

online fundraising

Justgiving for schools **Gift Aid made easy**

Many people have heard of Justgiving – since its launch in 2001, it has become well-known as a website which enables ordinary people to raise extraordinary amounts of money for charity. However, only a small proportion of schools have joined up so far. Amy Griggs interviewed head of charity marketing James Casey and found out what Justgiving could offer your school.

Justgiving was set up six years ago to provide a more contemporary method of donating and fundraising. It enables individuals and charities to share a common online space for raising money and aims to make charity-giving more efficient and pain-free.

The website is fairly easy to negotiate and has clear information and diagrams to illustrate what it has to offer and the processes involved. There is a special section for schools (www.justgiving.com/schools) which offers fundraising advice and case studies. Schools who join Justgiving are provided with fun and easy-to-use fundraising pages, which allow students, teachers and parents to raise money creatively through sponsorship or donations.

When I interviewed James Casey, Justgiving's charities marketing manager, he said that the organisation was serious about helping more schools to raise money and revealed how they are encouraging them to sign up.

How many schools have you worked with?

We have worked with 40 schools over the past 18 months. These have included primaries, secondaries, special needs schools and youth projects.

What kind of sums of money do schools usually raise?

It really depends on the size of the school. Larger schools have raised as much as £20,000, while smaller schools raise on average £2,000 or £3,000. There is a degree of difference in how fundraising is set up in schools and this can make a difference as to how much money schools raise. In some schools the principal takes on the job of raising money, while others have specific fundraising departments, so obviously they can raise more.

What do you do to help schools raise money?

There are four main ways we can help schools.

Fundraising page

A fundraising page is a bit like an online version of a paper sponsorship page. The advantage is that it won't get torn or lost and it can be easily emailed to a wide range of people, so ultimately more money can be raised.

Each student/teacher has their own page where they can collect donations from friends and family around the world. Schools also have access to Justgiving's Online Donations Service, where donors can make either one-off or monthly donations directly to the school. On average fundraising pages raise between £28 and £32, but multiplied by large number of students, that can work out as quite a significant amount. Justgiving makes weekly deposits to schools' accounts so donations appear regularly.

Gift Aid

Gift Aid is 28 per cent of the tax taken from a donation, which charities can claim back. Sadly, many charities don't bother to do this because there is so much paperwork involved. Justgiving takes the hassle out of this by automatically reclaiming 28 per cent of every eligible pound. This is how it works: The Gift Aid goes into a Justgiving charity trust account. Justgiving then deduct a small amount in commission and the rest is paid into the school's account every month. It is a quick, simple and pain-free process.

Helpdesk

Should you run into problems, there is a fundraiser and charity helpdesk available Monday-to-Friday 9am-6pm, which you can email. Alternatively, there is a help-line number to call: 0845 021 2133.

Keeping track

There is a secure online area, where you can get an overview of proceedings and see who has contributed, and how much has been raised in total.

How can schools join Justgiving?

Schools can do 50 per cent of the application process online in about five minutes. They then have to send back hand-signed paper forms consisting of a direct debit instruction, a Gift Aid reclaim and bank account details. The whole process takes as long as a school wants it to. If the school sends the forms back straight away, fundraising pages can be set up in 24 hours.

How much does it cost?

There are two fees, a subscription fee and a transaction fee.

Subscription

Justgiving offers two kinds of subscription fees – you can choose either an annual fee of £15 a month or a more flexible fee of £20 a month. With the second option schools can choose the length of time they sign up to Justgiving. It is possible to join for as short a time as one or two months.

Transaction fee

On each donation, Justgiving takes five per cent of the gross amount (including the Gift Aid) to cover its costs. So a donation of £10 would receive £2.82 in Gift Aid. After Justgiving have taken their five per cent (and VAT and credit card processing fees have been taken into account) the net donation would be a minimum of £11.84.

Currently Justgiving are offering three months subscription free, with no obligation for schools to sign up after this period. Their aim is 'to help schools raise more money than they ever thought possible.'

