
Education First Cambodia Sponsor Guidelines and Agreement

Thank you for becoming the sponsor of a Young Scholar at Education First Cambodia (EFC).

Sponsorship of a Young Scholar is \$100 per month and contributes towards the education, nutrition and support of a vulnerable child.

To help you get the most out of your sponsorship, and to ensure the safety and well-being of the children in its care, EFC has established the following guidelines for its sponsorship program. The child you sponsor and all of the other children with EFC are in EFC's legal care. The children's welfare is our priority. Many of our children have seldom experienced anything but uncertainty in their lives, and all have been brought up in desperately poor circumstances. EFC will make every effort to make your sponsorship experience rewarding for you and the child you sponsor, but EFC also has responsibilities to the children and must abide by the laws and policies of the Cambodian government.

We hope you will find the guidelines informative and useful. If you have questions after reading these pages, please contact EFC's founders or staff.

Sponsorship.

When you sponsor a child at EFC, it means a major step forward for the children in our program. Your support will help to ensure that children in EFC's care are provided with quality education, food and safety. Our experience shows that sponsorship is a positive step forward in the lives of our children, and also in the lives of the sponsors.

Sponsorship – How does it work?

When your sponsorship is established, you will receive information about your sponsored child and a photograph. Your contact with the child you sponsor will be through EFC's staff, who will provide updated information on your sponsored child to you on a regular schedule.

Contact with your sponsored child.

We encourage written contact with your sponsored child through letters, cards or e-mails. Your contact will be through our staff, who will help the child translate your e-mails from English into Khmer, and the child's e-mails from Khmer into English. Please remember that our staff will do their best to translate the mails, but if there is something that seems unclear, feel free to ask for clarification.

You set the pace of your written communication with the child you sponsor. Your sponsored child will likely respond to your letters, cards or e-mail fairly quickly. You should let your sponsored child know how often you intend to be in contact. If you are unable to write more than once a month, it is fine to say so. Disappointment only occurs when an expectation is not met, and our children understand if you have a busy schedule, travel or other priorities. Whatever the arrangement for contact you make, however, it is important to do your best to stay with the schedule. We ask that you write a minimum of one time per month.

Our children are very forthright in expressing their feelings and are very excited to have a

sponsor. They may write “I love you” even if they have never met you. They also may want to call you “mom” and “dad”, which is not uncommon in Cambodian society; if you prefer for them to use your names instead, please say so. In Cambodia terms like sister, brother, uncle, etc. are used very loosely with people who you feel close to.

For child safety reasons, we do not allow our students to contact their sponsor via social media or from a personal e-mail account. The internet is a dangerous place for vulnerable children, and we don’t want addresses to fall into the wrong hands. We also want to avoid that anyone exploits your generosity. Please make sure to let us know if you receive direct contact from a student, or a request for additional support from a student.

The importance of EFC sponsorship and communication.

Our sponsorship system matters in two essential ways. First, it brings in financial support that allows EFC to educate and care for the children we support. Secondly, and no less important, it gives you and your sponsored child a chance to create a positive relationship. Relationships cannot exist without communication, so the level of communication matters. Nearly all EFC children have lived with inconsistency and in many cases abandonment. No contact for weeks or months may result in hurt feelings and a lessened self-esteem. Even a two-sentence e-mail that simply states you are busy but they are in your thoughts will do wonders. Nobody wants to see any of the children hurt, however we recognize that sometimes sponsors, with the best intentions, simply run out of the time or impetus needed to sustain the writing relationship. If you decide you no longer have the time to write on a regular basis, we would like to transfer your support to the general program and allow someone else to be the sponsor.

What to talk about

Sponsors may be uncertain what to write about to their sponsored child. Some suggested questions include: Where do you go to school? What grade? Who’s in your family? What’s the weather like? What are your friends like? What food do you eat? Where do you live? What makes you laugh? Our children will be happy to be asked these questions and may also ask you questions. Of course, only answer those that you feel comfortable with. Likewise you can tell your sponsor child about your home, job, family, traditions, food, etc.

Asking about life before EFC.

All children supported by EFC are from backgrounds marked by a level of poverty that is hard for most of us to fully comprehend. Many have faced neglect and abuse, with little support from official agencies. However, the children have quite a remarkable degree of resilience and tend to be forward thinking, so please do not worry unduly about asking gently about their lives and hopes.

At EFC, we encourage the children to be open and honest in their communication, so when exchanging letters or e-mails, they may openly share their thoughts or feelings with you. Sponsors should not attempt to counsel a child or to solve problems in the child’s life through letters or e-mails. EFC’s staff and social worker is in touch with our children and their families, providing emotional and practical support. If your sponsored child raises an issue or problem, please share any concerns you have with the EFC staff so that we can take whatever steps are needed to help the child.

Can I send photos?

