

Sagemont Church Policy

Mission Trips

Date Approved: July 29, 2026

Reference No.: 6-0001

PURPOSE

This policy establishes guidelines for any person(s) participating in a mission Trip administered and/or sponsored by the Missions Department.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all Mission Trips administered and/or sponsored by the Sagemont Church Missions Department.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Missions Team: Responsible for reviewing and approving exceptions to the age criteria.

Missions Department: Responsible for the organization and administration of mission Trips. Responsible for purchasing travel insurance, administering refunds, and reviewing Trip leader cost reconciliations.

Executive Director of Missional Strategies: Responsible for reviewing and approving exceptions to this policy.

Trip Leaders:

- Demonstrated competence in administration, communication, team care, conflict resolution, and financial accountability.
- Sufficient knowledge of the destination, host ministry, culture, risks, and assigned ministry activities.
- Completion of all required screening, background checks, safeguarding training, and leader orientation.
- Willingness to submit decisions, expenditures, incidents, and team discipline matters to church oversight.
- The trip leader must provide the Accounting Department with a detailed justification for cash advances prior to the money being provided. Additionally, if there is a significant discrepancy after the trip is over, we will require additional justification from the trip leader for the discrepancy.
- Assists the Missions department with budgeting for the trip and is responsible for reconciling all Trip costs and turning in receipts to the Missions Department within 5 working days from when they return.

CHURCH POLICY

The Missions Department is responsible for organizing and administering all Mission Trips (Trips) sponsored by the Church. Administration includes enforcement of all rules and regulations set forth in this policy. The Church applies the following framework to all Trips:

This is the framework:

- Work alongside local missionaries and churches. This will include, but is not limited to, partnering with IMB missionaries and/or local missionaries/pastors who have an established relationship with the Church, are seeking to establish a relationship with the Church, or are seeking to plant a church in partnership with Sagemont.
 - ***This criterion ensures that Trips are held accountable, and that Trip participants, as guests in the country, are working alongside the local missionary/church strategy to help in the missionary effort.***
- Strategically come alongside the local missionary/church's work to serve their needs and strategies. This will look different from trip to trip based on our ministry partner's needs and goals.
- Seek to provide a Trip that is reproducible and cost-effective to local ministries.

Any Trip that the Missions Department determines has not met the intent guidelines listed above will not qualify for sponsorship or administration by the Church. Unqualified Trips may not use Church branding, request Church funds, or insinuate to local missionaries or

churches that the Church is affiliated with the Trip. The Executive Director of Missional Strategies will have full discretion and final authority to determine whether a Trip satisfies the intent guidelines.

Age Criteria

International Family Mission Trips: 6 years old & up

- All participants must be aged 6 years old or older.
 - At the discretion of the Missions Team, there is an exception for non-overseas international Trips (e.g., Hidalgo, Mexico),
- Minors aged 6-17 years old MUST be accompanied by a legal guardian.

International Non-Family Mission Trips: 13 years old & up

- All participants must be aged 13 years or older.
 - **Exceptions must be approved by the Missions Team.**
- Minors aged 13-17 years old MUST be accompanied by a legal guardian.
- All participants MUST be able to clearly communicate their testimony/salvation experience.

Other Participant Criteria

As the mission of the Church is to help people take their next step in following Jesus, and because the Church encourages people to carry out God's command to go, share the gospel, and make disciples, any person can register for any Trip administered and/or sponsored by the Missions Department.

- Church members have priority over non-members for participating in Trips.
- If a Church member has participated in a Trip, they will only be allowed to participate in another Trip in the same fiscal year if there is availability. In other words, priority will be given to Church members who have not yet participated in a Trip during the fiscal year.
- Membership is not necessary to participate; however, priority will always be given to church members.
- All participants must pass a background check.
- All participants are expected to demonstrate Christlike character before, during, and after the trip. Any behavior deemed inappropriate, not in accordance with our Christian faith, or damaging to the witness of the team will be reason for the trip participant to be removed from the trip at their own expense of returning home.

Flights, Associated In-Country Travel, and Accommodations

All travel and accommodations must be booked through the Missions Department, unless the Trip is being organized by a partnering organization that helps with booking travel (e.g., flights, train, bus, taxi, etc.). Trip participants are not allowed to travel separately from the group or arrange for separate accommodations for the duration of the Trip, unless a specific request is made by a participant to personally extend their time for personal reasons. All requests to be extended for personal reasons will be decided on by the Executive Director of Missional Strategies. Any extension beyond the trip date range will not be connected to Sagemont Church in any way, and any additional expenses related will be on the participant. The Missions Department will assess all arrival and departure times and, within reason, select the most cost-effective flights and alternative transportation. This process will be done in consultation with a travel agent, if necessary.

