooms, etc). Under no circumstances will any male or female students share a room. Students who have concerns about sharing a room with a specific person should come to a mentor early.

Student directors will keep a headcount to make sure that no one was left behind while we are in transit. If someone is missing the director(s) should report it to a mentor right away.

Students should never be alone in any part of the hotel with someone of the opposite gender. This is not only to prevent inappropriate behavior, but protect the students from possible accusations of inappropriate behavior.

'Hooking Up' with another person is not allowed.

No one from outside of the team can be in a student's room at any time unless it's hotel staff or with a team mentor.

Students are not allowed to leave the hotel without mentor permission. Students who are allowed to leave the hotel must be in a group of 3+ or with mentor supervision.

Students who are taking medication must tell a team mentor. In accordance with school rule, some types of medication maybe be collected by a team mentor. This is to prevent students from abusing medication as well as make sure people in their rooms aren't allergic to the medication.

Students who have food/medication allergies must tell a mentor prior to traveling.

The team mentors will have access to spare room keys and are reserve the right to enter a student's room at any time (female mentors in female roomes, male mentors in male rooms).

Students are not allowed to deadbolt doors unless it is after bed check.

San Diego Robotics Center (Mission Bay High School)

Team 1538 is fortunate enough to be allowed to use space at Mission Bay High School to practice and prepare for competition. This space is used and managed in conjunction with Mission Bay's FRC team - Team 4160. The area we use is called the "San Diego Robotics Center" and has a work area, a ¾ practice field and adjacent rooms we use for storing field elements, team supplies and for meeting.

- Every night when we leave, the SDRC must be clean.

We want to show MBHS that we appreciate the space they're letting us use and in a show of gratitude we never want to leave the SDRC messy. The areas that need to be cleaned daily are:

- The Work Area
- The Playing Field
- Behind The Drive Station
- Project Room
- Engineering Storage
- Bathrooms

Departments (Pit Crew/Drive, Scouting, Business) will be assigned areas to clean every day. Before the students in those departments leave, their assigned areas must be clean. If a department doesn't clean their assigned areas, they will be responsible for cleaning all the areas the next meeting.

- Food & Drink are allowed, as long as students pick up after themselves.

Each year students start the year being able to have food and drink inside the robotics center (never on the practice field, in the pit or near a robot). Students will lose this privilege if they do not clean up after themselves.

Cleaning up after themselves includes picking up after themselves at team meetings, build season meetings and team events. If the mentors feel that

students have not been doing a good job picking up after themselves, all students will lose the privilege of eating and drinking inside the SDRC.

- Students are not allowed to be on the MBHS campus during school hours.
Because High Tech High and MBHS are on different academic calendars there are some days the team has practice where HTH does not have school, but MBHS does. In this situation, students are not allowed to be on campus before 2:30pm (or whenever MBHS lets out). Please respect the fact that this is a real school and for the safety of their own students they do not want strangers, especially minors wandering around campus.
- Students are not allowed to be inside the SDRC without a mentor.
Most days at least one mentor will be at MBHS before the start of practice. In the event that a mentor is not present, students are not allowed to go into the SDRC.
- Students are encouraged to bring a lunch to weekend practices.
Food options near MBHS are very limited. If everyone goes out on their own to get lunch practice would stop for two hours. Out of respect for the time we have at practice, we ask that students do one of the following:
 1. Bring a lunch and keep it in the refrigerator
 2. Designate one person to go get lunch for everyone
 3. Have a potluck where everyone brings something in
 4. Start a 'food fund' and keep a supply of lunch food for those that pitch in.
- Team 1538 is responsible for the cleaning supplies used to clean the SDRC. If you see something is low or you use the last of it, please let a mentor know so more can be purchased.
- From time to time, other teams do come over to use the SDRC and may leave their stuff. Do not touch or play with anything they leave at the SDRC.
- MBHS stores stuff inside the SDRC from time to time. This is property of San Diego Unified School District and/or MBHS. This is not fair game for the team or students on the team to take. Do not touch or play with anything that does not belong to Team 1538.

