



# TEAM HANDBOOK

**16 August 2021**



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**Revision History**

<b>Date Approved by Board</b>	<b>Revisions Made</b>
July 20, 2020	Original Handbook
August 16, 2021	Version 2

## I. Welcome to Due West Robotics

Congratulations on joining Due West Robotics! This handbook provides an understanding of the program and responsibilities of team members. It includes information relating to membership expectations, team structure, team guidelines, parent information, competition events, travel and other important aspects of the organization.

The intent of this handbook is to provide you with information about Due West Robotics and your responsibilities as a team member. Please read it carefully and share the information with your parents/guardians.

To find out about our history, answer some frequently asked questions, and more, visit [www.duewestrobotics.org](http://www.duewestrobotics.org).

## II. Membership Expectations

Due West Robotics (DWR) has standards of participation and behavior set to ensure the success of individual team members, each individual team, and the overall program. By meeting these standards, students gain the opportunity to obtain leadership roles, travel opportunities, and recommendations for possible scholarships.

- A. Members attend practices, events, and outreach opportunities.** DWR participates in programs and outreach events throughout the year. We recognize that students have other interests and commitments but ask that team members remain informed of team events and participate as much as possible. *It is the responsibility of the student to manage and balance his/her activities, informing the coaches/mentors of any conflicting commitments.*
- B. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to actively participate in team activities and events.** DWR could not operate without parents and volunteers. Having experienced parents to assist with events, fundraisers, etc., is vital to our success.
- C. All high school team members must participate in a tool safety training.** All students on teams using tools and/or power tools must complete a safety training. This is to ensure the safety of our students and prevent injury.
- D. Members are expected to demonstrate appropriate behavior/character.** All members of DWR work closely with others on a team. The success of a team is dependent on all team members operating as their best selves while working together. Members should demonstrate the following:
  - **Good Judgment and Positive Behavior:** Each team member is an ambassador of our team, organization, and sponsors to the rest of the community. Mature behavior, including dedication, competence, patience, and self-control should be demonstrated.
  - **Ability to Commit to a Project:** Starting a project and following it through to the end is critical to team success. Team members need to practice good time management and not get discouraged. Team members need to ask for help when necessary.

- **Ability to Work Independently and as a Team Member:** Being able to be a team player, or *do what is needed for the team*, is an asset to all. However, working independently when necessary shows dedication and willingness to learn.
- **Demonstration of Honesty and Integrity:** Honesty and integrity are fundamental attributes of a quality person. Integrity includes doing what is right when no one is watching. Trusting your teammates is necessary to achieve great teamwork.
- **Time to Dedicate to Your Team:** Membership on a team requires many hours of a student's time. Careful planning and scheduling are required to stay actively involved.
- **Respect for the Work Areas:** All students participate in keeping the work areas clean and organized as they work and at the end of each practice. This is critical for safety and shows respect for the fact that it is a shared space with other teams. It is respectful to our coaches/mentors to own the responsibility of keeping the workspace clean.
- **Appropriate Attire:** Proper clothing should be worn for safety purposes and out of respect for team participation. When in doubt whether or not something is appropriate, follow the school dress code.
- **Appropriate Attention and Focus:** Since membership on a DWR team involves a great investment of energy, skill, money, thought, and time from numerous people, team members should participate with good focus. Attention to the task in front of you is essential for safety and success in team goals. At events and practices, members should avoid distractions that can hinder team goals and/or opportunities for personal development.

### III. Team Structure

Due West Robotics establishes maximum and preferred team sizes based on past experience. These team sizes allow for reasonable levels of participation for each team member and ensure that each member has the opportunity to receive appropriate amounts of direction from the coaches. If a unique circumstance causes a minor change to be considered, the coaches will be consulted before any change is made.

Some team levels have an overlap in ages. An applicant moving up to the next level must have participated for *at least two years* at the previous level. Coaches of both teams will make the final decision to determine whether or not an applicant is prepared to advance to the next level. Any exceptions to the two year requirement due to special circumstances will be assessed on a case by case basis by the coaches.

