



QUASICS

Team Handbook
2019-2020

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Welcome to Quasics!

This handbook is meant as an overall introduction to the rules and structure of our team. It contains valuable information for prospective team members, current team members, parents of team members, Coaches and mentors, community members, administrators, and sponsors alike. This handbook represents what we view as important, our team rules, and how our team is organized, funded and supported.

Quasics History

Gateway High School's Robotics Club was founded in November of 2007, beginning a journey that continues today. The original team members named us "Quasics" (short for "Quantum Physics"). Our first event was the 2008 *FIRST* Robotics Competition, and FRC Team 2656 has competed at the FRC Greater Pittsburgh Regional each March since. With increases in our team's membership, Quasics added a *FIRST* Tech Challenge team in 2011, which competed for six seasons through 2016. Two VEX Robotics Competition teams were added in 2013.

Quasics in the Community

Each year Quasics participates in dozens of community events. These community events are an essential part of Quasics: we can win awards at competitions based on our community events, and -- more significantly -- outreach and STEM education is a major priority of our club. ("More than robots" is something we believe at a fundamental level.)

2019-2020 Student Leadership Team

Each spring our team members can apply to be a part of our Student Leadership Team. Those selected will attend additional meetings, as well as help to plan our community events. They are also expected to serve as "first-line" volunteers for outreach events (especially when speaking as a public face for the team), and to serve as role models for the conduct expected from the team as a whole.

The 2019-2020 Student Leadership Team includes: Kat, McKenzie, Lenny, Scott, and Esther.

Coaching Staff

Head Coach: Sean McMahon
Assistant Coaches: Meg Gilmore, Matt Healy
FRC Mentors: Curt Hofmann

Important contact information

Team website: www.quasics.org
Team Facebook page: www.facebook.com/Quasics
Team Twitter: www.twitter.com/quasics
Team Instagram: www.instagram.com/quasicsrc
Team YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/user/FRC2656
Head Coach's email: Coach.SeanMcMahon@gmail.com
Head Coach's mobile number: (412) 334.1822

Team Member Rules and Expectations

Being a member of our robotics team is an honor and a privilege. Your position on the team carries great responsibilities, both to the team and to yourself. Our team members must meet the following criteria:

1. School Work

Your school work must remain a top priority. We expect you to maintain your GPA and class work throughout the school year. Being a member of a *FIRST* or VEX team sets you apart from your classmates, and as such, you will be held to higher standards.

GPA – Students **must** carry a 2.0 or higher GPA. Eligibility reports will be checked every 3 weeks for compliance. Team members under a 2.0 will be suspended from the team until a qualifying GPA is reached. This is a school rule and applies to all clubs and sports.

School days missed due to team activities – If your dues are paid and you remain in good standing, you will be invited to attend the competitions with the team. Depending on your team position, you may miss one or two days of school for each competition we attend. You are expected to notify your teachers in advance of your absence, then obtain (and complete) any work you may miss.

2. Attendance and Participation

Attendance and dependability – Attendance and dependability are keys to both personal and team success. Excused absences will be permitted; however, these absences cannot be excessive, should be on a limited basis, and Coaches must be notified ahead of time. If we do not see you without notice, for an extended period of time (2-3 weeks), we will assume you are no longer interested in being a part of our team, and you will be removed from the mailing list.

Commitment level – Robotics is a program that requires significant commitment. We work long hours during Build Season, and we participate in events outside of school. These events are often during the evenings and/or on the weekends. We expect you to assist when available.

Community Outreach - Team members will be required to participate in Community Outreach Events each school year before being eligible to attend competition. New team members will be expected to attend at least ONE event to be competition eligible. Returning team members will be expected to attend at least TWO events to be competition eligible.

Commitments to other clubs/activities/teams outside Robotics – We understand that some students will have commitments to other clubs, activities, or sports teams outside of Robotics. We are willing to work with you, provided we have prior notice of when your other events are taking place. You are expected to provide the team leadership with a copy of your schedule of practices, games, or meetings. If you have a myriad of other commitments, we may need to meet to determine if Robotics will be a good fit for you, and what your team role can be.

