

PUBLIC RELEASE

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Events and Travel

General Expectations

When students travel for competitions, they are to represent the team and the organization. Students attending events are required to attend the entire duration of the event. Late arrivals or early departures are prohibited unless explicitly approved in advance. This type of behavior disrupts the ability of the team to function, impacting things like scouting and pit rotations.

Only students who have paid team dues or travel fees by the stated deadlines are allowed to participate in team activities or travel with the team. The Executive Director may make exceptions on a case-by-case basis for a limited duration. If students are not able to pay dues or travel costs in full due to financial hardship, the situation should be brought to the attention of the director of programs to determine if the student is able to receive financial assistance from growingSTEMS in order to continue participating in the program. This is described in-depth in another section of the manual.

Travel Eligibility

Students who plan to attend travel must be in good standing with the team. As stated before, The RoboBees strive to be a professional organization and we hold our students to high expectations. Good standing means (but not limited to) the following:

- Follow all team policies
- Good academic standing
- No disciplinary problems
- Positive interactions with the team and others

All students who are in good standing will be invited to attend all district events (pending event regulations). Attendance at any particular event is optional; however, competitions are a major part of the team experience. Therefore, every FRC student will be required to attend, at a minimum, a district qualifier or the district championship.

Sometimes our team is unable to invite every student to the FIRST Championship event due to the associated cost and mentor requirements. If this occurs, the following will result:

- Mentors will recommend students for travel based on their contributions and efforts during the current season.
- The number of students recommended for travel will be determined by the Lead Mentor based on team needs.

As soon as competition dates are announced, it is each student's responsibility to check for scheduling conflicts and to bring them to the attention of team leadership as soon as possible in order to resolve those conflicts as quickly as possible.

Travelling With the Team

It is heavily encouraged that students travel with the team and stay with other students. Travel as a group helps to build team cohesion and provides the students with limited independence, facilitating some growth and increased maturity. We can't promise miracles, but we do our best.

If students are unable to travel with the team, this must be coordinated ahead of time with the Lead Mentor. They will need to be explicitly escorted by their own parent/guardian, who is responsible for physically signing them in and out with a team adult. It is up to the parents to attend the event and arrange lodging. The team, based on hotel room availability, may be able to help with this by booking family rooms. More information on this can be found below.

While FRC competitions are public events, students will be denied permission to participate with the team (in pits, stands, or in the field) at the competition if they do not travel with the team. Students can't just show up at a competition with no notice and expect to participate.

Lodging for Students

Lodging costs make up the majority of the travel budget. Extensive effort is made to reduce the cost of lodging to ensure that travel fees are kept affordable. Students are almost always placed three to four to a room.

Students will be assigned a room based on a variety of factors considered by the mentors. Generally, the input of the students is not taken into consideration during this process. The opportunity to select hotel roommates is a very special privilege that is sometimes afforded to students by the team. The team may change student room assignments at any time for any reason (e.g., to consolidate underpopulated rooms to minimize the total cost incurred by the team).

Lodging for Mentors

The team seeks mentors who can be unlimited participants in each of the competitions that the team attends. Mentors who are unable to attend an event the entire time are welcome to come when they can, however the team is unable to guarantee these mentors a spot in the team hotel unless space happens to be available.

Generally, the cost for mentor lodging is picked up by the team and subsidized by student travel fees. However, should mentors wish to share a room with any non-mentors, the team has instituted the following rules: Unless otherwise requested, mentors will share a hotel room with another mentor (2 mentors per room). Exceptions to this policy will be made based on gender, permitting a single mentor to have their own room. If they do not wish to share with another mentor, mentors may request their own room (or a room to share with family members) based on room availability. In such a case, the mentor will absorb the entire cost of the room and will pay for the room individually.

Lodging for Parents

Lodging for parents who wish to travel with the team can usually be very easily accommodated if known ahead of time. In most cases of travel by family, they are asked to reimburse the team with the flat rate for the hotel across the length of the competition.