#### A. Jr. FLL

- Coaches - maximum of 2 (one lead and one assistant coach)
- Team Members - maximum of 6
- Ages 6-10 years old

## **B. FLL**

- Coaches - maximum of 3 (one lead and two assistant coaches)
- Team Members - maximum of 10 (8 members preferred)
- Ages 9-14 years old

## **C. FTC**

- Mentors - maximum of 4 (one lead and three assistant mentors)
- Team Members - maximum of 15 (9-12 members preferred)
- Ages 12-18 years old
- Divided into three sub-teams: Business, Mechanical, and Programming

## **D. FRC**

- Mentors - maximum of 17 (one lead and up to 4 mentors for each sub-team)
- Team Members - maximum of 50 (20-25 members preferred)
- Ages 14-18 years old
- Divided into four sub-teams: Business, Mechanical, Electrical, and Programming

## **E. Coaches/Mentors**

- The growth and education of DWR depends largely upon adult team members. Typically, the adults are parents of students or interested members of the community.
- The lead coach/mentor has ultimate responsibility for all aspects of the team and its members. His/her specific tasks include team organization, financial planning, technology mentoring, decision-making regarding issues of discipline, and overall team management.
- The goal of all coaches/mentors is to train members of the team to work knowledgeably on the robot or for the team and, eventually, independently of them. At all times team members should respect coach/mentor decisions and appreciate the judgment and experience they provide.
- All adult coaches/mentors have completed the background check required by *FIRST*.

## **F. Youth Mentors**

- Former team members who have graduated within the past few years sometimes return as youth mentors. They are an important part of training and advising team members.
- Youth Mentors do not qualify to have the chaperone responsibilities of adult mentors until they reach the age of 21.
- Youth Mentors aged 18 and up have completed the background check required by *FIRST*.

## **G. Parents/Guardians**

- Parent/Guardian support in all aspects of team involvement is a key factor in the motivation, dedication, and success of their student.
- Parents/Guardians have several opportunities for participation, which include, but are not limited to the following: providing transportation, assisting with fundraising, providing team materials when asked, keeping coaches/mentors informed of student information, etc.

- *Parents/Guardians are encouraged to consider becoming a coach/mentor.*

## IV. Student Time Commitment

Participation on a Due West Robotics team is a considerable time commitment. In order to be a valuable member of the team, each student needs to be dedicated, punctual, and dependable.

### A. Jr. FLL

- Teams have a 1 to 1.5 hour practice once per week.
- Team members are expected to attend as many practices as possible.
- Teams prepare for an end of season Expo to showcase their talents.
- If a team member must miss a practice, this needs to be communicated to the coach beforehand so the coach has time to plan the practice accordingly.

### B. FLL

- Teams have a 1.5-2 hour practice twice per week.
- A typical season lasts from August-December with advancement opportunities extending into January-May.
- Team members are expected to attend as many practices as possible.
- If a team member must miss a practice, this needs to be communicated to the coach beforehand so the coach has time to plan the practice accordingly.
- 2 unexcused absences will be allowed. An unexcused absence is an absence for which the coach was not notified beforehand. Following an unexcused absence students will be warned and parents notified. Any additional unexcused absences may result in removal from the team. Excused absences will be allowed for medical appointments, family issues, and athletic practices. For an absence to be excused a coach should be informed at least 24hrs in advance, or as soon as the issue arises.

### C. FTC

- Teams practice for 3 hours twice a week
- A typical season lasts from September-March with advancement opportunities extending into May.
- Team members are expected to attend as many practices as possible.
- If a team member must miss a practice, this needs to be communicated to the team beforehand so the mentors/captains have time to plan the practice accordingly.
- 2 unexcused absences will be allowed. An unexcused absence is an absence for which the coach was not notified beforehand. Following an unexcused absence students will be warned and parents notified. Any additional unexcused absences may result in removal from the team. Excused absences will be allowed for medical appointments, family issues, and athletic practices. For an absence to be excused a coach should be informed at least 24hrs in advance, or as soon as the issue arises.

### D. FRC

- **Supporting Members** - Less than 70 hours. Do not plan to travel with the team to competitions

- **Competing Members** – 70 hours, at least 60 in build season
- **Sub-team captain/leads** – 100 hours, at least 80 in build season
- **Captain/president** – 120 hours, at least 100 in build season
- Students are responsible for tracking their own hours, including hours outside of normal meeting times. The captain/president and coach are responsible for checking at regular intervals to ensure that team members are committing an appropriate amount of time.
- Students are expected to meet the following in order to be eligible for travel to competitions:
  - Meeting Attendance: Minimum 2 meeting per week
  - Participate in 50% of our Outreach events
  - Help with 50% of our Fundraising events
- Lead Mentors will keep official attendance records.