Workshops and build sessions – We expect members to attend team meetings as often as possible. Failure to do so will lead to the student not being invited to travel with the team to competitions and other team functions outside of school. Attending the competitions should be considered an opportunity to represent your team, community, school, and yourself in a positive and honorable manner.

Getting home – Outside of competition days, team members will be responsible for safe transportation to and from meetings. If you cannot attend a team function due to a transportation issue, please notify a coach or Leadership Team Member before the function is to take place. It is possible that another team member may be able to provide transportation for you. With friends and parents working together, some of the transportation issues may be resolved.

In the shop – Safety glasses must be worn at all times while operating power tools. Safe clothing must be worn in the shop (e.g., no loose clothing, ties, jewelry, hanging chains, etc. while near/working on moving or rotating machinery, etc.). Long hair must be tied back or otherwise safely secured. There will be no horseplay in the shop at any time. If you “don’t have anything to do”, it might be time to call it a day. It is not up to Robotics Club leadership to keep you busy.

3. Communication and Social Networking

While some information may be communicated through the school announcements, email is a fast and efficient means of team communication, and is the preferred method of team leadership.

As a result, all team members must have an active email address that they will provide to the team leadership and check often. [Gmail is preferred by team leadership due to the ease of file sharing with Google Drive.] You are required to read (and respond to) your email, *every day*. If you do not have email access at home, we can show you how to get it at school or even on a mobile phone.

In order to remain up to date on trends within the *FIRST* and VEX communities, get answers to questions regarding robot construction, team organization, and other issues affecting teams, members should become familiar with the Chief Delphi forums: an invaluable resource to seek advice or assistance from thousands of knowledgeable members and mentors of other robotics teams. (www.chiefdelphi.com)

4. Behavior expectations

We want the School District and other community members to see that Quasics members are the best of the best. As such, you will need to follow these guidelines to maintain a position on the team:

Integrity and respect – High levels of honesty and integrity will go a long way to making robotics a positive experience for everyone involved. Oftentimes you will be interacting with adults, students, Judges, and members of other teams. The utmost respect must be shown to all coaches, mentors, team volunteers, teachers, team members, and event staff/volunteers.

Teamwork – Another key quality of a good team member is being just that: a good team member and teammate. You will treat your teammates with respect, as well as being mindful of the fact that you are a representative of your team, school, and sponsors.

Judgment and behavior – Robotics team members are expected to show good judgment and character, and behave as role models for the rest of the student body. Occasional lapses in judgment and behavior will be met with discussion of the incident. Repeated and/or egregious poor behavior will be grounds for dismissal from the team.

School – Gracious Professionalism is a key concept of *FIRST*, defined as “a way of doing things that encourages high-quality work, emphasizes the value of others, and respects individuals and the community”. You are expected to exhibit Gracious Professionalism at all times while on school grounds (both during and after school) and at events. We will not allow our team reputation to be tarnished by offensive team member behavior.

Team events – All school and team rules will apply at any team-sponsored function outside the School District. When in public, you are representing yourself, your team, your school, and your sponsors. Be mindful of this, and behave accordingly.

Social Media - Despite your freedom of speech, your comments are often public, and will reflect both upon yourself and those you are associated with, including this team. Misuse of social media will require a meeting with team leadership and could lead to dismissal from the team.

Code of Conduct and Disciplinary action – As a Quasics team member you are expected to uphold the rules of Gateway High School, such as no cheating, cutting class, or other infractions that may warrant a detention. Also, you will be responsible for adhering to the safety protocols necessary for working in the shop, and observing the other expectations for members. We reserve the right to dismiss you from the team upon failure to comply with these rules. Suspension from the team can last anywhere from one meeting to indefinitely, depending upon the offense.

- Level I (detention) offenses will operate on a “three strikes, you’re out” policy.
- Level II offenses, such as drug/alcohol abuse, fighting, or anything else that results in a school suspension, will most likely lead to immediate expulsion from the team.

