



**CAMBODIAN  
CHILDREN'S FUND**

[www.cambodianchildrensfund.org](http://www.cambodianchildrensfund.org)

# Sponsorship Guidelines

2014

# CCF

Sponsorship



# Guidance on Sponsorship with CCF

Thank you for becoming the sponsor of a CCF child. We're sure the bonds that you are about to start building will be good for you, for the child you sponsor, for the family and community involved and for CCF. To help you get the most out of the relationship we've put together the following guidelines. We hope you'll find them informative and useful. It is impossible to be fully comprehensive and cover every point and answer every possible question in advance, so if there is anything that you would like to know that isn't included in what follows, please do get in touch and let us know. We will get back to you.

## Sponsorship

Getting a sponsor is a major step for the children here. For those able to communicate, either on their own or via CCF's translators, this is almost always reflected in their initial, often effusive, communications. You will be a very new part of their lives and we know from experience that you can have a hugely positive influence on their lives as well.

We have two sponsorship options at CCF; Child Sponsorship and Child Sponsorship Plus. Child Sponsorship is \$100 USD per month and contributes towards the cost of education, nutrition, social services and support; lifting a vulnerable child out of poverty and opening doors to a much brighter future.

## Child Sponsorship Plus

Our Child Sponsorship Plus program, at \$150 per month, extends beyond the child, helping their family and community reach self-sustainability and dignity. For Plus Sponsorships we select families who, despite living in the direst of circumstances, show true commitment to their child's education, to providing a safe living environment for their children, and who cooperate with our community outreach and education staff.

The extra \$50 contribution goes towards additional family support, such as rice, rent support and/or shelter repairs. A portion is set aside in a "trust fund" for the child and family. The trust fund is managed by CCF and can be accessed by the family (following discussions) in a number of ways:

- cover costs of a medical emergency
- help re-finance high interest debts
- help set up a business or buy back farmland
- the future, and setting up the process of entering society

CCF manages the Trust Fund carefully to ensure that your support leads to self-sustainability, rather than dependence. Any unmonitored support can carry major implications, so **please contact us if you are ever asked to give money directly to a child or a family.**



# Contact Guidance

When a sponsorship is established for all except the very youngest of the children, one of the first things we do is to provide the sponsored child with an email address of their own, which we provide to you. Your contact will be through CCF's team of dedicated email translators. It is their task to help the children communicate their emails and put them into English for you and into Khmer for them when necessary. Some of the children are sufficiently competent in English to be able to communicate directly and in that case they usually write their own material and send it to you through the team.

## Contact - How often?

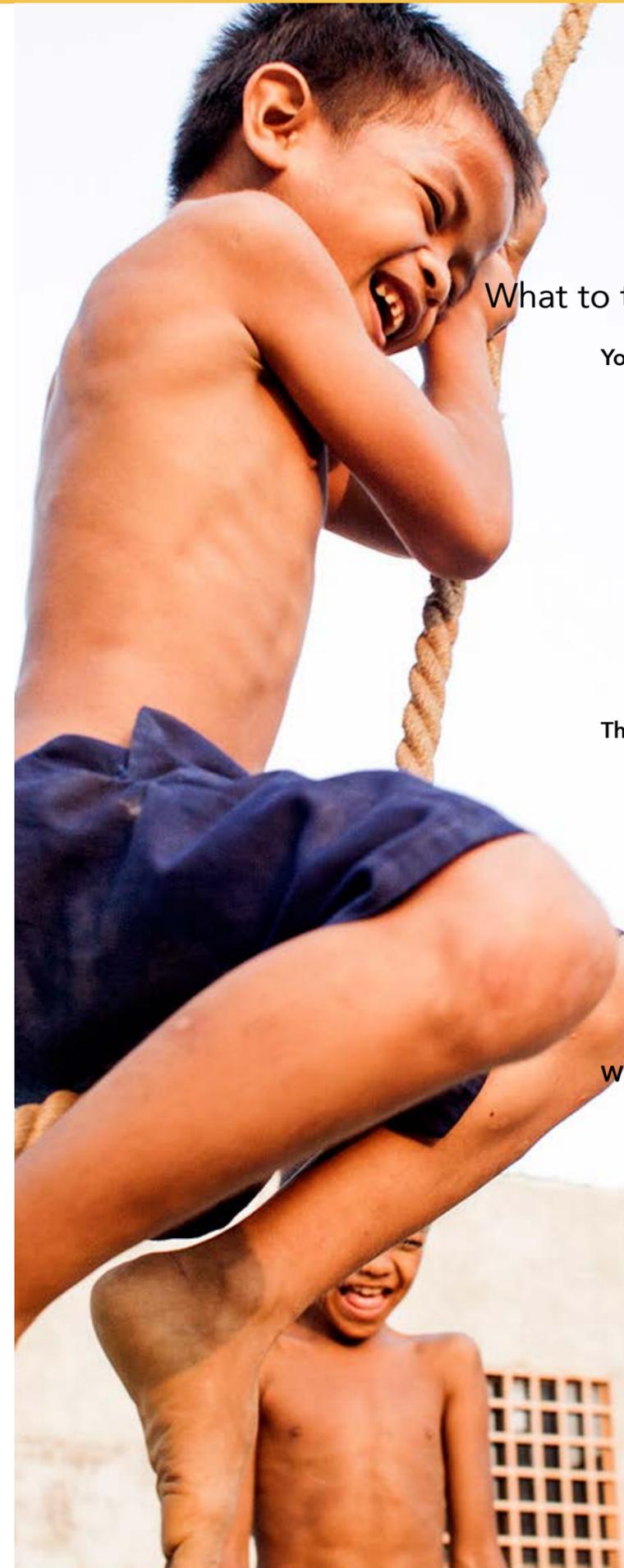
It's best to set expectations in your first email. If you are unable to write more than one or two times a month, it is fine to say so. Disappointment only occurs when an expectation is not met and our children understand if you have a busy schedule, travel or other priorities. Whatever the arrangement is, once made with the child, it is important to do your best to keep to it. Your child will likely respond to your email within a week (though sometimes it can be a bit longer if our translators have a backlog or there is a major vacation period) and may occasionally just write to say hello. You set the pace.