Photos are welcome, and your sponsored child will be delighted to see your home, your family, your workplace. Photos can be e-mailed as attachments. However, the internet connection in Cambodia is not always strong, and you should compress any photos you send to us electronically.

EFC's policy on gift giving by sponsors.

Many of our sponsors like to send gifts, and children here, as anywhere, love to receive them. Gifts should be reasonably priced items that the child can use for school or play. A new set of clothes, for either girls or boys, is always welcome. Other appreciated gifts include art and drawing supplies, books to read, toys, sports equipment like a soccer ball or badminton racquets, school bags, or new shoes. We prefer gifts that do not to exceed \$30 in value.

Expensive gifts are discouraged.

Although we greatly appreciate sponsor generosity, sponsoring a child is itself a very generous act on your part. Giving expensive gifts to the child you sponsor can be problematic. EFC aims to help children in our program to become independent, caring, well educated, and able to contribute meaningfully to their own developing society in Cambodia. We do not wish to encourage children to become dependent, and we strongly discourage linking our sponsorship program to personal gain or equating a sponsor's generosity and friendship with access to expensive presents.

Further, EFC needs to avoid anything that might cause jealousy or tensions between children or within families, neighborhoods or communities. A gift to one child that looks lavish or very expensive could cause jealousy, and occasionally even bullying can erupt.

Accordingly, EFC sponsors must refrain from sending the children they sponsor expensive or elaborate gifts such as cameras, iPods, iPads, laptops, mobile phones, or other costly items. If you wish to make such a generous gift, EFC will accept it only to be shared among all the EFC children. Accepting such gifts on that basis will avoid any perceived unfairness, and all our children can benefit from them.

Gifts of money are not normally permitted.

Sponsors may not give money directly to a sponsored child at any time. EFC discourages gifts of money. If there is a special situation, it can be discussed with EFC's Director.

How to send or arrange for gifts.

Standard international mail to Cambodia is not secure, and courier services such as DHL or FedEx are expensive. Surprisingly, almost anything can now be purchased locally in Cambodia. If you let us know what it is that you'd like to provide, we can almost certainly find it and share it with your sponsored child and other children on your behalf. Cash donations to EFC are also appreciated and can be sent through the normal channels via the website, or if you are in Cambodia can be given to the Director of EFC. If you do wish to send a gift, please contact us in advance so we are aware that it will be coming.

Can I visit my sponsored child?

Yes!!! Many sponsors would like to visit their sponsored child and we are happy when sponsors are able to visit Cambodia. As a sponsor, you will be able to meet with your sponsored child at the EFC School, or, with prior arrangements, take your sponsored child out with other children and EFC staff for a morning or afternoon trip to sightsee, visit a market or mall, or have a meal. Such day trips are only permitted when the children do not have school classes. For safety and privacy reasons, it will not always be possible to visit the family home of a sponsored child unless prior discussion and approval has been given. Sponsors and other visitors wishing to take children out of the EFC School must provide a copy of their passport for EFC to keep on file.

Visitors must comply with the following policies and procedures for a visit to EFC or a sponsored child. Unannounced and unscheduled visits are not allowed. We take the safety and stability of our children very seriously, and staff will not allow access to anyone who is unannounced or does not have a prior appointment.

Advance notice is required.

For sponsors and visitors traveling from other countries to Cambodia and intending to visit EFC, we ask that you give us some advance notice so we can advise you if there are any holidays. Sponsors who live in Cambodia are asked to call or e-mail in advance of a visit. Advance notice will allow EFC time to plan for the visit and to advise you about school holidays, family leave, or other events that might make a sponsored child unavailable during a planned visit. After you advise us of your intended visit, we will send you some information about Cambodia and provide you with some information about our visiting times and procedures.

Please be aware that there are many public holidays in Cambodia. Some of the national festivals are Khmer New Year (April), Pchum Ben (October) and Water Festival (November). Please always check your intended visit dates with us before you commit in order to avoid disappointment if your sponsored child is away.

Visiting times and day trips.

The best times to visit the EFC School are during the children's school break times from **11am to 1pm**, and in the afternoon from **4:30pm to 6pm**. Day trips away from the EFC School are by permission only and must be accompanied by an EFC staff member. If permission is given for a day trip with a sponsored child, all EFC children taken out after special approval for an outside visit must be returned to the EFC School no later than 8:00pm the same day. EFC does not permit overnight stays for EFC children under any circumstances.

EFC's duty of care.

EFC commits itself to preventing the exploitation of children. Our children are not "tourist attractions." It is important to ensure that interaction between sponsors, visitors and the children is appropriate, balanced, and in accordance with our child protection policy, which ensures that we support the best interests of the children. EFC does not permit unsupervised visits. For the protection of the children and for your protection as a sponsor, a EFC staff member must accompany children at all times during your visit.