It should be noted that the above should not be taken as a strict mapping of the school’s definition of offensive severity to how they will be handled. Something that the school deems to be a “Level 1” offense or even a non-issue (e.g., if they happen outside the school. or aren't a violation of a specific part of the student code) might pose a more serious issue in the context of the team, or might need to be responded to by the team before they have been evaluated by the school’s administration (e.g., due to concerns regarding member safety, etc.). As a result, evaluation of the severity of

offenses will be handled by the coaching staff on a case-by-case basis, albeit with Gateway's policies serving to inform such evaluations.

5. Student Assistance

We understand that team members may need assistance throughout the school year, with robotics and technology, academics, and other situations. Coaches and Mentors are willing to help you make positive changes and assist you in any way they can. You are encouraged to ask for assistance at any time. Also remember that it is everyone's responsibility to report unacceptable behavior.

6. Team Member Health

If you are required to take any medication, or have any health issues we need to know about, please notify a Coach. We will keep medical forms on file, along with an allergy list. This information will be kept confidential.

Please note: as part of our safety plan, all team members must complete an Emergency Medical Form yearly.

7. Dress Code

Quasics team members are expected to adhere to a dress code both at official competitions and at our community events:

- Team uniforms must be worn at all such events.
- Long pants or shorts can be worn depending on weather conditions, but they should be in complementing colors to our green shirts - black, khaki, gray, and jeans are acceptable.
- Closed-toed shoes must be worn at competitions per the rules, and should be worn at other team events for safety.
- Long hair should be pulled back.
- Safety glasses must be worn in the Pit areas and on the competition fields.

8. At The Events

Student safety is our top priority at the events. Students are NOT permitted to leave the venue unless (a) accompanied by an adult, **and** (b) two Quasics coaches have been notified and have acknowledged either by text message or verbally.

We also expect our team to be active participants when attending our competitions. Make signs, cheer, be invested!

9. Team Member Relations and Interactions

As aforementioned, team members are expected to treat all team members with respect, integrity, and gracious professionalism. Inappropriate behaviors such as bullying, harassment, and/or physical altercations will not be tolerated.

Although the club cannot control what feelings may arise among members, we ask that if a relationship or issue should take place, please do not let it interfere with team activities. Whether this relationship may involve romantic feelings or negative feelings for one, it should not interfere with the team's efficiency, image, and overall copacetic atmosphere among its members.

Quasics strives to maintain its professional integrity and image among its fellow members and community. If you have any problems with other team members, please contact the coaching staff. Disciplinary actions are up to the discretion of the coaching staff.

Mentor Rules and Expectations

Quasics coaches and mentors also have rules to follow. Our volunteers must meet the following criteria:

- Former students will not be permitted to volunteer with our team until they have been out of high school for at least two seasons. This helps to put necessary distance between the roles of student and volunteer, as well as allowing our alumni to continue to grow and mature prior to returning in their new role.
- As mentors are in a position of authority with regard to student members, student/mentor dating relationships are considered to be inappropriate, and are prohibited by PA state law.
- Per district policies, mentors must obtain Gateway School District Board approval and volunteer clearances. The requirements are as follows:
 1. Pennsylvania State Police Clearance
 2. Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance
 3. Federal Bureau of Investigation Clearance (Fingerprinting)
 4. Tuberculosis Test
 5. Signed Volunteer Exception Form (Available on the district website listed below)

Once those steps have been completed, the finished packet of information can be dropped off at the Administrative Office, and it will go to the School Board for approval. The clearances are valid for 5 years. More information can be found at:

How Parents Can Help

- * Meals – During the long hours of building robots, the team often eats meals at school in the shop. A home cooked meal, or donation of beverages or other food will provide a change in the monotony of the food consumed (typically pizza).
- * Travel and Logistics – The organization of travel and logistics for competitions outside of Pittsburgh will be a challenging task, requiring valuable support from parents and others. Also, providing transportation of the robot and various other team items to events could apply here.
- * Public relations – When applicable, the team would appreciate the support of parents and other team supporters to represent the team. For example, they could provide their outlook on the impact of the program at a school board meeting, or help recruit mentors at work.
- * Construction of Practice Field Elements – It is often necessary to construct mock-ups of what the playing field will look like in order to model and test robot systems. This area is very open for parents to offer skills and time to aid in the construction of elements for practice.
- * Fundraising/sponsorship – Funding a robotics team is an expensive, yet worthwhile, venture. Assistance with preparing sponsorship presentations, transporting the robot and presenters to business locations, and any other events the team organizes to raise money.
- * Team Support – When the team participates in or organizes events to spread the message of *FIRST* and VEX, and awareness of the team, parental support will be encouraged and appreciated. Parents can often volunteer at these events
- * Parent Clearances - Due to schedule conflicts, individual Coaches are not always able to be present in the shop. As a result, we need parents to volunteer some of their time in the evening to come and monitor our students and assist them with their work if possible. Parents need to gain school and government clearances before this type of support is allowed, as discussed in "Mentor Rules and Expectations". (However, the other types of help described above do not carry this requirement.)