Cambodian children can be forthright in expressing their feelings. They love to love and be loved and they are very excited to have a sponsor. If your sponsored child says "I love you" in his/her first email, don't be shocked and don't be wary. It's spontaneous and our translators simply translate what is given to them. Some sponsors feel that the child is coached or led and we sometimes hear that a child so young would use such a complex word. Remember that our translators write the English version. For example, if your 7 year old child writes that: "My friends play sports but I don't participate because it's too hot", then that may be the translators version of "My friends play sports but I don't like to be part of it as I get too hot". The emails you receive are from the child and if you have any doubts, please feel free to contact us.

**This bit is really important so please read it carefully.** The Sponsorship system matters in 2 essential ways; first, it brings in some of the money needed to allow CCF to help and educate the child in question and to assist the child's family and community. Second, and no less important, it gives the sponsor and sponsored child a chance to create a real relationship. Relationships cannot exist without communication, so the level of communication matters. Nearly all CCF children have lived with inconsistency and in many cases abandonment. The arrival of email tells them that someone out there cares for them for their own sake. No contact for weeks or months on end can result in hurt feelings and a lessened self-esteem. Even if your email simply states that you are busy, that they are in your thoughts and you will write a fuller email later, then it does wonders. No-one wants to see any of the children hurt, however we recognize that sometimes sponsors, with the best will in the world, simply run out of the time or impetus needed to sustain the writing relationship.

To address this situation, **CCF operates a four-month rule**. When a sponsor has not been in touch with their sponsored child for 4 full months, then CCF will assume that the active sponsorship is at an end. It would be unfair to deny the child access to a communicative sponsorship, so he/she may be paired with an alternative sponsor in such situations. In practice, this is rare and most sponsors grow closer through time. In such a case, the previous sponsor remains free to write to the child on a penpal basis. You can also opt to stop your payments or request a refund, otherwise your payment will be used for overall program expenses.

But please don't worry about the 4 month period passing without your realising it - we'll make



sure you know. If it looks as if you've gone a bit quiet and you haven't written for 2-3 months, we'll send you a reminder. If we don't hear from you in the next month, we'll send you another. If you are still quiet, we'll send you a final email to let you know that the deadline is getting near. If we don't hear from you then, that's when we'll responsor.

## What to talk about

### Your Life

Some sponsors have told us of times when they simply don't know what to write to their child. The answer is: **Anything. What do you do? Why? How? Who's in your family? What's the weather like? What are your friends like? What food do you eat? Where do you live? Are you happy? What makes you laugh? What did you do at the weekend?** The children will be happy to learn about any or all of these. And they will ask you more. But do make sure, when the questions come your way, that you answer only those that you feel comfortable answering.