Guidelines

Attitude Is Everything

Like with most things in life, your attitude often times makes the situation. If you go into a situation with a bad attitude, you're probably not going to have a good experience. Go into an important match thinking you're going to lose, you're probably going to lose. Always keep a positive attitude.

"We Is Greater Than Me"

First and foremost this a team. What one or two people do isn't as important as what the team accomplishes together. Wins, losses, successes and failures are the result of the

team's collective effort - not the effort of a single person or department. Likewise, every department/sub-team is dependent on each other. A few examples of this are:

The Business Department helps secure the resources needed to build a robot, but they don't have a product to demonstrate without the Engineering Department.

The drivers depend on the pit crew to keep the robot fully functional and the scouts/strategists to provide a strategy. If one of these three sub-teams don't do their job it's very difficult for the team to be successful on the field.

Never Rest On Your Laurels, Always Keep Improving

Never assume you know everything. Always keep an eye on ways to improve yourself and the team. Everyday is an opportunity to improve. Try something new, work in a new department, practice old skills, etc.

Be proud of what you've accomplished in the past, but don't use it as an excuse to stop improving. Remember that when picking positions the mentors do not look at past accomplishments, grade or seniority. The mentors will pick positions based on who they feel is the best for the team. So even if you've held a position in the past, someone else can take over if they prove they can do the job better.

Compete With Integrity

Always compete the right way - by working hard to rise above the competition. Cheating and sabotage will not be tolerated. This extends beyond the playing field. When trying out for a position you should be actively trying to help your teammates get better, not trying to bring them down. Remember that this is a team.

Meetings

Fall Meetings

Team 1538 / The Holy Cows meet Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday during the fall. These meetings are used to work on team projects, plan events and train students. Occasionally these meetings may be shifted around or cancelled based on school activities or holidays. It is important that students attend these meetings to help them become active and engaged members on the team.

Tuesday / Thursday Meetings

These meetings will usually be training days with presentations and/or hands on work time.

Wednesday Meetings

These meetings are required to be a member of the team. At these meetings the team's leaders will go through announcements and upcoming events. Newer students will meet with veteran students to help them become more familiar with the team. In addition, there may also be work time or training planned for these meetings.

Build Season Meetings

These meetings occur during the 6 week build season. Due to the limited amount of time the team has to work on its robot, the team has meetings planned everyday (including weekends) during

build season. While students are not required to attend every meeting, the more a student shows up, the more engaged and involved they'll likely be in the robot's design and build process.

Competition Season Meetings (Practices)

Just as a sports team practices between games, so does Team 1538. Unlike most teams, Team 1538 build a second (practice) robot that is used between competitions to train the pit crew and drivers, as well as test and implement improvements. In addition, students work on preparing for competition, packing before a competition as well as train to be scouts. These practices occur at Mission Bay High School's San Diego Robotics Center.

Competition Jobs

While at competition there are several jobs that students will have. Each job is important in the team's overall performance at a competition.

Scouts / Strategists (6-12 Students)

This is the group of students who are responsible for collecting information about other teams and developing a strategy for matches. During matches, the scouting collect data on every robot in every match. This data is compiled into a spreadsheet and is used to help form match strategies as well as direct the team on what to do during the alliance selection process. While the drivers may control what happens during a specific match, the scouts and strategist control what the team does over the course of the entire event.

Requirements

- Attend practices regularly (3-4 days a week)
- Works with Scouting & Strategy department to practice scouting
- Pre-scout teams prior to a competition
- Attends a nightly scouting meeting while at competitions
- Sits in stands to help with the collection of match data
- Arrives to competition venue early to help secure seats with good views of the competition field.

Pit Crew / Pit Speakers (2-5 Students)

This is the group of students who are responsible for maintaining the robot at competition as well as talking to judges. Between matches the pit crew works on the robot to make sure that it is fully functional for the next match. During matches the pit crew works on keeping the pit clean. Students in this group must know how to maintain the robot as well as be well versed in the team's non-robot areas as well.