The Missions Department is not responsible for seat upgrades on Trip flights. All booking references will be given to trip participants to enable them to upgrade or purchase preferred seating on their flights, at their own expense.

Registration and Cost Administration Criteria

Mission Trip Registration

- All participants must register in the church app.
- All participants must sign a release form either digitally or on paper and turn it in to the missions office to officially be registered for a trip.

Mission Trip Payment

To secure a spot on a Trip, participants are required to complete the following:

- Pay a NON-REFUNDABLE deposit of \$250 per person.
- Payments MUST be made in the church app.

The remaining balance for the Trip will be collected as follows:

- All remaining payments MUST be made in the church app

All Trip payments made by Church members or non-members are tax deductible (IRS Publication 526 / Church & Clergy Tax Guide, pg. 361). Payments will be included on the giver's year-end contribution statement from the Church. Depending on the itinerary and Trip purpose, some Trips may only result in a portion of the payment being eligible for giving credit.

All Trip participants must acknowledge their understanding that payment for the full cost of the Trip MUST be made prior to Trip departure date. If a participant has not made full payment for a mission, they will be barred from signing up for another Trip until the remaining balance is paid. This requirement may not be waived for any reason by the Executive Director of Missional Strategies.

Financial Support

To receive financial support from the Church, participants must meet the following requirements:

- Be a faithful member of the Church in good standing.
- Participate in ALL required Trip preparation and/or training prior to the Trip departure date.

The Trip leader, with the approval of the Missions Department, may waive these requirements based upon a Trip-specific need or discipline needed to ensure the success of the Trip in question.

Trip Insurance

The Missions Department purchases travel insurance for all participants for each Trip, including COVID coverage. Documents will be provided detailing coverages for illness, loss of property, cancellation of Trip, etc.

Should a Trip participant contract COVID while in a foreign country, the Trip and COVID insurance will cover quarantine costs for necessary lodging and food expenses of up to \$200/day for 15 days (\$3,000 max). Any costs more than that amount are the responsibility of the participant.

Reimbursements

Unless specified or agreed upon prior to the Trip, airport parking is the responsibility of individual Trip participants and will not be reimbursed by the Church.

If supplies are necessary for the Trip, a supplies list, cost, and cash advance will be agreed upon between the Missions Department and the Trip Leader. Trip Leaders will be responsible for staying within the agreed budget. Overages will be discussed with the Missions Department during the cost reconciliation process at the end of the Trip and will require justification by the Trip Leader. The Executive Director of Missional Strategies will make a final determination regarding whether overages will be reimbursed by the Church or be the responsibility of the Trip Leader.

Refund Policy

If a participant is no longer able to participate in the Trip, the participant MUST immediately notify the Missions Department. The Missions Department will make a good-faith effort to recover the costs already expended for the Trip (e.g., airfare, lodging, etc.). Any costs that are no longer recoverable will not be refunded to the participant in addition to the non-refundable deposit. Trip cancellation insurance will be the primary means of individual refunds, and any refunds from the insurance should be made directly to the individual by the insurance company, not the church.

The Missions Department is protected from cost overruns in the following ways:

- Participants no longer able to participate will lose their \$250 non-refundable deposit.
- Additional funds from Ralph Edwards may be utilized.
- Other budgeted expenses may be reduced to compensate for overruns.
- Designated funds may be used to compensate for overruns.
- Insurance protection is purchased for every Trip participant.

Cost Reconciliation

Within 5 days from the end of the Trip, the Trip leader will close out, justify, and reconcile all costs associated with the Trip. All receipts and statements should be returned to the Missions Department. If the actual expenses for the trip come in under what was budgeted for, there is no refunding of funds to any of the participants.

Exception Resolution

Exceptions to this policy require approval from the Executive Director of Missional Strategies.

DEFINITIONS

Church means Sagemont Church, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, its officers, and authorized agents.

Mission Trip means a Trip sponsored and administered by the Church with the primary purpose of sharing the gospel and ministering to the local people of the Trip location.

Trip Leader means the person participating in the Trip who is in charge of the group and responsible for Trip-related costs while at the Trip location as well as financial reconciliation upon return.

U.S. GAAP COMPLIANCE

Is U.S. GAAP applicable to this business practice?

☐ No

☐ Yes

☒ N/A

REFERENCE

- IRS Publication 526 – *Charitable Contributions*
- 2024 Church & Clergy Tax Guide – *Short-Term Mission Trips*

Forms, Tools & Manuals

APPROVED BY: Executive Director of Missional Strategies & Senior Executive Director of Outreach and Operations