### The children

Every one of the children in CCF's care comes from backgrounds which are marked by a level of poverty which is hard for most of us to fully comprehend. Many have faced neglect and abuse and with homes in impoverished communities, utterly unsupported by official agencies and services. But the children often have quite a remarkable degree of resilience and tend to be very forward thinking so there is no need to worry unduly about asking, gently, about their lives and hopes prior to and after joining CCF.

### What not to talk about

We encourage the children to be open and honest when they write and they may well share problems with you. Please resist the temptation to try to solve any such problems through promises of money or making contact outside of CCF. Provide sympathy and empathy - often that is all that is needed and wanted. If your sponsor child raises any issue that troubles you and that you feel needs specific attention - **please let us know**. Our staff are very experienced in these matters and will be able to advise or to help as appropriate.

## Contact – outside of CCF

For child safety reasons, our students are prohibited from contacting their sponsor over social media or from a personal email account. Please contact us immediately if this happens. Your contact may be all above board but it is vital that we do not encourage this behavior by our students by not acting. The internet is an increasingly dangerous place for vulnerable children and we do not want contact addresses falling into the wrong hands. Further to this, we wish to protect you from your contact information becoming known to undesirable friends, relatives or neighbours, who may look to exploit your generosity. As above: if any correspondence raises any issue that troubles you and that you feel needs specific attention - **please let us know** - as our team is best placed to assess and provide the support needed.

## Can I send photos?

Any photos you send will be well received. The children will be delighted to see your home, your family, your workplace - anything that tells them and shows them you! They can of course be emailed as attachments - but please keep in mind that the Internet in Cambodia is not strong and that what is an everyday 5mb attachment in one country can bring a receiving system in another to its knees. Please, always compress photos before you send. Please don't send us more than 1MB!

## Can I send gifts?

Many sponsors do like to send gifts and it has to be said that children here as anywhere love to receive them. However, in CCF's particular situation gift giving can also be a source of problems. These tend to fall into 3 main areas:

### a. Perceived fairness

CCF has to be careful not to do anything that might cause jealousy or tensions between children or within families, neighbourhoods or communities. The arrival of anything that looks lavish or that could mark the child or family as specially favoured has to be avoided.

### b. Logistics

The next issue is that of logistics - getting things here. The standard mail is just not secure and courier services, which you can be sure will get through, such as DHL or FedEx, are expensive. You might be surprised to know that almost anything can be obtained locally here in Phnom Penh. If you let us know what it is that you'd like to provide for a birthday, to celebrate becoming an award-winner or something for another special event or achievement we can almost certainly source it, get it and give it on your behalf. If you do decide to send a gift, contact us in advance for a CCF address to which you can send it and we will take it from there.

### c. The cost of the gift

Sponsors do like to be generous, but this has risks. CCF aims to help the children in its care become upright, educated, independent, involved contributors to their developing society. It wants to do nothing that will encourage them to become dependent, to link sponsorship with personal gain or to equate a sponsor's care and friendship with access to expensive presents. Please do not think of sending gifts such as cameras, iPods and the like. Generosity on this scale has the potential to be disruptive and damaging not only to the individual concerned but to the community in which they live. Accordingly, no gift should exceed \$20-\$30 in value. The old cliché that 'It's the thought that counts' is still often very true. We do not want to turn the children into people who value a gift by its cost. We need you to understand this and to help us with it.

So yes, gifts can be sent and are welcome, but to maximise their impact, they should be rare, limited to a birthday, a special event or success and should follow the value suggestions in this guidance sheet.

## But I can afford to send something more expensive than usual.

Sponsors who wish to send items such as cameras and musical instruments should be aware that CCF's approach to the arrival of such gifts is that the recipient child will have initial early access. Thereafter the gift will be held and used in common, under the guidance of CCF staff. This arrangement has worked well to date but in all honesty, CCF does prefer to discourage expensive gifts.



## So what do the children like?

This section outlines examples of arrangements we make when we receive gifts and how much money is appropriate to send. We normally ask the child what activities they would like to do with their sponsor's donation and we will also follow your guidance and direction where suitable.