It is the responsibility of the student to manage and balance his/her activities, informing the coaches/mentors of any conflicting commitments.

If a student is found to be disruptive, distracting, or loitering rather than contributing to team goals, the student may be asked to leave that meeting and will not be counted as present for that meeting.

Sports teams provide different challenges. It is important to communicate with coaches/mentors ahead of time, even before the sport season begins, to work out the timing of conflicting activities. Often these conflicts can be accommodated to the satisfaction of both activities.

There are some instances, however, where the timing cannot be resolved. In this case team members will have to choose which activity is the priority.

## V. Team Funding

It is very expensive to fund a successful robotics program. The average cost for a Due West Robotics team is as follows:

- Each Jr. FLL team = \$1,000
- Each FLL:Challenge team = \$2,500
- Each FTC team = \$7,500
- Each FRC team = \$25,000

We make every effort to keep our expenses reasonable and seek funding from a wide variety of sources.

### A. Team Membership Fees

All student participants in the program pay a non-refundable participation fee. The primary purpose of the participation fee is to ensure a minimum level of commitment to the team. The yearly fee is kept as reasonable as possible but is subject to change based on projected outside funding.



## **B. Fundraising**

Due West Robotics conducts fundraisers throughout the year to raise funds for operating costs. Team members and their parents/guardians are expected to assist with fundraisers. This assistance builds community within our organization and helps us to plan and execute successful events.

When necessary, individual teams conduct fundraisers for post season travel and expenses. Parent/Guardian leadership and involvement is essential for these fundraisers to succeed.

## **C. Corporate Sponsors**

Due West Robotics secures several corporate sponsors from the local area and beyond each season. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to share any sponsor connections that he/she may have with us. On occasion, team members may be asked to present to a potential sponsor. These are great opportunities for the student to practice presentation skills and serve as an ambassador for Due West Robotics.

## **D. Grants**

Due West Robotics applies for several grants throughout the year. These grants typically provide us with restricted funds that help pay for a variety of events, materials, and supplies.

## **E. Personal Contributions**

Many friends and family members contribute to Due West Robotics each year. Contributions can be made directly from our website, [www.duewestrobotics.org](http://www.duewestrobotics.org).

# **VI. Communication**

Communication, *both reading and responding*, is vital for team coordination.

All parents and FTC/FRC students are expected to have an active email address and to check for team communication on a regular basis. Members should check email at least once a day during the season. Responding to messages and communicating plans and ideas is not only productive but respectful.

In addition, all students and parents will be asked to create a Spond account and download the Spond app if they have a phone. Students are expected to respond to promptly to communications. This includes emails, Spond posts and messages, and calendar invitations.

# **VII. Conduct**

Gracious Professionalism is defined by FIRST as “a way of doing things that encourages high-quality work, emphasizes the value of others, and respects individuals and the community.” Members represent Due West Robotics, our corporate sponsors, and FIRST. At practices, events, or within the community, good character described by FIRST’s Gracious

Professionalism should be a part of our thought processes and apparent in our actions.

#### **A. Visible Character**

Team members' behavior is a direct reflection of the character of our team. The team standard is high; showing respect to each other and competitors is essential.

Team conflicts may arise due to the close nature of team practices and travel. All team members should remain positive and constructive, refraining from negative comments directed towards another. If a conflict arises, a student should speak to a mentor immediately. Physical confrontation is prohibited. If a physical confrontation occurs, both students will be disciplined and their membership may be terminated.

#### **B. Cooperation**

Team members should always be cooperative. This includes cooperating with requests of coaches, mentors, and parent volunteers. Ignoring the directions or request of a mentor is disrespectful and not in the team's best interest. If a team member feels that a request is out of order, he/she is encouraged to complete the task, then speak to the mentoring staff at a later, more appropriate time.

#### **C. Inappropriate Behaviors**

These behaviors include, but are not limited to, the following: running, pushing and shoving, (negative) name calling, leaving a disorderly workspace, fighting, swearing, stealing, and all other actions that reflect negatively on the team. Conversations that undermine team unity and respect for leaders are not only counterproductive but destructive; If it is not constructive, it is inappropriate.

Inappropriate behaviors involving drugs, alcohol, pornography or other illegal activities may result in immediate dismissal from Due West Robotics with no refund of team membership fees.

#### **D. Cell Phone Use Policy**

Students are permitted to have cell phones at practice. However, the cell phones are not to be visible or used during the practice unless directed by the coach or in case of emergency.

