

# FAQ

GRACES' Sponsorship Program at Escuela Integrada

## Helpful Links

[Send a Grocery Voucher](#)

[Schedule a Zoom call](#)

## A. Communication with your sponsored student

### 1. How do I write and send a letter to my sponsored student?

You can send a letter by email to [sponsorships@wearegraces.org](mailto:sponsorships@wearegraces.org). Unfortunately, we are not able to receive postcards or physical letters because there is no post office in Guatemala. We will translate your email letter and share it with your sponsored student.

### 2. What communications should I expect from my sponsored student?

During the year you will receive updates such as a photo, a letter, and a teacher update. You will also receive an invitation to sign up for video calls with your sponsor student.

### 3. Why does my sponsored child sometimes use different names?

In Guatemala it is common for people to use both their first and middle names interchangeably. You might get a letter saying it is from Pedro and the next letter says it is from Luis, it is normal for them to use both, first and middle names.

### 4. What does “padrino” or “madrina” mean and why does my sponsored student refer to me like that?

Students often refer to their sponsors as “padrino” or “madrina,” which means “godfather” or “godmother.” In many Latin cultures this term expresses appreciation for someone who supports and encourages them.

### 5. Will my student know that I am their sponsor?

Yes! We share your name(s) with the student. If you share a picture with us, we can print it out and give it to the student. Students know that their sponsor is someone who supports their education and cares about their future.

### 6. Can I meet my sponsored student in person?

Yes! Whether you are visiting with a church, a group, or by yourself, we will set up a

home visit for you to meet your sponsor child and their family. We have many sponsors who have created relationships with their sponsor children over the years. Sponsors are welcome to visit and talk with them at school and also at their home.

## **B. Gifts and additional support**

### **1. How can I send gifts to my sponsor student?**

Unfortunately, Guatemala does not have a working postal system. The only option to send gifts is through mission teams or groups visiting the school. If you are thinking about sending something, feel free to contact us and we can share a little more about your sponsored student's interests, preferences, or any specific needs they may have.

### **2. What kind of gifts should I send or bring for my sponsor student?**

Some good ideas for gifts are clothes, a backpack, or toys. We ask that you don't send electronics, except for a calculator if the student is in 6th grade or above.

### **3. Are sponsors allowed to send money directly to the family?**

To protect both sponsors and families, we ask that sponsors do not send money directly to students or their families. Any additional support should go through the school so we can ensure it is handled appropriately for the families involved.

### **4. Why do children sometimes thank me for things I did not personally give them?**

They may thank you for shoes, a stove, or an item that you personally did not provide for them. This is because everything they receive from the school is from our "supporters," and you are considered a supporter as well as their sponsor.

### **5. Why are grocery vouchers limited to \$25, \$50 or \$75? Can I give more?**

Grocery vouchers are intentionally limited to these amounts because they are meant to be a special blessing rather than ongoing financial support. Keeping the amounts consistent helps prevent families from becoming dependent on vouchers and avoids large differences in support among families.

### **6. What should I do if my sponsored student or their family contacts me directly through social media?**

Many of our children and their families have social media (specifically Facebook). If they message you asking for special donations or money, please refer them back to the school. Please do not make any promises about helping with school supplies or anything extra. If there is a need with the family, we will contact you.

## C. Students who leave Escuela Integrada

### 1. **Why might my sponsored student stop attending Escuela Integrada?**

We try our best to keep the children in our school and give them the tools and opportunities they need to succeed. However, some children move, do not pass their grade, or are removed from the school by their parents. If this happens, we will let you know and ask if you would like to sponsor another child. Sadly, we cannot continue communication or any type of assistance outside of Escuela Integrada. Our priority is to support the children at Escuela Integrada.

### 2. **Can I continue to sponsor my student(s) after they graduate from Escuela Integrada?**

After a student graduates from Escuela Integrada, they can continue receiving support through a high school scholarship. Since 2024, we have been able to give scholarships to the entire graduation class, and every student is eligible as long as they pass. Students are able to choose the school they would like to attend and receive a monthly scholarship to help with their studies. Our programs support students through high school, helping equip them with the tools they need to continue pursuing their education and their dreams.

## D. Managing your sponsorship

### 1. **What happens if I need to pause or cancel my sponsorship?**

If your circumstances change, please contact the sponsorship coordinator for assistance in pausing or canceling your sponsorship.

### 2. **Is my donation tax deductible?**

Yes. Donations are tax deductible in the United States through. You will receive a year-end contribution statement from GRACES each year for the prior tax year.

### 3. **Can I choose the age or gender of the student I sponsor?**

We try to match sponsors with students who currently are most in need of support. If you have a preference for a child's age or gender (such as if you have a child who is the same age), you are welcome to share it with us. We will do our best to accommodate your request when possible.

### 4. **Can I pick the student I want to sponsor?**

No. We do not allow sponsors to pick their sponsored child. The students at the school know that our team places sponsors with students. That way there are no hurt feelings if they are not "picked" by a visitor or sponsor. We take the matching process very seriously and work hard to make sure students are matched with a loving and supportive sponsor.

5. **How long does a sponsorship usually last?**

A sponsorship lasts as long as you choose to continue supporting the program. When a student graduates from high school, we will connect you with another student in need at Escuela Integrada. Your support will continue blessing more students as long as you are able to continue your sponsorship.

6. **Does my donation go directly to my sponsored student?**

Sponsorship donations support the overall program at Escuela Integrada, which benefits all students. This approach allows the school to provide consistent education and resources for every child in the program even when they are not sponsored.