FIRST ROBOTICS COMPETITION



SAULT STE. MARIE

#1596 THE INSTIGATORS

2025-26 Season Expectations

FIRST AGE

PRESENTED BY Qualcomm

Students/Parents/Guardians:

Welcome to the Instigators! Your student has expressed an interest in participating in this year's Sault Area High School & Career Center Robotics Team. We are an after-school activity and the adult mentors are volunteers. This is our 21st year as a team. As of this printing, there are 5 mentors and 15 student members.

Contact Information

Please read this document fully and return the completed signature/contact page by October 27, 2025.
Students/Parents/Guardians/Mentors will be added to the 1596 group e-mail and will be expected to know in advance what, when, where, etc. – in other words...***read your email***. Students will also be added to a text group and Discord.

Social Media

Student members and families are encouraged to follow TEAM 1596!

- Website: https://www.saultschools.org/robotics
- Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/frc1596
- YouTube: www.youtube.com/user/Instigators1596
- FIRST Robotics Competition: https://frc-events.firstinspires.org/team/1596
- The Blue Alliance: https://www.thebluealliance.com/team/1596
- Tik Tok: @instigators_1596

Team Commitments

Funding: Students are expected to participate in fundraising activities.

Time: Most students will be expected to expend about 50-100 hours throughout the season. Attendance will be monitored, and the students who expend little effort or do not attend meetings may be asked to leave the team.

Pre-Season: **Meetings/work sessions are Mondays from 6-8 pm** in the robotics lab. This is our time for team-building and discovering our interests and learning new skills.

Kick-off: **Saturday, January 10, 2026** is the big "game reveal" when teams find out the challenge and game details. The team will meet following the reveal to begin brainstorming.

Build Season: From the moment the game has been revealed the team will be focused on the design, build, and programming of a robot. Work continues through competition season as we fine-tune the robot. **Meetings/work sessions will take place on Mondays-Thursdays from 6-8 pm and on Saturdays from 10 am-4 pm.**

Competition Season: From March-April there are District Event Competitions each weekend (Thursday-Saturday), then State of Michigan event (aka State's) in April at Saginaw Valley State University, followed by FIRST Championship in April at Houston. **We will travel to two District Events: one in Midland on March 12-14, 2026 and the other at LSSU on March 26-28, 2026.** Our standings will determine if we advance from districts.

Meeting/Room Work Expectations:

Students are expected to attend and participate in meetings. These are an opportunity for veteran students to share knowledge and adult mentors/coaches to get to know the students through training. The more time they spend in the robotics room, the more they will learn about the whole U.S. FIRST Robotics process, upcoming travel competitions and become part of the team camaraderie. The team will meet throughout the academic year. Saturdays are included during build season. Showing up consistently and/or contributing during sessions will be taken into consideration when awarding prominent roles within the team such as positions on the Drive Team.

Meetings/work sessions are set up to simulate a real-world engineering work environment. They will begin with the first 10 minutes devoted to signing in and reviewing the work to be done that day. The last 15 minutes of the session will be spent on planning for the next meeting and clean-up. Students need to check-out before leaving.

Expectations when in the Robotics Lab: Once students come into the room they are there for the robotics team's goals. Respect others, be productive, clean-up after yourself, and follow safety rules.

Behavioral Expectations: A key fundamental of FRC teams is gracious professionalism. How we treat one another is a top priority. See the chart of Team Fundamentals for what is expected. These go a long way to rating how people are chosen for prominent roles on the team.

Consequences: If a student violates any of the expectations, the following actions will take place:

1) An adult mentor will speak to the offending student member.
2) A scheduled Parent/Mentor/Student meeting will take place.

If a similar situation arises between a student and a mentor, another adult mentor will be involved in the process.

TEAM FUNDAMENTALS

Category	Criteria	Excellent (5)	Good (4)	Average (3)	Needs Work (2)	Poor (1)
Driving Skill (Driver/ Operator)	**Control, precision and smoothness**	Consistently precise, no errors	Mostly precise, few errors	Adequate control, come hesitations	Frequent errors or collisions	Struggles to control robot
Game Awareness	**Knowledge of rules, field and scoring**	Knows all rules & strategies, applies them naturally	Know most rules, minor mistakes	Understands basics, occasional errors	Relies on reminders, frequent errors	Unfamiliar with rules
Communication	**Works with mentor, partner, and alliance**	Clear, concise, always responsive	Good communication, occasional lapses	Adequate but sometimes unclear	Struggles to give/ receive directions	Poor communication, ignores input
Decision-Making	**Reaction under pressure**	Makes quick, smart choices	Usually good choices, minor delays	Average decision-making, occasional freezes	Frequently hesitates or panics	Consistently poor or unsafe choices
Composure	**Staying calm under stress**	Always calm, focused, positive	Mostly calm, minor stress shows	Handles stress okay, occasional frustration	Easily frustrated or distracted	Loses focus, disruptive under pressure
Commitment	**Attendance, reliability, practice effort**	Always present, prepared, reliable	Almost always present, minor gaps	Attends most, but occasional conflicts	Inconsistent attendance or effort	Rarely available

Roles on the Team

There are a variety of team roles. Positions are subject to change and are based on how the students embody the team fundamentals, interest and ability.