Requirements

- Attend practices (5-6 days a week)
- Works with drivers to make tweaks to robot to improve performance
- Works with scouts and strategists to improve robot performance
- Long hours standing in the pit
- Knowledge of tools and robot functions
- Maintain a clean and well organized pit
- Comfortable speaking to judges about robot and team
- Can handle stress of making repairs in very short time
- Arrives early to competition venue to help secure seats for scouts and strategists

Drive Team (3 Students)

This is the group of students who drive/compete with the robot during matches. This is arguably one of the toughest jobs a student can have during competition since the team's performance at a competition depends on how well they perform.

Requirements

- Attend practices (6 days a week)
- Works with pit crew to improve robot performance
- Works with scouts and strategist to improve their own performance
- Long hours standing
- Knowledge of how robot works
- Comfortable speaking to judges about robot and team
- Can handle stress of driving and performing in front of a crowd

Misc.

Depending on the competition, the number of students at the competition and the needs of the competition we may have different jobs come up. These jobs could range from volunteering to make the event run smoother, assisting teams or escorting VIPs.

Selection Process

For the sake of transparency, this section covers the thought process behind how students are selected for positions. However, it is important to keep in mind that selecting students for a position is not an objective process and there is a fair amount of subjectivity involved in the process. There's not a magical list that will guarantee a student a specific position. It's also important for students to keep in mind that all of these positions are important to the success of the team. Students should not base their success/failure on if they got a position in the pit or drive team, but rather that they did something that contributed to the team being successful at competition.

Positions are selected by the mentors, with input from the student leadership. Voting is not part of the process since it typically indicates who is most popular - not necessarily who is the best fit for the position(s).

Also keep in mind that positions are not set in stone for the entire season. As the season develops, positions may be added or removed based on the needs of the team. In addition, if a student isn't performing or meeting expectations, they may be replaced by another student. In conclusion, once a student has earned a position, they must still continue to earn that position everyday.

Assessment & Interest

Before any selection can be made, the mentors must know who is interested in trying out for different positions. After build season a series of tests are given to the students. These tests are voluntary, meaning that students can pick and choose which test(s) they take. The purpose of these tests is to express interest in a position as well as see how much the student knows about the position so the mentors know what areas they'll have to work on with the student if they're selected.

It is important that students do not miss the assessment date. Some positions must be picked very quickly to give the students plenty of time to prepare for competition. If a student misses the assessment date, they run the risk of not being eligible for some of these positions.

Note that a student's performance on the assessments doesn't necessarily indicate that they will or will not get a specific position. For example, in the past students who have scored the highest on the 'pit crew' assessment did not receive a position in the 'pit crew' for other reasons.

Each position has at least one assessment with some having more:

Scouting: Game Rules

Pit Crew / Pit Speakers: Pit Crew / Pit Speaker

Driveteam: Game Rules / Driveteam / Pit Crew / Pit Speaker

Below is a description of each assessment:

Game Rules

This assessment covers the game specific rules as well as various scenarios that may come up in a specific game.

Pit Crew

This assessment covers the technical aspects of the robot from mechanical to wiring to controls. Students will have to identify tools, parts on the robot as well as make decisions about possible situations that may arise in the pit.

Pit Speaker

This assessment covers the non-engineering side of the team such as community outreach events, fundraising efforts, how the team supports the FIRST community, etc.

Driveteam

This assessment covers spatial awareness and decisions that members of the driveteam will have to make every match.

Evaluation

After the assessments are graded the mentors will evaluate each student who is interested in a position. The mentors want to not only find the best students for each position, but also put students in a position where they can succeed. Part of this evaluation looks at the mentor's and other students' experiences with a student.

For example, if a student has shown that they cannot handle high stress situations, it's not fair to the student to give them a position that involves stressful situations. Likewise, if a student has not been showing up consistently, it's not fair to the rest of the team to put them in a position such as driveteam that requires a student show up often.

After this process, a list of candidates will be released for each position. It's not unusual for students to be on more than one list. During the later part of this phase students will be evaluated on their practical skills.

Pit Crew

Different combinations of students will be ran as pit crew. Some of the things that are looked at for Pit Crew are how well a group of students works together, safety habits, ability to learn new things and technical skillsets. It's better for a student to be a team player than to try and do everything on their own. Making sure there are diverse skillsets in the pit in another factor.