Funding

Working towards the goal of funding the team is not only expected all of team members, but required. This is a very expensive endeavor, and everyone needs to chip in for success.

Sponsors – Sponsors support our team in a variety of ways. An important category of sponsor for our team provides donations of services and products. Examples of this variety would include welding services, or other machining capabilities.

In addition, some sponsors may provide mentors to assist in engineering, marketing, or other aspects of the team. Working with professionals enriches the experience for students involved in the program.

The final type of sponsor provides monetary backing for the team, allowing for competition registration, robot building, the purchase of tools and new technology to occur. This incredibly important resource for our team is what allows the program to flourish, with sponsors receiving recognition on our website, team promotional items, and T-shirts worn by team members at events.

<i>SPONSORSHIP LEVEL</i>	<i>DONATION</i>
Diamond	\$1000+
Platinum	\$500 - \$999
Gold	\$259 - \$499
Silver	\$79 - \$249
Bronze	\$75

Sarris Candies sales – Team members will be expected to participate in our Sarris Candies Holiday sale. Members will approach family and friends to sell items from the Sarris catalogs. When the orders arrive, team members will deliver the candies back to their customers. The team has raised over \$1500 per season by selling Sarris Candies. We expect to sell even more this year!

Travel

Quasics travels to various locations throughout the year, including official competitions, offseason events and community events. For official tournaments, there will be a bus to transport students to and from the competition. For community events and offseason events, transportation is normally not provided, and while Quasics leadership

will try to set up carpools to allow students to attend events, students are expected to find a ride to and from community events and offseason competitions.

Team Member Dues

Team members are required to pay \$50 in dues in order to be a member of the robotics club. The main purpose of this fee is to partially offset the costs of team transportation and uniforms, which can total over \$3000 (even before the costs to register for competitions). Requiring \$50 per team member is a good-faith payment to help offset these team costs.

The full, total payment of \$50 will be due by mid-November each year. We will accept payments totaling \$50 if that works better for the team member or their family.

If this fee will be a financial obstacle to your participation in the Robotics Club, please speak to a Coach before you decide on staying or not. We will work with every student to maximize their ability to participate, and waive the dues if needed.

STIMS

FRC team members **must** register in STIMS (an online consent form) before attending the FRC Kickoff event (usually the first Saturday in January). Follow this link to learn more:

<https://www.firstinspires.org/resource-library/youth-team-member-consent-and-release-form>

Parents must also create an account and approve certain areas in their child's STIMS account.

VEX **does not** have to register in STIMS; however, they **must** sign competition consent forms before attending any VEX competition.

Safety glasses!

Team members are strongly encouraged to purchase a pair of safety glasses. They are to be worn at all times when work is being done on our robots in the workshop. Safety glasses can be purchased at Lowe's, Home Depot, Harbor Freight Tools or similar establishments for well under \$5 in many cases. For individuals who normally wear eyeglasses, Amazon.com carries "side shields" in multiple sizes as an alternative for safety glasses for under \$5 as well.

Acknowledgement of receipt of the Quasics Handbook

My signature below indicates that I have received a copy of the team's 2019-2020 Handbook.

I understand that this document contains information regarding the team's history, rules, regulations, and other information which affects me as a member of Quasics.

I acknowledge that I have read and understood the team policies.

I also understand that the team may revise, supplement or rescind policies, procedures or information described in the handbook, with or without notice.

(Student) Print Name _____

(Student) Signature _____

(Parent) Print Name _____

(Parent) Signature _____

Date _____