## Birthday outings

A birthday outing at CCF involves more than just a birthday cake. The children usually like to bring some of their friends along to enjoy a meal and shopping to help create a special memory. We encourage the birthday child to bring friends who are unsponsored or have rarely joined any special outings. The same is true for other gift outings, and they usually involve a selection of these activities:

-  **\$5- \$10** - Birthday, celebration, cake
-  **\$10 - \$20** shopping for a new outfit
-  **\$5 - \$10** shopping for stationary, books, art supplies
-  **\$5 - \$10** going for a meal (many of the children like fast food as it's an infrequent and special treat. Fried Chicken and pizza usually tops the list. Health conscious sponsors – please note – these are very rare occasions and a vast departure from the nutritious, balanced meals served daily at CCF.)
-  **\$2 - \$5** playing games at the arcade, ice skating/rock climbing at Kid City **\$5 - \$10**, visiting the fun fair at Dream Land **\$10**, swimming at a hotel **\$5 - \$15** or renting a boat for an afternoon **\$30 - \$50**
-  Visiting new places such as Wat Phnom, the Royal Palace, local parks and playgrounds

### Suggested gift amounts:

Any 3 months - 3 years old: **\$25 - \$30**  
 4 years - 7 years old: **\$40**  
 8 years - 13 years old: **\$40 - \$50**  
 14 years old up: **\$50** or up

To ensure your gift is arranged in time for the special occasion - please give us 4 - 7 days to process

Amounts above these suggestions will allow for more children to participate in the Birthday celebrations. Any left-over money is usually put to Family Support in the form of rice or rent subsidy, or saving for the child's future needs.

Please contact Saron, your local office, or simply make a donation online to send a gift:

Saron Chhem  
 saron.chhem@cambodianchildrensfund.org  
 + 855 (0) 17 670 639

**Donation Pages** Please include your name and the child's name:

**USA**  
**Australia**  
**Hong Kong**  
**United Kingdom**

**Email** (click)

**USA**  
**Australia**  
**Hong Kong**  
**United Kingdom**

## Can I visit?

Almost every sponsor thinks of visiting their sponsor child and every child would love a visit. We are happy when sponsors are able to come here and surprisingly many have done just that. If you intend to visit, let us know as far in advance as you can and we'll do what we can to help. Once we know that you're coming, we'll send you some information about the country and the city that we hope you'll find useful.

One important point though. It sometimes happens that sponsors plan surprise or short notice trips at times when the children are on holiday. CCF is very supportive of family links and family togetherness is seen as very important of some of the main national festivals, such as Khmer New Year (April) and Pchum Ben (Sept - Oct). So please always check your intended visit dates with us before you commit. We don't want you or the children to be disappointed.

## Please don't just turn up

Please do not just turn up at any of our facilities. We're sure you'll understand that we take the safety and stability of our children very seriously and staff will not allow access to anyone who is unannounced, unexpected and unescorted.

## Can I meet my sponsor child?

Not only will you be able to meet your sponsored child but you'll be able to:

- a. Take your sponsored child for a sponsor outing (see below).
- b. Visit the facility where the child studies with CCF.
- c. See more of what CCF does through a visit to other CCF facilities.

## What to expect on a sponsor outing

- 3 - 4 hours with your sponsor child - who, if OK with you, will bring 2 or 3 friends along
- The outing can be in the morning or afternoon and will be in Phnom Penh only
- The outing will be chaperoned by one of our Sponsor Relation Officers, who will also act as a guide, translator and supervisor
- We ask that the sponsor pay for the activities of the outing with their sponsored child, their friends and the chaperone - and thank you for your generosity!
- The sponsor is welcome to bring a gift for their sponsored child (in line with the above guidance)

## Appropriate activities include

- Going for a shopping trip (to the mall or local market), going out for lunch or ice cream, visiting the park (Diamond Island or Wat Phnom), a visit to *Dreamland* or *Kids City* (fun fair), going



swimming at the hotel pool or visiting other public places such as the museum or a bookshop

- We are open to outing suggestions but encourage sponsors to find out what the child would like to do and be led by that

## What we cannot do

Please bear in mind that all of the children are in CCF's Duty of Care and that CCF focuses its resources on them and their welfare. We prioritise stability and harmony in the children's lives. Most of the children have seldom experienced anything but uncertainty and all have been brought up in desperately poor circumstances. Visits are enormously valued but they have to be fitted in with the child's normal life. This means that while we will do everything we can to make your visit special and enjoyable, there are some things that we cannot do. **We cannot**

- Allow unsupervised access to the children. There must always be CCF local staff present.
- Allow sponsors to give money directly to children or their family. Any funds intended to help the child or the child's family must be channeled through CCF.
- Allow multiple trips out or an unduly large amount of time to one sponsor's visit. (We will make sure that the scheduled outing does not conflict with the child's school time).
- Allow the sponsor child to have an overnight stay with sponsors.
- For child protection and privacy reasons, it will not be possible to visit the family home. We will enable you to appreciate the reality of the life of the child and family you are helping during your visit.