Driveteam

For driveteam students are tested as operator until the 2 or 3 best operators are determined. Next, each candidate is tested as driver until the 2 or 3 best drivers are determined. It's possible for students to both be on the final operator and driver list. During this first part students are evaluated on ability to learn, ability to drive or operate and ability to handle pressure and failure.

Next, different combinations of drivers and operators are ran. Some of the things that are looked at are teamwork, communication, ability to learn and adapt as things change.

Typically the driver and operator are determined first since those positions require the most skill. Next the human player is determined by testing candidates' ability to perform the role of human player.

Scouts

Collecting accurate information is key to a scout's success. Scouts will be tested on their ability to accurately record match data by watching both our team's practices and matches from other competitions. Prior to the team's first competition a list of scouts will be released based on their performance at practice.

Training

Once positions have been announced each position will work with the mentor(s) that oversee that position to learn more about the position, the tasks of the position, and prepare for competition. As stated above, each student should earn their position everyday. Students who are not meeting the expectations for their position risk being replaced by someone else.

Student Leaders

The Student Leaders on Team 1538 are the students who oversee the operation of one or more departments on the team. On a bigger scale, the mentors on Team 1538 look to the Student Leaders as a voice for the other students, to be role models for other students to emulate, help build unity among the students, mentors and parents.

Being a Student Leader requires a lot of dedication and a strong work ethic on the part of the student. However, being a Student Leader is extremely rewarding.

Requirements

Team 1538 expects a lot out of its Student Leaders. In order to become a Student Leader, a student must:

- Have been on the team for at least 1 year (preferably 2 if applying for director)
- Students applying for a director position must be a junior or senior the following season.
- Have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 (Directors Only) or 2.0 (Managers Only)
- Have been very active during their time on the team (high meeting attendance, community service hours, build season hours)
- Attend competitions

Once a student has been selected as a student leader, they also have the following responsibilities:

- Attend a weekly leaders meeting
- Oversee all projects in their department and make sure they are completed on time and meet the team's quality expectations.
- Build team camaraderie
- Help engage and integrate newer team members to the team
- Be a role model student for other students on the team.

Student leaders will receive a regular performance review from the mentors and/or their director. For example, the directors will have their review with the mentors while the managers will have their review with their director and the team's mentors. The purpose of these reviews is to provide positive feedback on how the student can be a stronger leader and better fulfil the responsibilities of their position.

Selection Process

Student leaders are selected in a two part process. Part one is selecting Directors, part two is selecting Managers.

Director

Directors are selected prior to the Championship. This is to give them time to learn from their predecessor as well as evaluate what they would like in their managers.

1. After the team's last regional competition applications for director will go out.
2. 7-10 days prior to the team leaving for championships, the mentors will hold director interviews and interview all applicants. These usually take 1-2 days.
3. After all interviews have been completed, the mentors will name directors.

Managers

1. After the team returns from championships, managers applications will be sent out to the team. They are usually due 7-14 days after they are sent out.
2. A few days after applications are due, mentors and the new directors will hold interviews for all the applicants. These usually take 1-3 days depending on the number of applicants and time available.
3. After all interviews have been completed, the directors will make their recommendation to the mentors. However, the team mentors still have final say on who is selected as a manager.

Picking Leaders

Picking Student Leaders is not an objective process. This means that there isn't a checklist that guarantees you a position. In fact each year, there are many deserving students who do not receive positions. Here are some of the things the team mentors look at when picking student leaders:

- **Dedication**
Past meeting hours, community service hours, etc. Have they been doing the bare minimum or have they been one of the top students? What kind of outside commitments do they have?
- **Past Performance**
How has the student performed in jobs in the past? Have they struggled to get assignments done on time? Have they been proactive or passive?
- **Role Model Characteristics**
Consciously or subconsciously, students will emulate the student leaders. Is the student someone we want other students to emulate?
- **Follow Through**
Talk is cheap, has the student followed through on things they said they were going to do? Has the student been reliable?
- **Attitude**
Has the student had a positive team-first attitude? Or have they been more concerned about personal glory?
- **Maturity**
Has the student proven they can be mature enough to handle the added responsibility?