Parents wishing to reserve their own room outside of the group booking may do so; however, the parent will absorb the entire cost of the room at the “rack rate” and will pay for the room individually.

If spaces are available, the team may also propose that a parent share a room with a mentor of the same sex. If this occurs, the parent will only be responsible for 50% of the cost of the room.

In cases when parents choose to share a room with their child, the team has implemented the following policies:

- The parent is still responsible for the entire cost of the room.
- Since the cost of student participation in the event is flat regardless of the amount spent to actually house that student, there is no effect on the student’s trip fee. The student is still responsible for the full amount of the student fee. While the bulk of the cost of travel is associated with lodging, student fees still help to defray a wide array of the team’s expenses for participation in the event, such as mentor lodging, trailer transport fees, and team meals at the event.

Hotel Conduct, Curfews, and Room Policies

Prior to the official night curfew, if students wish to gather socially or study, they must do so in designated hotel common spaces or in a room with a coach's express permission. If gathering in a hotel room, the door must remain wide open (never propped or closed).

Once the designated bed check hour hits, students must be inside their assigned rooms. They are strictly forbidden from leaving their rooms for any reason until the morning wake-up call, except in the case of a verified emergency.

Students are prohibited from changing room assignments, swapping keys, or allowing non-team members (including friends from other FRC teams) into their hotel rooms.

Accountability During Travel

Students will not leave the assigned place (competition venue, hotel, restaurant, etc.) without appropriate mentor or parent supervision.

If a student desires to leave the team travel area and deviate from the published itinerary, they must provide notification in the event channel in Slack. This notification must describe the who, what, where, when, and how of the situation. An example is provided below.

Andrew, Carson, and Collin are leaving right now (1:15 PM) to drive to the nearest Best Buy. We need to buy a replacement controller before the next match. We expect to be back by 2:00 PM

When the group returns, they must send a message in that thread to announce the group’s return. This is intended to ensure accountability of all students travelling with the team.

Mentors and parents travelling with the team are not required to follow this process, as the team is

not responsible for the safety of adults. However, it is strongly recommended that you consider following this process to both ensure your own safety and allow the team to keep track of your location.

Discipline During Travel

Discipline during travel is rare, but it does happen. Typically, poor behavior is quickly addressed and remediated without the need to escalate to formal discipline. Occasionally, however, mentors must take actions that limit the rights and responsibilities of the students.

Minor infractions typically result in a loss of privileges. This can include, but is not limited to, reassignment to other duties (e.g., drive team to pit support).

Moderate infractions, such as consistent insubordination or continued unwillingness to support the team, may result in students being asked to stay behind at the hotel for the day. This is entirely dependent on the ability of the team to support that discipline. If there is no mentor or parent who is able to provide supervision at the hotel, this moderate infraction may be escalated by necessity.

Major infractions, such as breaking curfew, entering the room of a member of the opposite sex, or violating drug/alcohol policies, can result in immediate suspension from the event. This typically requires the student's parents to be contacted so they can physically pick them up from the venue city at their own expense.

Competition Venue Expectations and Behavior

FRC stands for the FIRST Robotics *Competition*, so it is expected that the team will go into the event with the goal of winning the event. However, that does not take precedence over the priority to be gracious and professional during the event. Throughout the entirety of the competition, all team members and individuals who are associated with the team (e.g., parents, siblings, alumni), will behave in an exemplary manner.

All people cheering in the team's block must adhere to the same professional codes of conduct as the students and mentors. This includes participating in the team chants, refraining from booing or criticizing other teams, and doing whatever is needed to support the team's activities.

While at the venue, students must actively watch matches, scout, analyze strategies, or look at other teams' robots to learn. Engaging in unrelated activities (e.g., playing handheld video games, leaving the venue to wander) without express mentor permission is forbidden.

Competition Schedule

The schedule for each event can differ but generally follow an accepted format. District qualifier events take place over two official days, with a load-in-day for the advance team. The schedule below is replicated from the 2026 Pasadena qualifier.

