Crowdfunding Fundraiser Guidelines

Horry County Schools recognizes the desire for teachers to enhance their classrooms through online crowdfunding websites. These are to be considered fundraisers and must follow HCS' fundraising policies and procedures. Please review and follow the steps below when setting up a crowdfunding website in order to protect yourself and the district and to ensure that the funds and/or materials are used in the way the donors intended.

Approved crowdfunding websites:

- Donors Choose (for supplies only; not class trips or visitors)
- SC Future Minds (principal-initiated, school-wide donation; not for individual projects)
- Amazon Classroom Wish List

The following are approved, provided the school receives at least 80% profit:

- WeFund4U (effective 7/1/2022)
- Vertical Raise (effective 7/1/2022)
- Norton Fundraising Services' Believe Kids' FundGive (effective 1/3/2023)
- Snap!Raise (effective 6/1/2023; Early Access option is NOT approved)
- InstaRaise (effective 9/23/2025)

Prohibited crowdfunding websites:

- GoFundMe
- Kickstarter
- CrowdFundEdu
- ClassWallet
- Boosterthon
- Apex Leadership Co.

You must obtain ALL approvals **BEFORE** setting up the fundraiser:

- Complete the "Crowdfunding Fundraiser Approval Form," found on the HCS Accounting website and forward it to your school principal for approval.
- Submit to the Chief Financial Officer if necessary.**
- Any technology items must also have pre-approval from the Technology Dept. (Missy Johnson). If approved, you will be provided with further instructions as needed.
- Any facility enhancement items must also have the pre-approval of the Facilities Dept. (Joe Burch).
- The teacher and bookkeeper must retain copies of the signed "Crowdfunding Fundraiser Approval Form."

***Any request to use a crowdfunding website not listed above must be submitted to the Chief Financial Officer. Please provide information from the crowdfunding company indicating what the pricing platform/fees are, how the school will receive the funds (if applicable), and where items will be delivered*

*(if applicable). To be considered for approval, fees must be 20% or less, and profit checks must be made payable to the school.***

Setup the fundraiser online:

- Include the district, school, and teacher's name on the project website.
- Postings that describe the purpose and rationale for conducting the crowdfunding campaign may not negatively reflect upon the District, its programs and services, its staff, or its students.
- Ensure that funds will be remitted by check directly to the school. No checks should be written to teachers or deposited electronically into any personal bank account. No school or district banking information should be given out.
- The fundraiser should have a clear beginning and ending date within the same school year.
- Provide donors with information regarding service fees to be deducted from their online donation (do your research in advance).
- Satisfy other online website requirements (ex. thank you letters, photos showing completed project, copyright requirements, etc.).
- Items placed on online fundraising websites must not violate student privacy in accordance with state and federal law or any district policies. Information that should not be listed includes, but is not limited to, student names, addresses, etc. Student images may not be used unless image release forms have been obtained.

Complete the fundraiser:

- Upon the fundraiser conclusion, a copy of the "Crowdfunding Fundraiser Summary Form" should be retained by the teacher and the original sent to the school bookkeeper. The school must retain copies of the approval form, summary form, and any agreements and permission forms, along with anything posted on the website (verbiage, photos, etc.).
- Donations must be sent directly to the school and received by the school bookkeeper for deposit into the school's PAF bank account. Items or checks may NOT be mailed to employees' homes.
- Donated items must be shipped to the school and remain on the school campus at all times.
- Ensure that the crowdfunding site is taken down.

Property received through crowdfunding sites is considered to be the property of the district and will remain at the source school. If the teacher moves to another site within the district or leaves the district, the materials and/or funds remain at the source school.

Be mindful of accountability. When funds are raised for a project, you should follow through with the project and use the funds as originally intended.