Our children are some of the most wonderful children you could ever hope to meet. They have a great sense of fun, love to share their happiness with each other and with visitors, and genuinely seek to enjoy new experiences. We're sure that you'll enjoy being a sponsor and helping to support a EFC child. Our aim is to be as flexible as possible in arranging visits, while also meeting the demands and time constraints of our work.

A final point about promises and hopes for the future...

In communicating with the child you sponsor, please be careful not to say or promise anything about bringing any sponsored children to visit your home country. There are major obstacles to such a trip, not only economic but also legal, practical, social, and psychological. A child's own psychological and family situation may not permit such an event in the child's life. If such a promise is made, it has the potential to cause distress in the child's life, especially in the event such a trip cannot be arranged. If you have an idea or suggestion for future plans for your sponsored child or other EFC children, please bring them to the attention of EFC Management first. We are happy to hear your ideas or thoughts, and to give you advice and suggestions.

Child Protection Policy

The EFC Child Protection Policy has been developed to ensure the safety, security and well-being of all children in EFC's care. It applies to everybody who comes into contact with our children – staff and visitors alike. If you are going to visit your sponsored child, we need to meet with you in advance to:

- a. discuss the visit to ensure that you understand the important points outlined in these guidelines and have the best possible experience with your sponsored child;
- b. ensure that you have read the EFC Child Protection Policy; and
- c. have you sign a Code of Conduct signifying your understanding of the EFC Child Protection Policy and its requirements.

For our Child Protection Policy, please see our website or ask any staff member for a copy of the policy.

Ending a Sponsorship

In the event a student is expelled from the EFC program due to continued absence from school, or continued improper behavior and unwillingness to improve, the Sponsorship will come to an end. We will let you know at the earliest possible opportunity if there are concerns over your sponsored child's behavior or attendance, and an encouraging e-mail from you could help get the student back on track. If the student leaves, we will invite you to sponsor another child, although there will of course be no obligation to do so.

EFC Sponsorship Agreement.

We have attached to these guidelines our sponsorship agreement form, which along with this document sets forth the policies and procedures you must comply with as a EFC sponsor.

Any questions?

If you have any questions about the Guidelines or anything else about EFC or the EFC sponsorship program, or if you simply want to give us feedback, please feel free to contact us at any time at info@childrenfirstcambodia.com.

Thank you!!!

Many thanks for your support of EFC and for your generosity and kindness. We hope that the experience of sponsoring a child will be special and rewarding for both you as a sponsor and the children we care for and support.

Education First Cambodia: Child Sponsorship Agreement

Education First Cambodia (EFC) is committed to the safety and well-being of all the children in EFC's care, and EFC must ensure that all children in our care are provided with equal support and benefits. As part of your agreement to sponsor a child, you are expected to adhere to the following policies and guidelines:

- 1/ We accept cards, e-mails, letters, gifts or photographs for your sponsored child in accordance with the EFC Sponsorship Guidelines. All must be sent to your sponsored child through the EFC office. Do not send any monetary gifts or religious material. We do not provide direct e-mail communication with a sponsored child.
- 2/ You are welcome to meet with your sponsored child if you are planning to visit the EFC School. However, we ask you to give us advance notice of your intended visit. The advance notice will enable us to ensure that you will have an opportunity to meet with the child you sponsor. Unannounced and unscheduled visits are not permitted.
- 3/ You must present your passport when you arrive to visit the EFC School, and you must sign in to the EFC visitor log for each visit. EFC will keep a copy of your passport on file.
- 4/ A EFC staff member will accompany you when you take your sponsor child outside the school.
- 5/ EFC will not be held liable in the event of injury or death on the EFC School premises. By signing this agreement you agree to release EFC from any such liability.
- 6/ To ensure the safety and security of the children in EFC's care, EFC does not allow any child to leave the EFC School overnight with a sponsor or any other person. With the child and the family's permission, we permit day trips outside EFC. A EFC staff member must accompany the child or children on any such day trip, and permission for the day trip is subject to the availability of a EFC staff member to attend. Children must return to the EFC no later than 8:00 pm. Due to busy schedules of children, and in the interests of fairness, we may be unable to arrange multiple trips with children during a sponsor visit.
- 7/ You are welcome to take photographs while visiting. However, any photos taken are to be for personal use only and not shared via the internet or other public media.
- 8/ EFC is a non-smoking and alcohol-free facility. Please do not bring or consume any alcohol or tobacco products on the premises.
- 9/ Children in EFC's care are not permitted to travel out of Cambodia with sponsors or any other persons. However, in furtherance of EFC's mission to care for and educate the children in our care, EFC welcomes the opportunity to facilitate overseas study and scholarship, should such a possibility arise. Any opportunities for overseas study or

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scholarship should be discussed with EFC management before being discussed with the child.

- 10/ All donations are shared equally among all children in EFC's care, as it is against EFC's policy to favor one child over the other.

Please sign below to indicate your agreement to the foregoing and to the EFC Sponsorship Guidelines.

Thank you for your generous support to Education First Cambodia.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____