Friday - March 13th, 2026

Advance team leaves The Hive		4:00 PM
Pits and inspection open/load-in	5:00 PM	9:00 PM
Fields open for calibration	8:00 PM	8:30 PM
Saturday - March 14th, 2026		
Students arrive at The Hive		5:30 AM
Depart The Hive		5:45 AM
Arrive in Pasadena, MD		7:45 AM
Pits and inspections open		8:00 AM
Field open for calibration		8:00 AM
Drivers' meeting		8:30 AM
Safety Captain meeting		9:00 AM
Practice matches		9:00 AM
Opening ceremonies		10:30 AM
Start of qualification matches		11:00 AM
Lunch	1:00 PM	2:00 PM
Qualification matches		2:00 PM
Pits close / return to hotel / dinner		8:00 PM
Team meeting		10:00 PM
Room check and lights out		11:00 PM
Sunday - March 15th, 2026		
Leave Hotel		7:30 AM
Pits open		8:00 AM
Opening ceremonies		9:00 AM
Qualification matches		9:30 AM
Alliance selections (8 minutes after last qual match)		12:30 PM
Lunch	1:00 PM	2:00 PM
Playoff matches and awards		2:00 PM
Pits close / leave for The Hive		7:00 PM
Return to The Hive		9:00 PM

The District Championship takes place over two official days, with a load-in-day allowed for an advance team and three days of matches. The schedule below is replicated from the 2026 Chesapeake District Championship.

Thursday - April 9th, 2026		
Advance team leaves The Hive		3:00 PM
Pits and inspection open/load-in	5:00 PM	9:00 PM
Practice fields are open	6:00 PM	8:30 PM
Fields open for calibration	8:00 PM	8:30 PM
Friday - April 10th, 2026		
Students arrive at The Hive		5:00 AM
Depart The Hive		5:15 AM
Arrive in Petersburg, VA		7:45 AM
Doors open, team load-in, and on-field camera calibration		8:00 AM
Drivers' meeting		9:30 AM
Safety Captain meeting		10:00 AM

Practice matches		10:00 AM
Lunch		Noon
Qualification matches		1:00 PM
Pits close / return to hotel / dinner		7:00 PM
Team meeting		10:00 PM
Room check and lights out		11:00 PM
Saturday - April 11th, 2026		
Leave Hotel		7:30 AM
Doors open		8:00 AM
Practice field opens		8:30 AM
Opening ceremonies		9:00 AM
Qualification matches		9:30 AM
Lunch		Noon
Qualification matches		1:00 PM
Pits close / return to hotel / dinner		7:00 PM
Team meeting		10:00 PM
Room check and lights out		11:00 PM
Sunday - April 12th, 2026		
Leave Hotel		7:30 AM
Doors open		8:00 AM
Practice field opens		8:30 AM
Opening ceremonies		9:00 AM
Qualification matches		9:30 AM
Alliance selections		11:30 PM
Lunch		Noon
Playoff matches and awards		1:00 PM
Pits close / leave for The Hive		6:00 PM
Return to The Hive		10:00 PM

Travel To and From Events

Parents and mentors are expected to help transport the students to the events. The only acceptable route for a student to arrive or depart a competition is via a vehicle that has been arranged by the team or in a vehicle driven by the parent of the student in question. If travelling with a parent, this must be arranged ahead of time with the Lead Mentor.

Students are not permitted, with extraordinarily rare exceptions approved by both the Lead Mentor and Executive Director, to drive themselves to events. This is true regardless of license level, age, or presence of passengers.

Towing the Trailer

A volunteer is always needed to help transport the trailer to and from the competition. The trailer has an empty weight of 2,150 lbs. and a GVR of 7,000 lbs. When driven to outreach events and not fully

loaded, the trailer can often be towed by an SUV. However, when fully loaded for competition events a pick-up truck is almost always needed to safely move the trailer.

An appropriately licensed adult, mentor, or other volunteer are the only people who are permitted to tow the trailer. Students are not permitted to tow the trailer.

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