## CCF's Child Protection Policy

The CCF Child Protection Policy has been developed to ensure the safety, security and well-being of all children in CCF'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 CCF Child Protection Policy; and
- c. have you sign a Code of Conduct signifying your understanding of the CCF Child Protection Policy and its requirements.

Once we know that you're coming to visit, we'll send you a copy of our [\*Child Protection Policy\*](#).

## Our track record of happy sponsors is excellent

None of the many sponsors who have visited have reported any disappointment with their experience. Many have wished they could have done more and seen more and spent more time, but all have recognized and enjoyed the experience as unique and positive. We are sure that if you decide to visit, you'll be one of them.

## A final word about visits

The children are some of the brightest, nicest people 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 any new experience that comes their way. We're absolutely sure that you'll enjoy being with them and having them in your life.

We'll always do our best to help you have a good time, but do bear in mind that our own resources are limited too and the numbers of the children CCF cares for are in the thousands. That being said, we aim to be flexible and positive and do want to help you build and maintain the links that make a successful relationship. So if we can help, we will. But please bear with us and try to understand if sometimes we cannot.

## Promises and hopes for the future...

Please be extremely careful about saying or promising anything about bringing the child to your home country, be it for study or visits. Visas, immigration and local law can all help make this almost impossible and a child's own psychological state might itself be a major obstacle. In short if any such promise is made by even the most determined and sincere sponsor, it is one that will prove highly difficult to turn into a reality.

Please also be very careful about future promises. We hope that your relationship with your sponsored child and with CCF will be a long and good one. There will be opportunities to address issues such as future study or work plans and arrangements as they occur naturally. Resist the temptation to try to make firm plans for these contingencies. When they arise, we can tackle them together if there is a need.

The "CCF Promise" is a pledge to all children in our care that we will support them until they are self-sustainable - no matter what their dream may be, and no matter how long it takes to get there. There is no cut-off age and no set rule book. If children are academically able we will support them throughout University and with job placements (see below for more on University). If not, we will look to internal or external vocational training opportunities. Whether vocational or educational, the goal is to stretch the child's potential.

Our kids are motivated; they are motivated to improve their own lives and, overwhelmingly, they are motivated to improve the lives of their families, their community and their Cambodia.

With CCF's guidance, quality education and holistic range of support, we are able to foster this motivation into results. The model has also led to an over 97% retention rate of our students each year.

However, there are a number of situations that can lead to children leaving our care and programs. Before exploring these, it is worth highlighting 2 key points:

### 1. Children are in our care on a voluntary basis

*We need to establish engagement, and seek permission, from their parents or guardians. Guardians retain all legal custody of their children, even while they are in our care.*

### 2. We always act in the best interest of the child; regardless of sponsorship

*If a child is better off at their homeland, living with relatives or partaking in another vocation, we will never force them to stay for the sake of retaining your sponsorship dollars.*

## Children going to live in their homeland

A move back to their homeland is the best possible outcome for the children in our care. No matter how hard we work, a life growing up in Stueung Meanchey is incredibly tough - that's why we focus on assisting this community. Children are exposed to a number of risks in this environment, from the quick spread of diseases in the toxic surroundings to drug, alcohol and child abuse prevalent within the community we serve. For those living in one of our residential centers, a stable home life living with their family is a more suitable situation - and can free up space for the most vulnerable children.

That said, we will **always** ensure that a move home is truly in the best interest of child. We will ensure that there is access to schooling nearby and the child is registered into the appropriate classes.

We will investigate that the domestic environment is safe, loving and able to provide for the child.

Provincial Cambodian living is basic, but it is far less hazardous than growing up in the slums around Stueung Meanchey. Living safely with relatives and studying there is a good outcome and we will not try to convince the child to stay within Stueung Meanchey unless it benefits the child. We also have a package of support that we can provide when a child is moving to a better environment and attending school if the family needs extra money in order to continue the child's education.



## Expulsion from CCF

There are rare occasions where a child is expelled from CCF. Such situations fall into two main categories:

- continued absence from school without reason (older children)
- continued unacceptable behavior and an unwillingness to improve

We never want these situations to arise but, as with all schools, we have an overriding duty to protect the children enrolled in our programs and to cultivate a safe, fair and positive environment for those committed to study.