Drive Team: The team consists of 5 people. These are priority roles.

Driver – movement of the robot on the playing field;
Operator – the movements of the robot in relation to the field elements;
Technical – assist with technical issues that may arise;
Human player – interacts directly with designated field elements; and
Drive Coach – provides advice and positive reinforcement to driver and operator during competition.

Social Media Lead: oversees posts and maintenance of various social media sites.

Safety Captain: in charge of the first aid kit, the FRC Safety Manual and overseeing maintenance of safety in the robotics lab. This includes making sure people are wearing safety glasses and using safe practices with equipment.

Scouting Lead: drafts sheet to use for scouting during competition, oversees tracking of matches and works with mentor to develop list of potential partner teams.

CAD Lead: oversees CAD work on parts and systems.

Spirit Lead: oversees provision of the positive atmosphere and camaraderie among team members. Develops and puts into action ideas for cheering the team on at competition.

Operations Lead: this role will potentially change weekly. Oversee the meeting/work session planning and implementation.

Marketing Lead: oversees the outreach and public relations of the team. This includes ideas for fundraising, t-shirt designs, photography and collaborating with the Social Media Lead.

Finance: keeps track of purchases, expenses and budget.

Fundraising

The annual team fee to FRC, expenses for building a robot, promoting the team, supplying the room, meeting snacks, team gear, and competition costs (food and housing are covered only for team members), are extensive. **We need to raise $15,000-$20,000 annually.**

Volunteering

Volunteering is an attribute of our team. The Instigators have volunteered at various community events, presentations at local schools, Bayliss Library and more. Please encourage your child to participate in the volunteer opportunities within our community.

Competitions and Travel

When it is time to organize the team for competition travel, it is our goal for all team members to attend the competitions. All students who go will ride with the team and will be expected to stay with the team and on site for the competition duration. Our points earned at the two District competitions determine if we travel to the State's Competition. Then all points earned determine if we travel to FIRST Championship.

At competition team members are expected to wear their team t-shirts, sit together in the bleachers, contribute to scouting efforts, and generally participating overall. They can also help in the pit, scout other teams in the pits, answer questions from other teams, and being present in the moment. Dance, cheer on the team, and have fun!

Students are not allowed to drive, only parent(s) or mentor(s); no college-aged mentor can drive a high school student.
Immediate action will take place if a student breaks a Sault High & Career Center Handbook rule or TEAM 1596 Expectation at a competition; a parent will be located/called. Depending on the infraction, discipline will occur, including possible revoking of travel privileges or removal from the robotics team.

Homework/Grades

Students can work on homework before the meeting starts. A mentor will be available at 5 pm to assist with math homework. Students are required to have an overall grade of a C for current classes in order to participate at competitions.

Overall SAHS & CC Attendance and Discipline

Team 1596 follows the SAHS & CC Student Handbook for attendance and behavior.

Parent Roles

We ask parents to:

- **Register at firstinspires.org, then register your student with our team.** We cannot add your student to the team roster until this has taken place. If the student is 18, he/she will need to complete a Youth Protection application.
- Be sure the Consent & Release form is completed
- Assist in the robotics/drafting rooms
- Sign up for a Saturday lunch during the build season
- Drive/Chaperon to/at competitions
- Join in with Fundraising/Marketing/Public Relations/Your Professional Skills as a Mentor

Your time is appreciated when assisting! If you plan on mentoring and will be in the robotics room with students, or if you plan to assist with driving to competitions, you must file an online "Consent & Release Form" and complete the Youth Protection Program at firstinspires.org. We will need a copy of your Driver's License if you help with driving. The school also has an authorization form for a background check to submit.

SAULT STE. MARIE

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Signature/Contact Form

Please complete and return this form by October 27, 2025.

We have read the TEAM 1596 2025-26 Expectations and understand that we are responsible for its contents.

Student: (print name)_____

(signature) _____

E-Mail: _____

Cell number:_____

Parent/Guardian: (print name)_____

(signature)_____

E-Mail: _____

Cell number:_____