



NEW THIS YEAR

OneLink Updates, Changes, and News for the 2021-2022 Season

New Website

- OneLink has a new website at onelinkinternational.org.
- All previous websites are no longer in use.

New Security Guidelines

- Campus ministries are now free to post about summer trips with OneLink on social media, websites, etc.
- Please continue to use caution when talking about specific places overseas and partners names.
- Please do not list names of OneLink staff members on websites, social media, etc.

Vaccine Policy

- We are asking students to commit to receiving CDC recommended vaccines. COVID-19 vaccine is highly likely to be on the list.
- If an applicant does not have childhood vaccines (and are unwilling to get them), do not want to get the COVID-19 vaccine or are opposed to vaccines in general, they should not apply.
- If they are wondering about an exception for medical or other reasons, they can contact our office.
- They should ALWAYS follow the advice of their doctor. This is only our policy for serving with us, not our advice about safety or efficacy of any vaccine.

IMB Compliance Requirements

- The IMB requires that OneLink include a series of questions on our application, primarily related to applicants' past, such as criminal record, instances of inappropriate behavior, red flags that they might endanger a child, etc.
- They also have several required interview questions which campus partners will need to ask.
- Students will be required to do background checks yearly and through the OneLink sub-account.
- Applicants will be accepted to a team, "contingent on passing IMB compliance review." Once we have accepted a student and placed them on a team, IMB will conduct a "compliance review" before students are fully accepted to serve on the team.

FOR REFERENCE: NEW FROM THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR

GBI is now “Global Internships”

Global Internships is a semester-long program open to current students and recent college graduates. Largely, the time frame for these internships are June through December. We will be releasing the full list of available internships this fall.

Accepting Freshman Applications

OneLink is accepting freshman applications. If the Stateside Partner feels that a freshman is particularly mature and prepared for an overseas trip, they may recommend them for service with OneLink. Acceptance of freshman will be on a case-by-case basis. When in doubt, OneLink will ask freshman to wait a year. Because our application process is during the Fall semester, most applying freshman have limited history with the campus ministry. As such, OneLink will expect applying Freshman to remain involved with the campus ministry group during the Winter/Spring Semester prior to their overseas trip. If a freshman team member discontinues involvement with the campus ministry, the Stateside Partner should inform OneLink to discuss whether the student should be asked to withdraw from the team.

River Training Center

In cooperation with River Community Church in Wichita, KS, OneLink is overseeing the “River Training Center.” The Training Center is an “intentional, personal training for post college individuals wanting to gain ministry skills and training in the context of the church. The training center is a minimum two-year commitment.” This is for college graduates who are seeking “a pathway to vocational ministry or preparation for ministry in vocation.” You can find more information at rivercc.org/rtc/.

FOR REFERENCE: NEW FROM THE 2019-2020 SCHOOL YEAR

Updates and Clarification of the OneLink policies from last year.

Accepting Students for Service

In order to serve on a FOCUS project, BOTH the campus ministry staff AND FOCUS International must approve the student for service.

Partnering together with Stateside Partners (campus ministry staff) in evaluating student applications has always been a vital part of ensuring we send students who are called and qualified to serve overseas. Both OneLink and the campus ministry staff members bring experience and expertise to the evaluation process. The campus ministry staff, in most cases, know the applicants personally and have seen their maturity and walk with the Lord up close. OneLink brings an objective view and years of experience sending students overseas, including all the “lessons learned” that go with this, to the evaluation process.

Our Overseas Partners have put great trust in both OneLink and the campus ministries with which we work, knowing that we carefully vet and prepare students before they are sent out for the summer. We want our acceptance process to allow both parties to use their unique perspectives and experience to help evaluate whether or not it is the right timing for a student to serve with OneLink.

As such, both the Stateside Partner and OneLink International will have the authority to deny a student for service on a OneLink team. Turning down a student for service will only happen after careful consideration and discussions between the Stateside Partners and OneLink International staff, but both parties will have “veto power” if they believe the student is not ready or qualified for service. For example, OneLink would exercise this power under the following conditions.

1. The applicant has an ongoing or a recent pattern of involvement in immoral lifestyle choices (sexual sin, substance abuse, etc.). The severity of these failures and whether there is a sufficient track record of victory over them, will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
2. Clear evidence from application, interview or follow-up that the student is unwilling to follow the leadership of their Team Leader, OneLink or the Overseas Partner.
3. Theological views or practices that are not consistent with the OneLink Statement of Faith.
4. Mental or physical health limitations that would make service in a demanding overseas environment unfeasible.

Clarification on Team Leader and Overseas Location Selection

For teams comprised of students from one campus group, or if a specific campus group is the primary organizer of the trip, the campus ministry staff will have the final say on team leader selection and overseas location. For mixed teams comprised of students from multiple universities, OneLink will have the final say on team leader selection and overseas location, after receiving input from the various Stateside Partners (campus ministries) involved.