As you can see, age/seniority does not play factor in the decision making process. The team mentors believe that positions should go to the 'best' person, not the person with the most seniority. It is not uncommon for sophomores or juniors to receive positions over seniors.

Team Apparel

Team 1538 produces team apparel (shirts, hats, jackets, etc) that team members can purchase. The price of this apparel varies based on the cost of producing them. The team does not make a profit on its apparel.

Competition Dress Code

In order to maintain a professional appearance, the team has a dress code for competitions:

Note: Team apparel worn at competitions cannot be ripped, faded or modified (frayed, fringed, sleeves cut, etc).

Shirts

Below describes the type of shirt that should be worn based on the type of matches played that day. It is recommended that students buy 2 t-shirts each year. If a student cannot afford to purchase a t-shirt, a loner shirt will be provided. Loner shirts will be issued just before a competition and must be returned at the end of the competition.

| Type Of Matches | Students | Leaders / Driveteam | Mentors |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|
| Practice Only | Any Years T-Shirt | Current T-Shirt | Current T-Shirt |
| Qualification/ Elims | Current T-Shirt | Polo | Polo |

Pants/Bottoms

It is preferred that students wear dark blue jeans to competition. However, any pants worn to competition should not be ripped or faded. Shorts are acceptable as long as they're an appropriate length (see HTH Dress Code). Skirts, dresses, tights and leggings should not be worn at competition.

Shoes

It is mandatory that students wear closed toed shoes at competition. Students who do not wear closed toed shoes will not be allowed in the pit and competition field. This is non-negotiable.

Furthermore, students should consider their position at competitions. For example, if their position requires them to be on their feet a lot they may want to wear more comfortable shoes or even bring a second pair to switch in the middle of the day.

Accessories

It is preferred that any accessories match the team's primary colors (black and white) to show team spirit.

Conference Dress Code

There is not a set dress code for conferences since the attire varies from event to event. Generally students should err on the side of being overdressed than being underdressed. If students are unsure of what to wear, they should ask a mentor or student leader.

Note: Team apparel worn at conferences cannot be ripped, faded or modified (frayed, fringed, sleeves cut, etc).

Shirts

If a polo is required and the student does not have one, a polo will be loaned to them.

Pants/Bottoms

If it's business attire slacks, dress pants or skirts should be worn. If a skirt is worn, it should be an appropriate length (see HTH Dress Code). Shorts of any kind should not be worn at a conference.

Shoes

Open toed shoes are okay, as long as they're appropriate for the type of conference.

Parents

Parent support is an important part of Team 1538 / The Holy Cows. Parents can help in a variety of ways

Expectations

The following are expectations Team 1538 has for the parents of student team members:

- Provide timely transportation for their child, making sure that they are on time and ready to participate.

It is important that students arrive on time for events. If a student has to come late, they should let a mentor or student leader know ahead of time.

Some events, like when we meet at the school to take a bus to competition or at the airport, cannot be delayed. If your child is late, they run the risk of missing the bus or plane.

Please be on time to pick up your child. Team mentors will wait (at least for a period of time) with students until they are picked up, but please be respectful of their time.

- Do not send their child to robotics if they are sick.

It's easy for germs to pass from a sick student to other students and mentors. In the past Team 1538 has had illness take down many students and mentors, putting the team several days behind schedule during build season. Students who come to robotics sick, will be sent home.

- Respect the team, its mentors and its sponsors.

It is important that parents are respectful of the team and its goals. Collectively the team's mentors spend thousands of hours with the team, while you may not always agree with some of their decisions, please trust that they have the best interests of your child and the team in mind.

- Please bring concerns to the mentors early

If you have any questions or concerns about the team or your child, please bring them to the attention of the mentors early on so they can be addressed and not compound into larger issues.

- Keep Robot Information Confidential

Team 1538 understands that you're proud of what your child is working on, but please respect the team's wishes to keep robot information confidential until its public release.

Parent Booster Club

Parents who are interested in helping Team 1538 can join the Team 1538 Parent Boosters Club (PBC). This is an organization of team parents that help raise travel funds, volunteer at events and supports the team at competitions.

