



Parent/Guardian's User Guide

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Welcome

Welcome to eCYBERMISSION and thank you for actively participating in your student's learning experience! We are happy to have you on board for this year's competition. Everything you will need is located on the competition web site at www.ecybermission.com. We have also provided this Parent/Guardian's User Guide to serve as a reference.

This guide contains information not only about your student's roles and responsibilities, but also your roles and responsibilities as a parent/guardian. In addition, the Guide outlines the rewards your student will receive from participating in the competition, as well as information on how eCYBERMISSION has designed the competition to make it safe, fun and educational.

BACKGROUND

eCYBERMISSION is a free, web-based, science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) competition for students in grades six through nine. Students work in teams comprised of three to four students from the same grade and region. The teams are mentored by an adult supervisor, the Team Advisor, to identify and solve challenges in their communities. By applying STEM to a problem affecting the community, students not only discover the real-life applications and relevance of STEM, but students also find that they can make a positive difference in their communities.

Managed by the National Science Teachers Association as a part of the Army Educational Outreach Program, the concept of eCYBERMISSION was developed to engage a broad spectrum of America's youth in STEM education. The competition aims to not only motivate and encourage students to realize the importance of the future of STEM education, but to also improve student performance in STEM. In addition, the program hopes to encourage students to consider and work towards future careers in these STEM fields and inspire new generations to embrace and appreciate the role of STEM in our world.

Since its official launch in October 2002, eCYBERMISSION has received praise from educators and leaders in STEM alike. From the program's use of technology and team-based learning approach, to its open-ended challenges and community focus, eCYBERMISSION invites and rewards students of all backgrounds, proficiency levels and interests to participate.

BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING IN ECYBERMISSION

eCYBERMISSION challenges teams of students to apply STEM education to a real problem in their community. They have the chance to experience hands-on how STEM works in their world.

Students will:

- Learn about STEM and how it can be applied to a real problem in the community
- Work in a team setting and build skills in teamwork, communication, problem solving, conflict resolution and time management— all in a safe and supportive environment
- Collaborate and share ideas and interests, both online and in person, with other teammates and teams, which breeds creativity and stretches students' imaginations
- Participate in an inclusive competition that values and rewards students of all backgrounds and proficiency levels
- Compete for a chance to represent his/her school and community in a national competition

STUDENT'S ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Students who participate in eCYBERMISSION are responsible for:

- Forming a team with other students in their grade and region.
- Selecting a Mission Challenge to investigate a problem in the community, propose a possible solution to that problem and report their findings in a concise and informative way.
- Conducting research, experiments and gathering data.
- Collaborating in a secure environment with their team and other teams through Discussion Forums, Instant Messaging, Chat sessions and eCYBERMISSION social media sites.
- Seeking official and secure eCYBERMISSION guidance from CyberGuides; Army personnel who serve as online competition mentors.
- Completing the Mission Folder (eCYBERMISSION's final project) by the submission deadline.
- Conducting themselves ethically and in compliance with the eCYBERMISSION competition rules and online etiquette guidelines when using Discussion Forums, Team Talk and eCYBERMISSION social media sites, as well as when conducting experiments.

PARENT/GUARDIAN'S ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

As the parent/guardian of an eCYBERMISSION participant, you will wear many hats. Some of these roles include serving as:

- Informal Supervisor - In addition to working at school, it is possible that the team will work together at your house. You will be another set of eyes and ears on the team's progress, processes and any trouble spots along the way. This may involve stepping in to get a discussion back on track or to handle conflict between team members. For more information on how to handle conflict, see "Handling Conflict on Your Student's Team" below.
- Team Motivator - Encouraging your student and keeping him/her motivated will help the team complete its Mission Folder.
- Invaluable Resource - Although eCYBERMISSION will provide many sources of information, your student may also need your help with questions and/or ideas. Be as helpful as you can, but keep in mind that the students are solely responsible for their Mission Folder.
- Competition Liaison - If at any time you come across inappropriate behavior or actions by anyone involved with the competition, or have any other concerns, please notify eCYBERMISSION Mission Control immediately at 1-866-GO-CYBER (462-9237) or missioncontrol@ecybermission.com.

What you are NOT responsible for:

We encourage you and your student to discuss their ideas, findings and next steps. And we hope you will work with your student and contribute as a helpful resource and motivator. It is important to remember that you are valuable in keeping the students motivated and in assisting the official Team Advisor as they need.

