

Learning for Life

Student Correspondence Guidelines



everyone's family

General Remarks

The Smith Family encourages sponsors to correspond with their sponsored *Learning for Life* students. Everyone loves to get letters, and it certainly makes the students feel special when they receive correspondence from someone whom they haven't even met.

We do understand and respect that you may not wish to correspond with your student and conversely, we hope that you will appreciate that you may not necessarily receive a response from them for any number of reasons. Some students may feel embarrassed about their circumstances, others are quite shy, don't know how to respond appropriately, may have a disability, or are anxious not to reveal their inadequate literacy skills. We would like to ask you not to take their inaction as a sign of disrespect or lack of appreciation of your support.

In compliance with the Privacy and Child Protection Legislation and in line with The Smith Family's own policies, all correspondence must be processed at our National Office to ensure that the privacy of students and sponsors is protected, and that gifts comply with the respective framework.

The Privacy Act requires The Smith Family to ascertain that no personal information between students and sponsors is exchanged, and we are required to ensure that all correspondence conforms to the points listed below. We hope that you will appreciate that this measure is for the protection of both, students and sponsors.

YOU MAY INCLUDE

- first name/s
- your age
- your professional occupation
- your hobbies and interests
- state you are from
- photographs of pets and general things (no people)
- city of holiday destination (if on vacation)

YOU CANNOT INCLUDE

- surnames
- date of birth
- your address or name of town/suburb
- place of work or company name
- photographs of yourself or other individuals
- food items of any description whatsoever

Please clearly mark any correspondence with your Supporter ID, the Student's Name and Student Code and send it to:

Learning for Life Student Correspondence

The Smith Family

Attn: (Student Name and Code) (this is printed on the Student Profile)

Supporter ID Number (this is printed on your receipt or letters from The Smith Family)

GPO Box 10500

Sydney NSW 2001

If you prefer to email your sponsored student, you can do so by writing to:
sponsorship@thesmithfamily.com.au and putting your Supporter ID, the Student's Name and Student Code in the subject line.



Birthday and Christmas Correspondence

You may also wish to send a card and/or a gift at Christmas or for your student's birthday. We ask you to send birthday correspondence one month in advance to allow sufficient time to forward the gift to the students who may live in rural areas. The Student Profiles show the student's month and year of birth next to their name in the header.

Gifts to Your Student

We would like to stress that it is entirely at your sole discretion whether you wish to send your sponsored *Learning for Life* student gifts. If you do wish to send one, we encourage gift vouchers or cash value cards, as they incur nominal postage costs when we forward them on. It also reduces the burden of choosing the "right" gift and allows the student to make that choice. Of course if you prefer to send a personal gift, we will forward it to your student within a week as well.

During peak periods around Christmas and Easter, delivery times may increase considerably, as we must continue to meet all statutory requirements, notwithstanding the volume of several thousand items. As gifts have to be posted, we would appreciate if you could avoid sending heavy or fragile items. If you're sending a voucher, please contact the *Learning for Life* team for a list of stores in your student's area.

We would also like to ask that you limit the value to less than **\$100**, as it may otherwise cause rivalry among siblings who may not receive any gifts themselves. **Please DO NOT SEND CASH / MONEY.**

Correspondence from Students

When receiving letters from your students, you may be surprised that some write about toys that you would not normally expect children from a disadvantaged background to own. They may talk about gaming consoles, DVD players or interstate trips that they have taken. Some sponsors have expressed concern that their sponsorship contributions may be going to families who do not need it and feel that if parents are able to buy expensive toys for their children, they should also be able to meet educational costs.

The Smith Family takes great care in assessing the financial eligibility of families on the *Learning for Life* program to ensure that funds only go to families who genuinely need them. Please be mindful that while many students enjoy playing with such toys and make reference to them in their correspondence, this does not necessarily mean that they actually own these. Quite often, the more luxurious gifts that some children do receive are presents from extended family members, or they were purchased with contributions coming from several members of the same family.

Please feel free to contact the *Learning for Life* sponsorship team on **1800 633 622** if you have any queries or concerns, or send us an email to sponsorship@thesmithfamily.com.au.

Students with Disabilities

Under particular circumstances, we may inform some sponsors about a disability from which their sponsored student is suffering. This is confidential information that we may provide to account for a discrepancy between a student's displayed level of skills, and that typically associated with a young person of their respective age. We ask that you treat such information strictly confidential, and that you only make reference to it in your correspondence if your student has disclosed it to you themselves.