



EDUCATION POLICY

November 2019

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General Information

- The parent/guardian will be responsible for their student's academic and personal requirements (*Unless exceptionally identified as financially unable to meet these obligations*).
- School fees for supported students will only be paid when a student has reported to school.
- Parent/Guardian must take full responsibility of the child's medical care in the event that the child is referred to the hospital and provide COU staff with immediate updates on the health problem and required treatment.
- Parent/Guardian must take their student, at a minimum, for an annual medical check-up and provide documentation to both COU and their child's school clinic (*Impoverished students will be identified by the COU staff and possible support provided*).
- Parent/Guardian and COU partner schools must inform COU staff if a sponsored student is out of school for more than one consecutive week or has missed more than 14 days of school in any single term.
- Failure to abide by each school's "Rules and Regulations" including their "Code of Conduct" will have consequences, ranging from receiving a warning letters to termination from COU's program, depending on the gravity of the situation.
- Students involved in forgery of any kind or any misuse of funds will also have consequences, ranging from receiving a warning letter to termination from COU's program depending on the gravity of the situation.
- In accordance with school policies, COU shall not continue to sponsor a child who becomes pregnant unless under very unfortunate situations such as rape or defilement. Similarly, any boy who makes a girl pregnant shall also be immediately terminated from the program.
- A guardian/parent who wishes to withdraw their child from the program may do so, but COU requests notice either verbally or in writing prior to the withdrawal, explaining the reasons for the withdrawal of the child.
- Parent/Guardian will ensure that their child reports to school on the first day of each term. It is COU's recommendation that the parent/guardian bring their sponsored children personally.
- Parent/Guardian will continuously encourage their children to study seriously while both at school and at home.

- COU expects academic excellence. Therefore, we discourage retakes at any level and for University students, these will not be funded by COU. In the event of an emergency that impacts school performance, COU should be notified immediately.

Primary and secondary students who don't perform to expectation will lose their sponsorship at the end of the year. The average performance mark shall be 50% below which a student will lose their sponsorship at the end of the year.

- COU, in collaboration with partner schools will endeavor to achieve a degree of educational and career guidance that will allow COU students to perform to their maximum potential.
- COU will at its best endeavor to sponsor students in the program as outlined below:

Selection Criteria:

COU will recruit a child either in primary one or two not beyond eight years old and has demonstrated the ability to learn **but also fulfills any other qualifying elements from the following:**

- An orphan (*with the loss of one or both parents*) and/or vulnerable
- Affected by the AIDS epidemic
- From an evidently poverty-stricken family
- Child is abused or neglected
- Child is forced into labor outside the home
- Child dependent on elderly caregiver(s) (*>65 years of age*) who cannot afford their education
- Child's caregiver is chronically ill or disabled
- Child is living in a child headed family without an adult in the home

Only one child will be selected from each family. Pre-screening will identify a roster of qualified potential students and a determined number will be recruited for COU enrollment.

1. Recruitment:

- Recruitment shall be family based with an intention of empowering the entire family on the road to self-sustenance, as such, only those families capable of running income generating projects will be recruited.
- Sponsorship of new recruits from 2020 onwards will be limited to primary education. For any new recruits effective 2020, COU only commits to primary education sponsorship.
- Recruitment of new children into the program will be done periodically as determined by the board and will precede first term of the academic year (preferably in September unless the situation dictates otherwise).

- All children will attend one of the COU selected partner schools: Kamuli Church of Uganda Primary School and Sabina Primary Boarding School.
- Recruitment will be dependent on availability funding or the ability to obtain sponsors.
- COU will collaborate with existing Ugandan governmental agencies, NGOs, other organizations and partner schools providing social services or education in the villages and districts to be a primary resource in child selection.
- During and after the screening process, if COU staff discovers that the information provided by a family or guardian for a newly recruited child was materially false, the child will be disqualified from the COU recruitment consideration.

2. Primary Education (P.1 – P.7)

- Children will be supported in one of the selected COU partner primary boarding schools near their guardians, unless there is a justified exception made at the discretion of the Program Director.
- A primary school student will be permitted to repeat a grade level once on recommendation from the school authorities. In the event that a student is required to repeat any grade more than once or repeat twice in their primary education, COU will develop a plan to address the student's challenges and a way forward to that effect.
- All children who qualify for secondary education after P.7 will be supported at one of COU's selected secondary boarding schools through their Ordinary Levels (S.4). Each student will be required to meet the set rules, regulations and requirements of the selected partner secondary school.
- Children who fail to qualify for secondary school after P.7, and are a minimum of 16 years of age, will be diverted for vocational skills training for a maximum of 3 years.
- Effective 2020:
 - ✓ For all students in P.1 – P.4, COU Sponsorship commitment will only be up to P.7
 - ✓ For all students in P.5 – P.7, COU Sponsorship commitment will only be up to S.4

3. Secondary Education (S.1 – S.6)

- P.7 and S.4 Leavers will be enrolled as boarding students in COU selected partner secondary schools.