#### **E. Public Displays of Affection (PDA)**

In order to reflect professionalism, hand holding, hugging, kissing and other expressions of affection are prohibited during team meetings, competitions, and trips. Couples may not wander off or sit alone. In other words, they should not appear as a couple but as part of the team.

#### **F. Discipline**

If a student's behavior is found to be unsafe or inappropriate, the student may be disciplined as necessary by a mentor. The lead mentor will be made aware of the

situation to ensure that policies are enforced. The student's parents will be informed of any disciplinary actions as soon as possible. Policy is as follows:

1st Offense: Warning

2nd Offense: Parent Conference

3rd Offense: Restriction of activities/potential removal from the team

#### **G. Coach/Mentor Conduct**

Our coaches and mentors serve as role models for the students and are expected to follow the same guidelines and principles. Any coach or mentor who is determined to be behaving in opposition to these principles may be terminated.

#### **H. Parent/Guardian Conduct**

Parents/Guardians are expected to support the principles of Due West Robotics and behave accordingly when attending practices, events, and competitions.

### **VIII. Team Travel**

All team conduct rules apply while traveling. Team members will travel and lodge together unless specific permission has been obtained from the Lead Mentor. Team members should not leave an event without the permission of the Lead Mentor.

#### **A. Transportation**

Each team member will have a signed travel waiver on file.

Coaches and chaperones will transport team members to and from competitions and events. Coaches and chaperones will not transport a lone student, unless it is his/her own child.

When necessary, student drivers may transport themselves to and from events with parental permission. Student drivers may not transport other students.

#### **B. Overnight Trips**

When an overnight hotel stay is required for a team, hotel rooms will be separated by gender and each room will have a coach/chaperone of the same gender. Coaches/chaperones may only share a bed with their own child.

When an overnight dormitory stay is required, student rooms will be separated by gender and coach/chaperone rooms will be located on the same dormitory hall.

#### **C. Required Parental Travel**

If a team member exhibits a medical issue, a behavioral issue, or any other issue requiring special attention that exceeds what is manageable by the coaches, a parent will be required to accompany the team on any and all trips at their own expense.

### **IX. Student Health**

It is our desire to provide a healthy and safe environment for the students participating in Due West Robotics. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to be considerate of other students when deciding whether to place a student under our care. In general, students with the following symptoms should NOT attend practices or events:

- Fever, diarrhea, or vomiting within the last 48 hours
- Green or yellow runny nose
- Eye or skin infections
- Other symptoms of communicable or infectious disease

Students who are observed by our coaches/mentors to be ill will be separated from other students and the parent/guardian will be contacted to request that the student be picked up.

Coaches/Mentors will not administer prescription or non-prescription medications to a team member. Medications should be administered by a parent/guardian at home.

Exceptions to the medications policy may be granted to parents/guardians of students with potentially life-threatening conditions (such as asthma or severe allergic reactions). Parents/Guardians of such children should address their situation with the Lead Coach/Mentor to develop a plan of action.

In the event a team member becomes ill on a trip, transportation home will be at the parents' expense using the first available transportation.

A medical release form will be required for overnight travel.

## **X. College and Career Opportunities**

The FIRST Robotics program is an excellent way to explore the career of engineering. Throughout the season students will be exposed to many principles of engineering. While not all students will pursue a career in engineering, team members will benefit from discovering the many careers in and associated with engineering. For this purpose, the connection between mentors and team members is invaluable.

There are many scholarship opportunities associated with the FIRST program. The mentors will be providing information regarding scholarships as soon as they are made available. There is also information listed on the FIRST web site at [www.firstinspires.org](http://www.firstinspires.org).

## **XI. Board of Directors**

The Due West Robotics Board of Directors exists to be the fiduciaries who steer the organization towards a sustainable future by adopting sound, ethical, and legal governance and financial management policies, as well as by making sure the nonprofit has adequate resources to advance its mission. The Board of Directors delegates authority to others.

If you have any questions, concerns, or problems please address them through the appropriate channels / chain of command.

1. Your child's team leadership (mentors, coaches, etc)
2. If a problem still persists, please contact the Due West Robotics administrator
3. If a problem still persists, please contact the Board of Directors.

For a list of current board members and officers, contact the Due West Robotics administrator.