Fundraising

The PBC helps raise money to offset the cost of student travel. Some of the fundraisers the PBC is responsible for running include event concession stands, restaurant nights and after school food sales. Parents can help by volunteering to help man a concession stand, donating food for concessions or after school food sales. Anything helps!

Volunteering At Events

Some of the events Team 1538 runs each year require adult volunteers such as judges, referees, etc. Prior to an event, a list of needed volunteers and the requirements for those positions will be sent out to the parents .

Supporting Team At Competitions

Another great way to help Team 1538 is to support the team at competitions. This can be in many ways including picking up lunch, cheering on the team, running errands, etc.

Carpooling

Since some meetings are away from High Tech High, the team could use parents to carpool kids who do not have a ride or their own car to place like the San Diego Robotics Center. Any parents who carpool students to/from team events must be registered through High Tech High as a Category A Volunteer and have completed the Annual Driver Registration form.

Saturday Potlucks During Build Season

During Build Season Team 1538 meets just about every day, often until later in the evening. On Saturdays during build season the PBC holds potluck lunches for students and their families. This gives parents and siblings a chance to see what their student is doing and what the team is working on.

Welcome BBQ

Each year The PBC holds a Welcome BBQ for all students and their families. This is open to all students (rookie and veteran) and their families. This is a great chance to get to meet other parents, the mentors, help start carpools, etc.

How To Join

Parents who are interested in helping with the Parent Booster Club should contact parents@team1538.com for more information. Any parents who are part of the booster club will need to be registered through High Tech High as a Category A Volunteer.

Parents At Competitions

There is nothing that can explain the excitement of a FIRST competition. Team 1538 encourages parents to attend competitions, both in and out of San Diego. However, Team 1538 will not book travel arrangements for parents. On average the team travels with 25-35 students and mentors and trying to book arrangements for all the students and mentors can be challenging enough.

If parents are planning on traveling to a competition, we encourage them to let the team know. In the event the team has extra hotel rooms, airline tickets, etc. the team is more than happy to let a parent purchase them from the team instead of cancelling the reservations or letting them go unused.

When parents attend competitions, we ask that you respect their roles on the team. Every student has a job when we compete and it's important to the team's efforts that students are focused on their job.

Supporting Your Child

One of the best ways for a parent to support their child is to give them the tools to be active and engaged members. FIRST and The Holy Cows can be a highly rewarding experience with lots of lifelong benefits, but it's also a demanding program. As parents your child will likely ask you for rides to and from events on the weekends, these events go a long way in helping your child 'fit in' with the team since a lot of team bonding happens at these events.

In addition, remind your child that it's important they be active participants. Showing up to meetings and sitting in the back of the room waiting to be asked to do something doesn't work. There are a lot of students on The Holy Cows and the students who sit around waiting for something to be given to them usually get passed over for kids who come and ask for something to do.

When first joining Team 1538 they'll find new people, new things, new rules, etc. All this can be pretty intimidating to a rookie member. Like in school, The Holy Cows are going to push students out of their comfort zone from time to time, it's important that you encourage your child to embrace these new experience rather than run from them.

Parents should keep in mind that The Holy Cows isn't for everyone. Some students don't like the team aspect, some don't like competition, some just aren't open to STEM or robotics, etc. It's important not to force your child to stay on The Holy Cows if they're truly not interested. This doesn't mean they're not fit for STEM or robotics, maybe it's just not right for them at the moment, but it's not fair to them, the mentor or the rest of the team to force them to keep coming.

When Parents Get Notified

Often times parents ask mentors when do the parents get involved with discipline. The mentors believe that since they students are in high school, it's important for them to learn how to handle things on their own. This is part of the growing process. However, if there is a situation the where the mentors feel the student's safety or well being is a concern, or the student is being kicked off the team, then parents will be notified of what's going on.

CowNet

What Is CowNet?

CowNet is our online team management system. The Holy Cows use it to keep track of students, announce upcoming events, keep attendance and manage the robot design process. Every student (as well as at least one of their parents) and mentor must have an active account on CowNet.