However, please:

- Do not give answers
- Do not do the actual work
- Do not "take over" the team's processes
- Respect the Team Advisor's methods and team approach

THE U.S. ARMY'S PURPOSE IN SPONSORING A COMPETITION FOR STUDENTS

The Army recognizes the need for our country to remain competitive in STEM and STEM education. By sponsoring eCYBERMISSION, the Army hopes to promote students' interest in these fields.

- STEM advancements play a major role in improving our national security.
- eCYBERMISSION demonstrates the Army's commitment to encouraging America's youth to explore STEM education.
- The competition supports the President's national STEM education goals.

MONITORING THE WEB SITE

Students compete based on their grade level (sixth, seventh, eighth or ninth) and the region in which they live. It is not necessary for all students on a team to attend the same school, but they must be in the same grade and the same region. The Team Advisor who sponsors the team must be a teacher, counselor, coach, leader of a youth organization or parent/guardian with an appropriate STEM or education background. Throughout the eCYBERMISSION competition, steps are taken to ensure that students' and Team Advisors' information is valid and their behavior is appropriate. This includes CyberGuides monitoring Chat Rooms and Discussion Forums for appropriate language, as well as ensuring that teams who are selected as winners have valid team members. Students and Team Advisors who misrepresent themselves, or use the site inappropriately, are not eligible to compete or to win, and will be disqualified.

SITE SAFETY

The eCYBERMISSION web site is a safe and controlled environment. There are many security and privacy provisions to ensure your student's cyber-protection during the competition. Only students and adults participating in the eCYBERMISSION program will have log in access to the web site. Once logged in, students will be able to participate in Discussion Forums, Instant Message or Chat with each other and with CyberGuides online. These communications are contained within the web site and are monitored by CyberGuides and Mission Control. Team Advisors will have log in access and can periodically check on student work, but will not be able to modify, add or delete the team's files. eCYBERMISSION will not release or make available any personal information about participants. The only communication between eCYBERMISSION and students would be to provide technical help or to notify a student of their loss of access due to inappropriate conduct or misuse of the web site. Please review our Privacy Policy and Terms of Use for more information.

HANDLING CONFLICT ON YOUR STUDENT'S TEAM

Your student's team may experience conflict during the competition. How do you know if there's a conflict? Things to watch out for:

- Communication blocks
- Arguing
- Withdrawing
- Blaming or accusing
- Not listening
- Changing the subject

If your student comes to you for help with a conflict or you suspect that the team is experiencing conflict, you may want to discuss it with them using this five-step model.

Five Steps to Conflict Resolution

Step 1: Choose the time and place to discuss the problem, and agree not to interrupt.

Step 2: Ask each person to describe the problem and how it affects them. Ask each person to tell what has been done to resolve the problem in the past.

Step 3: Have each person describe what they need to have happen for the conflict to be resolved.

Step 4: Brainstorm as many solutions as possible, even those that seem unrealistic. Go through the list and choose one solution to try. Agree on who will do what.

Step 5: Set up the next meeting time to check on progress.

Tips for all five steps:

- Respect the values of others
- Ask questions to clarify
- Paraphrase - confirm you have understood

Remind the students:

- Don't jump to conclusions
- Don't try to read other team member's minds
- Don't create unrealistic expectations for the team

Cool-Down Ideas:

The team may not have a specific conflict to resolve, they may just be frustrated. Share the following ideas with the team if you suspect that some students just need a cool-down period.

- Take four or five deep breaths
- Pull away from angry thoughts – change your focus
- Buy yourself some time by saying "I need some time to think about this"
- Discharge the adrenaline with some exercise – go for a walk
- Distract yourself – listen to music, laugh
- Clear your mind for some creative solutions

ECYBERMISSION RESOURCES

Mission Control Help Desk:

1-866-GO-CYBER (462-9337)
missioncontrol@ecybermission.com

eCYBERMISSION Blog

www.ecybermission.blogspot.com/

eCYBERMISSION YouTube

Youtube.com/ecybermissionteam

eCYBERMISSION Twitter

Twitter.com/ecybermission/

eCYBERMISSION Facebook

Facebook.com

eCYBERMISSION Flickr

Flickr.com/photos/ecybermission

Be sure to also check out our interactive webinar series and utilize the eCYBERMISSION CyberGuides on the Discussion Forums.

Thank you for your participation and support! Good luck!

If you or your team members have any questions throughout the competition, contact Mission Control at 1-866-GO-CYBER (462-9237) or e-mail *missioncontrol@ecybermission.com*.