

School and PTA Donation Request Kit

The kit for asking on behalf of a school - who has to approve the ask before it goes out, which name and tax status the request is made in, a letter template for a school event, a classroom wish-list sheet, and a division of work across the parent group.

Templates & Letters · ultimatedonations.org/resources/school-pta-donation-request-kit

A school request has a step no other fundraising group has: permission. Before a single letter goes out, somebody with authority over the school's name has to know it is going out, and somebody in your parent group has to have agreed to it. Skipping that step is how a well-meant ask becomes a phone call to the principal from a company asking why two different people wrote to them the same week.

This kit is that whole process in order - approvals, whose name the ask is made in, the letter itself, a classroom wish-list sheet, and how to split the work across a parent group so nothing is asked for twice. It is informational, not legal advice; how your school and district handle this is set locally, so ask them. Browse the rest of the library at [free fundraising resources](#).

Step 1: get the approvals in writing

Two separate permissions, and they are not interchangeable.

- **The school's.** The principal, and in many districts an office above them, decides whether the school's name, letterhead, and student roster may appear in a fundraising request at all. Ask in writing and keep the answer.
- **Your parent group's.** A board vote or officer sign-off on what is being raised, what for, and who is authorized to sign a request.
- **A named signer.** One person whose name goes on the letters. A company that receives two requests from one school assumes one of them is not real.
- **A shared list of who is being asked.** Held by that signer, so two volunteers cannot approach the same manager.
- **An agreement on where the money goes.** Written down before any of it arrives, in the plain language you would use at a meeting.

This is informational, not legal advice - district policies on fundraising, student participation, and use of a school's name vary, and yours governs.

Step 2: settle whose name the ask is made in

Programs ask for documentation, and the answer has to be true.

Your situation	Ask in the name of	What you send with the request
PTA affiliated with a state and national organization	The PTA, as the entity holding or covered by the status	Your PTA's own documentation, or whatever your state organization tells you evidences it
Independent PTO with its own tax-exempt status	The PTO	Your determination letter and EIN
Parent group with no status of its own	The school, district, or district foundation - if, and only if, it agrees in writing	Whatever the school or district provides, on its letterhead, with its tax ID
A single classroom or team	The school or the parent group above it, never the classroom alone	As above, plus a note naming the teacher or coach the donation supports

Nobody may lend a tax ID casually. Using another organization's name or number is that organization's decision, made in writing, before anything is sent. If your group does not hold its own status, work through the [donation eligibility checklist](#) and our guide to [asking without a 501\(c\)\(3\)](#) before you write. *This is informational, not legal advice.*

Step 3: the school request letter

Copy this, replace every [bracketed placeholder], and keep it to one page.

[Date]

[Contact Name] [Company Name] [Street Address] [City, State ZIP]

Dear [Contact Name],

I am [Your Name], [your role] with [PTA or PTO name] at [School Name] in [City, State]. Our group supports [what the funds pay for - the library, the arts program, field trips, classroom supplies] for [the students the school serves].

On [Event Date] we are holding [Event Name] to raise funds for [specific purpose]. [One sentence on the school and the families it serves.]

We would be grateful if [Company Name] would consider donating [one specific item] for our [raffle, auction, prize table, or classroom]. To include it in our materials, we would need it by [Deadline Date].

[Choose the true sentence: "(PTA or PTO name) is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, EIN (number)." or "This request is made by (School or District Name), which has approved it, and whose tax ID is (number)."]

Every donor is thanked in writing and named in our event program. This request has been approved by [School Name]'s administration, and I am happy to provide anything else you need.

Thank you for considering it. I will follow up by [date], and you can reach me at [phone number] or [email address].

Sincerely, [Your Name] [Your Role], [PTA or PTO name] at [School Name] [Phone] and [Email]

The general-purpose version of this letter, with the wording rules behind it, is in the [donation request letter workbook](#).

Step 4: the classroom wish-list sheet

A school ask works better when it names something a teacher actually needs. Collect the list before you write to anyone, and keep it specific enough that a manager can picture the item.

Teacher or program	What is needed	Why it is needed	Who might have it	Asked	Received

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Two rules make this sheet work. Name **one item** per row, not a category - "a case of copy paper" rather than "supplies". And fill in **why it is needed** in the words the teacher used, because that sentence is what goes into the letter and it is the part a reader remembers.

Step 5: divide the work

A parent group's advantage is the number of people in it, and its failure mode is those people working past each other.

1. **One signer.** Every letter goes out over the same name, whatever volunteer wrote it.
2. **One list.** The [donation request tracker](#) holds every company, who claimed it, and what was asked for. A row is claimed before the letter is written, not after.
3. **Split by relationship, not alphabetically.** The parent who already knows the manager at the hardware store should be the one who asks there.
4. **Set a weekly ten-minute check.** Only the rows whose follow-up date has passed. Short by design, so it actually happens.
5. **Thank in writing, every time.** Including the noes. Next year's list is this year's list, warmed up.

Where to look for companies

Start with the companies your families already walk into: the store on the corner, the restaurant near the school, the pharmacy your community uses. Local asks are commonly decided by a person rather than a form, and a school request carries real weight in the neighborhood it serves.

For the national programs, look each one up in the [donor directory](#) before writing - we track 4,000+ companies, and each page describes what that program has historically offered and where to check its current status. Our guide to [companies that donate to schools](#) covers the patterns that show up most often for parent groups.

Common questions

Who has to approve a donation request made for a school?

Usually the principal, and often the district as well, before anything goes out on school letterhead or in the school's name. Parent groups also have their own approval - a board vote or an officer sign-off. Ask both before the first letter, because permission granted afterwards does not repair a request that surprised an administrator. This is informational, not legal advice.

Does a PTA need its own 501(c)(3) to ask for donations?

It depends on how your group is organized. Some parent groups hold their own tax-exempt status, some are covered through a state or national parent-teacher organization, and some operate under the school or district. Which describes your group is a question for your board and your state organization, and about seven in ten donation programs in our directory historically indicated 501(c)(3) documentation was required or requested. This is informational, not legal advice.

Should the request come from the school or from the parent group?

Whichever one actually holds the status the program asks for and has approved the ask - and the letter should say plainly which it is. A request that blurs the two is the one an administrator hears about from a confused company.