Personal Information

CowNet does keep students' full names, date of birth, phone number, shirt sizes and food preferences. This information is used for booking travel (airline tickets require full names and birthdates) and ordering the correct number of team apparel. This information is not public and CowNet members have limited access to it. For example, students cannot see other students' phone numbers or birthdates. If they want that information they can ask that person on their own.

Abusing CowNet

CowNet keeps several logs on http requests, page views and load times. These logs are typically used to help make CowNet better in the future. However, if CowNet abuse is suspected, they can be used to find who has been abusing CowNet. Anyone caught abusing CowNet can be released from their leadership position, suspended from the team and/or kicked off the team.

Abuse can include one or more of the following:

- Hacking (ex: Unauthorized backend access, trying to change user permissions, obtaining passwords, harvesting personal information, etc)
- Releasing confidential information (Names, contact information, robot information without consent, etc)
- Intentionally signing in students who were not at an event to boost their hours
- Using email lists for inappropriate reasons
- Harassing team members

Signing Up For Events

Students can sign up for events on CowNet. This way, mentors and student leaders know who will and will not be at an event so they can better plan, assign jobs and arrange transportation (if possible/necessary).

Events With Assigned Jobs

For events like Battle at the Border and our FLL Tournaments, each student must be assigned a job. If a student does not sign up for an event like this, they will very likely not have anything to do when they show up.

Build Season Events

During build season, mentors use the number of students signed up for meetings to let parents who are bringing in food know how much to bring. Students who are signed up for build season meetings will get priority for food over those who did not sign up. It is also imperative that students keep their signup status up to date so we don't over/under order food.

Competition Events

Competing, especially traveling, with the team is a privilege. Usually competition sign ups begin in the middle/late Fall. Any student who is interested in traveling should sign up for a competition as

soon as possible. This helps the team plan travel arrangements, book hotels, find places to eat, etc. When you initially sign up for a competition (Regional or Championship) you will be put on a waitlist. This allows the mentors to see if you meet travel requirements, keep up your grades, stay active on the team, etc. Toward the end of February students will be pulled off the waitlist and put on the travel roster.

Event Attendance

CowNet is also used to track event attendance and therefore meeting hours, build season hours and community service hours. In addition, event attendance can be used in the case of an emergency to make sure that everyone present is accounted for. Only mentors and student leaders can sign people in and out of an event. Students will not get credit for the time they were at an event unless they sign out of the event. For example, if you show up to an event at 10am and sign out for lunch at 12pm, you'll get credit for 2 hours. However, if you sign back in at 1pm and leave at 5pm, but forget to sign out, you won't get credit for the additional 4 hours.

Signing Out For Lunch

If you leave an event to go to lunch, you should sign out so that we have an accurate count of who is present at the event.

Fixing Attendance

Only team mentors have the ability to adjust attendance hours. These hours can be fixed if the student has a valid reason why they did not sign out.

Incident Reports

The team's mentors do maintain confidential incident reports on students. This is to help document a student's exemplary behavior as well as track any potential problems a student might be having. For example, sometimes one mentor might hear of or witness a student helping someone else or being a good role model and make an incident report so the other mentors can know about it. The only people who can create and view these reports are the team's mentors.

Mentors

Below are a list of expectations for team mentors.

Types of Mentors

There are two different types of mentors on The Holy Cows:

Jr. Mentor

These mentors either show up occasionally, help with very specific tasks or are a recent graduates and help out where needed. Jr. Mentors cannot be around students without the supervision of HTH Staff or a Mentor. Typically Jr. Mentors do not travel with the team or travel on their own. When they do travel, they are not responsible for chaperoning students. On CowNet, Jr. Mentors have limited access to information when compared to Mentors.

Usually new mentors will start as a Jr. Mentor and after a period of time be promoted to Mentor.

Mentor

These mentors are heavily involved with the team and its management. Mentors are able to supervise students on their own, without HTH Staff. Unless there is a work or personal conflict, mentors usually travel with the team and are responsible for chaperoning students at overnight competitions. In addition, Mentors have full privileges on CowNet.