- Student's academic performance will be assessed every term, and should remain in accordance to the performance standards of the school as well as that of COU (An average of 50% at the end of each term failure of which leads to termination at the end of the year). The academically challenged will be supported whenever possible to improve. The student will be supported until S.4 unless the school strongly recommends diversion to vocational education.
- Secondary school students will be permitted to repeat a grade level once on recommendation from the school authorities. In the event that a student is required to repeat more than once, COU will develop a plan to address the student's challenges and a way forward to that effect.
- COU will endeavor to support students to receive their O levels. At the completion of their O levels, all students will be given an opportunity to attend Vocational School for one certificate or a diploma if they are not qualified for A-Level. This training will be considered equivalent to those students proceeding to A-level.
- The pass mark for S.4 leavers joining Advanced Level (S.5) will be a Division 1 or Division 2.
- Students who do not attain the pass mark to join S5 and proceed to Vocational School, along with those who opted for Vocational School right after O-Level will be eligible only for a 2-year certificate.
- Effective 2020:
 - ✓ The 2020 to 2024 strategic plan will be a support document for guidance in case of any sponsorship clarities needed.

4. Vocational Training

- Effective 2020, vocational studies after S.6 will only be supported for continuing students with committed sponsors.
- COU will encourage students to attend programs, which will enable them to become a skilled tradesperson and/or an entrepreneur (i.e., welders, beauticians, farmers, tailors, mechanics etc.).
- Quality vocational institutions will be identified to train our students. Vocational students will be placed in our partner vocational schools.
- COU and the student will determine the appropriate vocational pathway.
- Students will be supported with the necessary training materials and/or vocational tool kits whenever possible.

- During the period of vocational training, students will be encouraged to participate in their course related internship or industrial training program.

5. University Education (Requires sponsorship)

- Effective 2020, university will only be supported for continuing students with committed sponsors.
- Students who perform exceptionally well and are awarded government sponsorship will proceed to university and COU will request sponsor assistance in providing their very basic requirements.
- Before a university student is given their second installment of fees and requirements for the semester, they must present their previous semester's grades/academic results to COU.
- COU does not encourage re-takes at the college level; and as such will not fund them.
- Students with support and guidance from COU will be responsible for identifying appropriate hostels, in a timely manner, for those who absolutely need accommodation. Students who live close to the universities will be supported with transport and lunch fee and will commute from home.

Parents/Guardians meetings

- Parents/Guardians of supported children **must** attend the annual parent/guardian meeting. In the event they are unable to attend, the parent/guardian must inform the COU office, in advance with justification. They also must arrange to visit the COU Uganda office in person, prior to the new school year beginning to discuss the meeting's agenda and outcome. Failure to attend or reschedule these important meetings will have consequences, ranging from receiving a warning letter to termination of sponsored child from the program.
 - Parent/Guardian or a family member must visit their student on visitation days, in accordance with the school policies failure of which will have consequences ranging from warning letters to termination of sponsored child from the program.

Gifts

- COU sponsors have the opportunity to send additional funds, that will provide essential commodities to meet the sponsored student's needs e.g. shoes, bed mattress, treated mosquito net, mackintosh, food, etc. As a guideline, we ask sponsors to keep these gifts under \$100 for each child once a year.
- As an alternative to sponsors sending individual gifts, COU encourages sponsors to send additional monetary gifts; these funds will be put in a designated pool and used to organize activities that benefit all supported children.

- Sponsors may also send their sponsored child small, inexpensive gifts and cards directly to our Ugandan office.

Volunteers/Interns

- Annually, COU will select program beneficiaries to participate in their internship programs for not more than 6 months per individual unless in exceptional circumstances with justified need at the discretion of the program Director.
- COU shall request the support of International volunteers to assist in varied services such as; providing counseling and guidance to the program beneficiaries.

Note: COU's further annual commitments per student and guardian are spelt out in the MOUs to be accordingly signed by all concerned parties.