Case study: Bacup & Rawtenstall Grammar School

The students of Bacup & Rawtenstall Grammar School (BRGS) in Lancashire needed £1.2million for a new sports hall and rather than leave the fundraising entirely up to parents and local businesses, they made it a project they could contribute to and learn from at the same time.

BRGS joined Justgiving.com, which enabled students to collect sponsorship easily, efficiently and creatively. Justgiving allows students to create their own fundraising page where they can describe what they are raising money for and how they are doing it; they can post photos of their event and leave messages for friends and family; and they can monitor how they are doing and how close they are to reaching their goal.

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Designing pages

BRGS pupils were encouraged to create online fundraising pages in IT lessons, and many more did so in their own time, with a total of 179 enthusiastic pupils creating a Justgiving page. Teachers built their own pages too and created a 'How to build' guide that appeared on the school's own website.

'I think the pupils really enjoyed creating the pages,' says Emma Gauntlett, development director at the school. 'There were some very imaginative ones – though we did have to exercise some control over what they put on them!'

Each pupil had a fundraising target of £25, but those that used Justgiving to collect funds averaged almost double that amount. The average raised per Justgiving fundraising page was £46, with top fundraiser Katie Taylor raising an impressive £301.54.

Gift Aid gains

Fundraising ideas included a 17.7 km sponsored walk. Altogether, BRGS raised £2,771 through Justgiving, £481 of which was automatically reclaimed Gift Aid. Funds raised online represented more than 30 per cent of the total £9,000 raised by the walk.

BRGS says that the fact Justgiving is able to claim back Gift Aid reduces a significant amount of administrative time and effort: 'The service was fantastic. It was really useful, especially when so many people were doing the sponsored event, because of the ability to claim back tax,' Emma says. 'Reclaiming Gift Aid manually on every donation made through the paper sponsorship forms was time consuming and tedious work.'

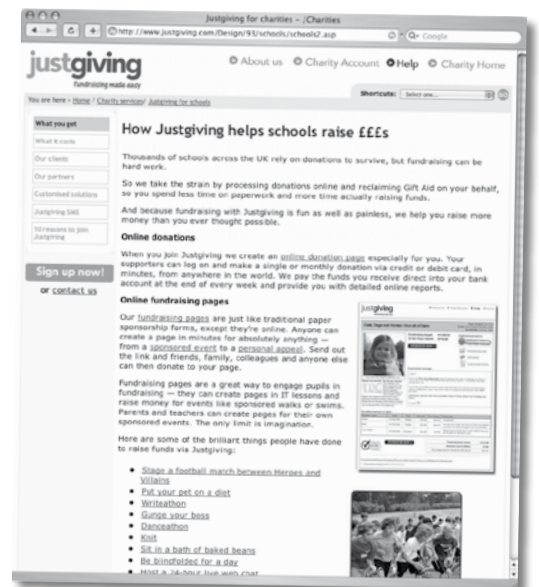
BRGS has shown how effective the Justgiving service can be for schools. Teachers inspired a passion for raising money by providing pupils with engaging online fundraising tools that made it fun and easy to collect sponsorship and the school saved itself the hassle and cost of processing offline donations and manually reclaiming Gift Aid. Most importantly, Justgiving enabled pupils to raise more money than they would have been able to via traditional means.

Helping the community

In March 2007, the students at BRGS broke the Guinness World Record for the longest netball match by playing for 55 hours and 20 minutes to raise money for Cystic Fibrosis Trust and Breakthrough Breast Cancer. Each member of the team set up their own Justgiving web page, as well as doing other offline fundraising.

'We would definitely encourage other schools to use Justgiving. It has proved to be the most effective way to fundraise'

Although not all the sponsorship money has been collected yet, the school are confident that they have raised over £1,000 for each charity.



Further information

For more information on joining Justgiving, contact Molly on 020 7549 2215 or email molly@justgiving.com