Requirements

Mentors must meet the following criteria:

- Be over the age of 18
- Be a high school graduate, preferably 2-4 years removed from high school.
- Meet at least one of the following criteria:
 - Be a teacher or staff member of High Tech High, High Tech High International or High Tech High Media Arts.
 - Be registered through High Tech High as a volunteer
 - Which category depends on the mentor's level of involvement. For example, Jr. Mentors should be registered as Category B, Mentors should be registered as Category C.

Expectations

The following are the expectations of all Team 1538 Mentors:

- The safety and wellbeing of the students is the top priority.
- Follow the High Tech High Volunteer Code of Conduct
- Follow the FIRST Youth Protection Program (FYPP) Code of Conduct
- It is highly recommended that mentors do not friend/follow/etc students on social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc) until after they have graduated from high school.
 - This is to protect the mentor as much as it is to protect the student. As adults, we sometimes post things to our personal social media accounts that students don't need to see or know about.

- Any communication (phone calls, text messages or emails) should be related to team activities, academic problems or career concerns. It is recommended that a parent or another mentor be copied on any written communications with a student.
- Whenever possible a mentor should not be alone with a student. If you need to talk to a student in private do it with another mentor. If the student only wants to talk to you one-on-one, do it in a room where other people can see you.
- Any mentor who believes that a student may be the victim of, or at risk of, abuse (emotional, physical or otherwise) from any source is required to report their concerns. Do not attempt to conduct an investigation or confront the suspected offender(s). Concerns should be reported to the lead teacher or mentor immediate and handled under High Tech High policy.
- Any mentor driving students must have completed the Annual Driver Registration form.

FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions)

I need to be on the pit crew or driveteam. What's the quickest way for me to get there?

Like in real life, there's no shortcut to getting somewhere. If you have ambitions of being on the pit crew or driveteam you'll need to be a dedicated member, be actively involved in the design and build process, exhibit that you're responsible, a team player (doing what's best for the team, not just to earn a spot on the driveteam or pit crew) and can take direction.

As explained in the handbook, there's no checklist that guarantees a student a specific position on the team. In fact, each year there are several deserving students who do not get positions on the pit crew or driveteam. The truth of the matter is that there are roughly 30 students who attend a competition and only 3-5 positions on the pit crew and 3 positions on the driveteam. This means that there are a most 8 out of 30 students in the pit or driveteam. Keep in mind that there are more ways to contribute to the team than just being on the pit crew or driveteam. There have been many students who have gone through the team without ever being on the pit crew or driveteam and have made great contributions to the team.

Can I come late to an event?

The simple answer is yes. It's better to show up for a little while than not at all. In addition to fulfilling your community service requirements, team events are a great way of getting to know the other students on the team. However, if it's an event where students are given jobs (Battle at the Border, FLL Tournaments, etc) you won't get a job that requires you to be there all day or could be used as a floater to help other students.

My teacher was sick and I couldn't get their signature on a form (grade check, permission slip, etc.). What should I do?

Talk to a mentor and explain the situation. Usually they can find some solution. For things like grade checks, the teacher can just email a mentor and let them know that your grades are at least passing. However, students are usually given a week or more to complete forms that require parent/teacher signatures, and in most cases teachers aren't sick for a week. The lesson is to not procrastinate on your forms signed.

I have a commitment Wednesday afternoons and can't come to those meetings, can I still be on the team?

The short answer is no. Wednesday meetings are required and those are the meetings that count toward your meeting requirement in order to travel. Missing an occasional Wednesday meeting (sick, doctors appointment, school/family commitment) is fine, however never showing up to a Wednesday meeting is not. In the past students who do not attend the Wednesday meetings usually have a hard time keeping up and being active members on the team.

I have a commitment Tuesday/Thursday afternoons and can't come to those meetings, can I still be on the team?

The short answer is yes. Tuesday/Thursday meetings are optional so that students can pick and choose which workshops and training they want to attend. Students are more than welcome to come to every Tuesday/Thursday meeting, but it is not required. However, if a student misses every Tuesday and Thursday meeting, then they are missing out on valuable training and therefore will not be prepared for build/competition season.