Clarification on Baptism

OneLink's statement of faith on baptism is:

Baptism is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus.

Our expectation is that students who serve on a OneLink team will have obeyed the Lord in believer's baptism. However, we recognize that in some cases students have only recently come to a place of understanding and acceptance of the doctrine of believer's baptism, and may still be in the process of following through with their commitment to take this step of obedience (i.e. going through a class, waiting for a certain date on the church calendar, needing to talk to parents first, etc.). In consultation with the Stateside Partner, OneLink may allow a student who has not undergone believer's baptism to be selected to a team, with the understanding that they will continue to follow through with this step of obedience within an agreed upon timeline.

Clarification on the Drinking Policy

OneLink requires all participants, regardless of age, to abstain from alcohol consumption while participating in OneLink trainings (i.e. Team Leader Training, O-Week, etc.) and while on their overseas assignment. While in some cases students may be able to legally consume alcohol in their country of service (and in the USA), we ask students to abstain while participating in their OneLink training and service. Our purpose is to avoid the possibility of misunderstanding or negative impact on their cross-cultural witness. During the period between acceptance to a team and participation in OneLink training and service, OneLink will defer to (and support) each campus ministry's policy on alcohol consumption for those committed to a OneLink team/summer project.

New Application System

We are excited to announce that we will be implementing a new system this year for receiving and processing applications! Due to our old platform no longer being supported, we have needed a new system to process our applications (which can be very expensive).

The IMB has graciously allowed us to use the program they are using as a Sub Account. We will have full control and are excited for the improvements this will allow us to make to our process. More information will be available soon to help get you oriented and trained to use the new application reading system.

Clarification on the Overseas Buddy System

OneLink asks students to strictly maintain a “buddy system” while serving overseas. For the duration of their project, OneLink team members should be in close proximity to another teammate, overseas host (any long-term “workers” hosting the students) or a trusted national partner.

The purpose of this policy is threefold:

- 1.) **Safety**- Students serve in unfamiliar areas where, in most cases, they do not speak the language or understand local emergency protocol.
- 2.) **Accountability**- Foreign environments can be stressful, lonely and tiring. These are all common triggers for experiencing greater temptation to sin. There are also many potential purity pitfalls in other parts of the world that students may not have encountered in America.
- 3.) **Personal Growth**- Ministering in community and in close partnership with others is a powerful tool for personal growth during a OneLink trip.

Are there any exceptions to the buddy system?

If there is a compelling reason to briefly suspend the buddy system for a teammate, this can be done in consultation with the overseas host. This should *only* be done during daytime and in an area familiar to the team and overseas host. Briefly suspending the buddy system should not be done for the sake of convenience or “strategy,” but only when it is unfeasible for a student to remain with a partner while completing a vital task.

Here are some examples of when temporarily suspending the buddy system could be considered:

- a.) **Class or work requirements**- Example: Students must attend classes in two different places on campus at the same time.
- b.) **Overseas Travel**- Example: Students are flying to their destination from different origin points and a teammate misses a connecting flight. In this case, the rest of the team should continue to their destination and wait for the delayed teammate there.
- c.) **Sick Teammate**- Example: A student has a mild sickness and will need to rest at the hotel for part of the day. In this case, the TL can make a judgement call and, if the sickness is not serious and the ill student has a way to communicate with the team, can leave the student to rest at the hotel/ guesthouse by themselves.

In all cases, every effort should be made to maintain the buddy system before an exception is considered. Teams will also need to consider context in determining brief exceptions to the buddy system. In higher risk areas (where threat of crime or terrorism is significantly elevated) few, if any, exceptions should be made.

Who qualifies as a “trusted national partner?”

A trusted national partner is a local friend or co-worker with whom the overseas host(s) has an existing relationship and enough relational history to feel comfortable with his or her judgement and character. Friends or connections made during the trip, who are previously unfamiliar to the overseas host, do not qualify as trusted national partners.

Communication Policy Updates

We no longer require the use of a “gatekeeper” for weekly team emails

The use of a “gatekeeper” for weekly email updates will no longer be required for summer teams. However, students must include a member of their campus ministry staff and the OneLink office on their email distribution list for the summer (or password protected blog). In order to help minimize security breaches in these emails, all students will participate in more thorough communication protocol training during the OneLink training process. If campus ministries would like to maintain this policy with their students, they are welcome to do so, but OneLink will no longer ask teams to submit gatekeeper information.

Team Members May Not Use Personal Social Media Accounts Overseas

The use of social media and messaging apps is an increasingly important tool for ministry overseas. Many of our overseas partners ask students to bring unlocked smartphones and use these tools to build relationships overseas. ***OneLink teams are welcome to use technology and social media overseas for local ministry purposes only; however, students must create a new account for the summer, rather than using an existing personal account.*** This policy ensures that security breaches do not happen during the summer or after the student returns. This also keeps the OneLink Communication Policy of not communicating back home, in order to minimize team member’s distraction and disengagement.