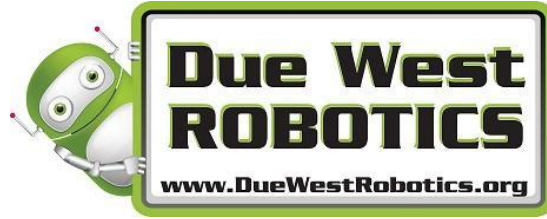
## **XII. Handbook and Policies Acknowledgement**

It is important that team members and parents/guardians fully understand the information in this handbook and all Due West Robotics policies. Therefore, participation on the team requires your signature on the Handbook Acknowledgement Form indicating that you understand this document and agree to comply with its contents.

A complete list of policies can be found on our website, [www.duewestrobotics.org](http://www.duewestrobotics.org).

This document is updated to include clarifications and new information as needed. As substantive changes are made to the basic document, updates will be distributed which must also be signed and returned for continued participation in the team.

Appendix A



The following agreement must be signed and returned to the DWR Administrator before the first team meeting via:

E-mail: [administrator@duewestrobotics.org](mailto:administrator@duewestrobotics.org)

Mail: PO Box 66, Due West, SC 29639

By signing this agreement, I acknowledge that ...

- I have read and understand all policies in the Due West Robotics Handbook.
- I am aware of the program's expectations, attendance policy, conduct policy, and student consequences for misbehavior that could include permanent removal from Due West Robotics.
- I am aware that should a student be removed from a team, all team fees are non-refundable.
- I understand that all communication about dates/times will be made via e-mail and/or Spond.
- I understand it is the responsibility of both parents and team members to check their email regularly.

Due West Robotics may be photographing or videoing for promotional purposes. By joining, you acknowledge this and agree to allow your image to be used by Due West Robotics and it's partners in both print and online promotional purposes. Anyone not wanting to be included should notify their coach at the time of the event or activity.

Team Member Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Team Member Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



My son/daughter, \_\_\_\_\_ has my permission  
to go on a field trip/attend a competition located at \_\_\_\_\_ with  
Due West Robotics on \_\_\_\_\_ (date) at \_\_\_\_\_ pm/am and returning on  
\_\_\_\_\_ (date) at \_\_\_\_\_ pm/am.

Name of Participant (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

### Emergency Contacts

Name of persons and telephone number to call in case of emergency:

Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

### Release of Liability

By signing this Permission/Waiver form I consent to my child's participation in these activities as well as the transportation that accompanies these activities. I expressly warrant that the child named above is capable of withstanding both the physical and mental demands of the activities listed above. I also expressly assume all risks of the child participating in the activities, whether such risks are known or unknown to me at this time. I further release Due West Robotics, and its leaders, volunteers, and agents, from any claim that my child may have or that I may have against them as a result of injury or illness incurred during the course of participating in the activities. This release of liability is also intended to cover all claims that members of the child's or my family or estate heirs, representatives, or assigns may have against this organization or its leaders, employees, volunteers, or agents.

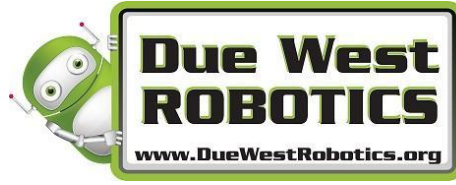
I have fully informed myself of the contents of this permission form by reading it before I signed it.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Printed Name**

*\*Note: A signed Medical Waiver must be on file for any student wishing to travel with Due West Robotics.*



Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

As the parent and/or legal guardian of (print participant's name)

\_\_\_\_\_, I authorize Due West Robotics, its agents, employees, and other officers to procure and consent to any medical emergency treatments, including hospital care, to be rendered to my child by or under the supervision of a licensed healthcare provider. The parent/legal guardian is responsible for any fees or costs.

My signature below represents consent and agreement to matters stated above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Medical Insurance Company: \_\_\_\_\_ Policy

#: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Insured: \_\_\_\_\_

Father's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Mother's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone

# \_\_\_\_\_

Physician's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #

\_\_\_\_\_  
Physician's Address:

Check any health conditions that apply (if none leave blank). Allergies \_\_\_\_ Diabetes \_\_\_\_ Seizures \_\_\_\_

Heart Condition \_\_\_\_

Other (please

describe): \_\_\_\_\_



Medications

prescribed: \_\_\_\_\_

Hospital

Preference: \_\_\_\_\_

*Note: in the event of an emergency medical situation, the coach/mentor will call 911 and all attempts will be made to contact the student's parents/guardians regarding the emergency.*