We have a counselor based at each of our residential facilities who works with children with behavioral problems. Children are given every opportunity to turn poor behavior around and with hundreds of teenagers in our care - we understand that certain hiccups are inevitable: we've all been there ourselves!

Expulsion for unacceptable behavior is the last possible option. And even in these situations our outreach team will ensure that access to public schooling remains easily accessible and the child is registered into the appropriate classes. We will also investigate that the domestic environment is safe, loving and able to provide for the child.

## Letting you know

Our sponsorship program is designed to build close bonds and we work hard to foster natural relationships between our sponsors and their sponsored children. Bringing these to a premature end is definitely the hardest and most upsetting part of our job.

But we owe you the truth and we will never sugarcoat or hide from a situation.

We will let you know at the earliest possible opportunity if there are concerns over your sponsored child's behavior or attendance. There have been a number of cases where an encouraging email from a sponsor has resulted in a turnaround in a child's behavior, although, if you are uncomfortable getting involved in such a scenario, that's fine as well.

In these situations, we always invite sponsors to start a new journey with one of our (many) unsponsored children, but there is no obligation to do so. And, should you feel let down by CCF's approach in such a situation, please contact us so we can discuss our reasoning and underlying issues - recognizing that there may be a need to protect the child's privacy.

## University

With CCF enjoying its tenth year in operation, more and more young children who once toiled in the Steung Meanchey garbage dump are nearing adulthood. Part of CCF's commitment to create tomorrow's leaders is a pledge that we will support our youth who reach University through their degrees. And, wow, our kids really have responded to that pledge! CCF university students are expected to top 100 in the 2014-15 school year, 170 in 2015-16 and 200 in 2016-17. These numbers do present a big funding challenge for us, however, it's exactly the sort of problem we want to have!

Many sponsors, having shared in their sponsor child's journey at CCF, are interested in continuing their support to college. Or, ask the question - "when will my sponsor child leave CCF and can I keep in touch?"

Part of our funding plan to cover this expense is to package university costs as 4-year scholarships for each student. We have determined that the average cost for a four year degree is \$4,300 USD (2014 figure). This includes; university tuition fees, study materials, textbooks, shared laptops and tablets, career guidance, job placement support, and transportation costs. Therefore, the cost of providing a "scholarship" will be \$4300 and can be broken down per year in the following tranches: year 1: \$1900, year 2 - 4: \$800 per year (year one being higher due to the initial costs of materials and equipment). And, of course, payments of a lesser amount will still be gratefully received into our general University Fund.

Our usual childcare costs are not factored into the \$4,300 figure, and we encourage sponsors to continue sponsorship through University. This is because the children receive the same level of childcare, shelter, nutrition - and also continue their CCF education while they're at University - with continued English, leadership and extra-curricular classes, as well as internship opportunities.

If sponsors are unable to contribute the full amount (or any extra), CCF remains committed to sending our children to University should they be successful in their application. We will seek funding from external partners, those interested in provide a University Scholarship, or supplement University costs from our general fund.

We are aware that CCF's sponsorship option is comparatively expensive and sponsors are under no obligation to contribute any more.

## Any questions?

That's about it. We know that the above guidance probably might not have answered every possible question you might have, so if you have any that you need addressed, please do feel free to contact us at any time with questions or feedback, at: [cambodia@cambodianchildrensfund.org](mailto:cambodia@cambodianchildrensfund.org).

## Thank You

Very many thanks for your support for CCF and for your generosity and kindness to the child you sponsor. We hope and believe that your sponsorship will be special and good for both of you.  
**Scott Neeson**

## Sponsorship Enquiries



**CHAMROEUN KONG**  
Sponsor Communication Manager  
[chamroeun@cambodianchildrensfund.org](mailto:chamroeun@cambodianchildrensfund.org)

EMAIL CHAMROEUN FOR  
Information about children or  
communication with your sponsor child

**JAMES WEYERS**  
Head of Sponsorship  
[james.weyers@cambodianchildrensfund.org](mailto:james.weyers@cambodianchildrensfund.org)

EMAIL JAMES FOR  
General inquiries or concerns

**SARON CHHEM**  
Sponsor Liason Manager  
[saron.chhem@cambodianchildrensfund.org](mailto:saron.chhem@cambodianchildrensfund.org)

EMAIL SARON FOR  
Sponsor visits and gifts for sponsor child