



Escuela Vera Angelita Gift Giving Policy

As one of our generous student sponsors, we know you may be eager to connect with your sponsored student directly, which is why we are enabling virtual exchanges, a standard mail service, and in-person visits. While we are so grateful for all the excitement and generosity of our sponsors in wanting to give gifts to your sponsored students, we have specific guidelines that we would now like to share with you in order to ensure that all students feel equally loved and supported throughout their academic and personal journey at Escuela Vera Angelita.

While every student at EVA will have a sponsor, every student-sponsor relationship is different. Some sponsors are very engaged, while others prefer to keep a lower profile. There is no right answer regarding how involved you would like to be as a sponsor – it is entirely your choice, whether you choose to be very actively involved or not at all. We recognize, however, that these different dynamics may create an imbalance amongst student sentiment, the effects of which we wish to minimize out of fairness and respect to all.

As such, we do not permit individual gifts of any kind. Individual gifts can quickly lead to jealousy, resentment, disappointment, and hurt feelings amongst the other students. Please send all the letters and photos you want, but please no individual gifts. Our students already know that their respective sponsors are giving them the greatest gift of all – the life-changing opportunity of a high-quality education at no cost to them or their families!

However, gifts from sponsors are most certainly welcome if they can 1) be used and enjoyed by all, or 2) if enough individual gifts are brought to give to all of our current students. Some examples of gifts that are always useful include the following:

- Books! Our beautiful library is in high demand for both English and Spanish books. Fun pre-teen stories in particular are popular and help to stimulate the desire to read, especially if they are in Spanish.
- Art supplies
- Craft supplies & activities
- Sports equipment
- Recreational materials (games, puzzles, etc.)
- Personal care items (hairbrushes, toothbrushes, hair ties, etc.)
- Teaching materials

We keep an updated **Amazon Wishlist** ([CLICK HERE](#)) with all of our current most pressing needs. If you feel so inclined, please feel free to buy items off this list and/or be inspired by its contents. You can ship items directly to us (*Visions Global Empowerment, 18800 Von Karman Avenue, Suite A, Irvine, CA 92612*), if you like. Or if you are planning to visit us in Nicaragua, we encourage you to bring any gifts / donated items with you.

If you are unable to visit our campus and are still hoping to create a special connection with your sponsored students, we still highly recommend sharing correspondence with them! We are setting up mailboxes for each Student Villa, and the girls will be thrilled to receive any letters from friends from abroad! This is also a great way to have a conversation with them without having to master Spanish.

Thank you so much for your understanding and continued support and enthusiasm!

Communications Options & Guidelines

We are thrilled to offer the following options for engaging with your sponsored student(s), should you be interested in doing so...

1. Virtual Exchanges

We offer virtual video calls connecting sponsors with their sponsored student(s), assuming you are interested in having a direct relationship. We can organize these calls as frequently as monthly or you can choose to do them every other month, quarterly, biannually, annually, or not at all, depending on your preference. These exchanges will be held via Zoom video call, and we will always have a translator present (unless you don't need one), so no need to worry if your Spanish is not up to the task! Our school staff manage this calendar, so please let us know if you are interested and how often you might like to chat with your sponsored student(s).

2. Mail Service

We also offer a standard mail exchange, in which you can write your sponsored student(s) letters and simply send them to our Irvine office address (*Visions Global Empowerment, Attention: Johanna Trainer, 18800 Von Karman Avenue, Suite A, Irvine, CA 92612*) which we will hand deliver to the students. All our students will soon be decorating mailboxes outside their respective Student Villas where we will deliver the mail. Students will also write letters to their sponsors periodically as well. We are ready to receive your letters at any time, so please send them to our office whenever you like and as frequently as you like.

Alternatively, if you would like to send an email to your sponsored student(s), please email johanna@visionseducation.org with the subject "Donor letter to [name of your sponsored student]".

3. Visit

As a student sponsor, you (2 guests total) are entitled to a 4-night stay at Vera Eco-Resort annually. During your stay, we will take care of everything, including all your meals and onsite activities, and we will customize an itinerary for you depending on your travel details and specific interests. At this time, we can accommodate whichever dates you wish to come visit us.

Please note the following in your planning:

- You are responsible for booking your own roundtrip airfare. We have a travel agent we can refer you to who can help you with your bookings, if you like, but we (Visions) are not directly involved with making any bookings for you.
- Nicaragua currently has a COVID test entry requirement, as does the U.S. for reentry. There is only one official option for getting a COVID test in Nicaragua, and it is a PCR test that is done at a government clinic in Managua. Please factor this into your trip planning, as Managua is a 3-hour drive away from Vera Eco-Resort.
- Any additional guests will be responsible for paying for their stay; please see our website for nightly rates or inquire with us directly.
- If your flight arrives at night, you will need to stay in Managua that night, as it is not advisable to travel on the highway at night.
- Nicaragua has 2 seasons – a wet and dry season. Wet season is typically mid-May thru mid-November, and dry season is mid-November to mid-May, although there is typically a lull in the rains from mid-July thru mid-August called the

“canicula”. While you can expect rain throughout the year (we are in a “cloud forest” after all), the rains are heavier during the wet season and temperatures are a bit cooler on average.

If you are interested in coming to visit us this year and meeting your sponsored student in-person, please email info@visionseducation.org with your initial thoughts and we will follow up with you!

With regard to all of the above, please keep in mind the following guidelines:

DO!

- Ask about the child’s overall health and well-being.
- You can describe news and events in your life in simple terms so that children may relate to your experience. Please avoid distressing news.
- Encourage your child in areas of her life you know are important to her
- Ask about their favorite activities, school subject, holidays, or animals. Asking questions will solidify your knowledge of and relationship with your sponsored student.
- Share fun tidbits about holidays that are special to you and your family
- Send postcards from places you have visited
- Include photos of you, your family, and your pets

DON'T!

- Ask for personal details regarding their homelife or past experiences, as some children have experienced trauma they do not want to recount.
- Share distressing news with your child, especially related to death or world events
- Share overt religious or political language.
- Talk about any visit until your travel dates are confirmed
- Promise the child you will take them on vacation or invite them to the US.
- Share any photos or updates about material possessions, including homes, cars, etc.