

Verein Funding Request – Frequently Asked Questions

The Verein exists to enhance the learning experience of the students – as stated in our mission. This includes supporting the initiatives of teachers, who take a leading role in the student’s educational experience.

Q. What is the Verein ?

A. The Verein exists as a source of funding for the JFKS community of students, teachers, administrators, and community leaders. The Verein’s purpose and mission statement is defined within its articles of association (shown at the top of this page), and – briefly summarized – is understood to step in where other major funding sources fall short.

The statutes of The Verein (below, in German and in English) provide a definition and purpose for the provision of the funding.

Satzung of The Verein:

“Der Verein unterstützt Maßnahmen, die die intellektuellen Fähigkeiten und sportlichen Leistungen der Schüler der John-F.-Kennedy-Schule und ihre Sozialkompetenz fördern sowie ihren Gemeinschaftssinn stärken. Ferner werden Aufgaben der Schule unterstützt. Zusätzlich wird die Förderung mildtätiger Zwecke im Sinne des § 53 AO verfolgt. Die Erreichung dieses Zwecks geschieht insbesondere durch Aufbringung und Gewährung von Mitteln für Klassenreisen, Ausflüge, Sportveranstaltungen und Schulaufführungen, für Beihilfen zur Anschaffung von Unterrichtsmaterialien, Büchern und anderen Gegenständen, welche zur Förderung der Aufgaben der Schule dienen, sowie für zusätzliche Beihilfen zur Unterstützung bedürftiger und förderungswürdiger Schüler und zur Förderung von Schulabgängern zum Studium.”

Statutes of The Verein:

"The Verein supports measures that promote the intellectual abilities and sporting achievements of the pupils of the John F. Kennedy School, their social skills and strengthen their sense of community. It also supports the school's tasks. In addition, the promotion of charitable purposes within the meaning of § 53 AO is pursued. This purpose is achieved in particular by raising and granting funds for class trips, excursions, sporting events and school performances, for subsidies for the purchase of teaching materials, books, and other items which serve to promote the school's tasks, as well as for additional subsidies to support needy and eligible pupils and to support school leavers for their studies."

Q. What does The Verein fund?

A. The typical project for which the Verein exists are major projects where there is not enough funding from other sources in general or where the scope of the funding falls short of the needs or of goals of the JFKS Administration.

Typical sources of alternative funding for the needs of the school include:

- The Senat
- The Administration
- The Trust Fund
- JFKS Sports Club
- Various government initiatives
- Department funding (by way of the Administration)
- Parent groups representing each classroom (typically the Homeroom)
 - Due to their lack of interaction with Parent Representatives, Subject Teachers typically do not have the same access to Parent-led funding; however, these Subject Teachers receive funding from the Administration via Department funding.

Q. Which needs are typically funded by The Verein?

A. The Verein generally funds the needs of initiatives where there is either not enough funding or it does not exist. Where funding exists and this funding has been exhausted is a matter for the board to use discretion and attempt to adhere to precedence of past decisions.

Each funding need is unique; however, many fall into the following categories:

- matching funds needed,
- funding from other sources is exhausted,
- funding from other sources does not exist,
- funding from other sources is being withheld or distributed unevenly

The Verein will not approve funding if the request would put the non-profit, tax-free status of the Verein at risk.

Q. How does the process work for requesting funding from the Verein?

A. The Funding Request Process Guidelines:

- The requester should first anticipate their needs in advance to allow time for the process of approval.
- The requester will complete the Funding Request Form (available at theverein.com under Downloads)
- The request form **MUST** be signed by the Administration to indicate it is a legitimate need which benefits the student body.
- The request form must be submitted to the Verein Board no later than **TWO WEEKS** prior to the project date. Larger requests should allow for much more time in order to obtain several comparable offers from different suppliers. Typically, requests will be reviewed during board meetings which occur once a month. There is a separate process by which a request can be approved outside of board meetings; however, due to the nature of the all-volunteer board and the need to properly assess the request against **BOTH** the above criteria as well as any precedence set for a particular type of funding, the approval process requires at least this two-week timeframe.
- Requests are considered submitted if either acknowledged in writing by a board member, or if sent to info@theverein.com.
- The Verein Board will vote on requests with a required majority of the board involved in the vote. The vote must receive more “yes” votes than the combination of “no” and “abstention” votes.
- The result of the Board vote on any request serves as the mandate for distributing funds from the Verein. Without a board decision, funds are not allowed to be disbursed.
- **AFTER** the board vote, in the case of a positive result, a purchase can be made. Purchases **CANNOT** be made prior to the Board approval of a request.
 - Two possibilities for funding disbursement exist:
 - Board approves the funding request and the requestor then makes the purchase on their own, and then the Verein reimburses the requester.
 - Board approves the funding request and makes the purchase directly on behalf of the requestor. This option provides the requestor with the option of not using personal money for the purchase, which is especially helpful in cases where the sums are large or where there may be tax implications for the requester.

Q. What sort of request do you typically approve?

A. The Verein will fund requests when they fall into one or more of the following categories:

- Broad impact to the JFKS student body. This includes requests where teachers receive the benefit of the request; however, the ultimate recipient consists of a substantial number of students within student body.
- Peak performers. By its very nature, peak performers are typically a small number of students; however, they are considered to represent not only achievement which the school strives for students but also represent the school in a positive way.
- Representation of the school (Model UN, Odyssey of the Mind, etc.). Broader representation of the school typically meets both of the two aforementioned categories.
- Family needs. Families who meet the criteria to demonstrate financial hardship (e.g. Berliner Pass).

Examples of the above categories which have been approved in the past include:

- The bike traffic school, toy sheds for the ECs, Chromebook's, furniture in Haus Reil, wooden benches around the school, music instruments in ES, maintenance and repair work for music instruments in HS, lights and sound system in the Aula, catering for Administration-led teacher workshops, and much, much more.
- The Verein also aims to promote school spirit among students and faculty members through the Verein School Shop, as well as organising and supporting various events at school.

Q. Why would a funding request put the non-profit, tax-free status of The Verein at risk?

A. As an eingetragener Verein (a registered club or association under German law), The Verein is an organization which must abide by the German rules of accounting. The disbursement of funding must fall within the scope of our articles of association (Satzung). These articles stipulate that the funding must be for the benefit of the JFKS community (which includes, for example, administrators, teachers, students, and club leaders) and requires a vote from the board as the mandate for each and any disbursement of funds. All disbursed funds, under German accounting principles, require a proof of purchase with the funds. Specifically, it must be proven that money provided by the Verein was specifically used for the intended purpose. Thus, all disbursements must be proven to be 1) approved by a Verein Board decision and 2) accurately recorded by way of receipts for bookkeeping.

A disbursement of Verein funds which cannot be traced to a recorded Board decision would put the non-profit, tax-free status at risk.

Q. What are the criteria for funding requests to be considered for approval?

A. The Verein Funding Request criteria:

- Request is received at least TWO WEEKS prior to the date of the project or need, in order to give time for the all-volunteer board members to discuss the merits of the request.
- Request is considered for funding if:
 - It has been signed off by the Administration (thus the Administration has indicated that this is a genuine need which benefits students)
 - The request has been submitted on time
 - The request does not have another source of available funding
 - It benefits a substantial number of students* or benefits the representation of the school within the broader community

* The benchmark of reaching a “substantial number” of students is at the discretion of the Verein Board. When the request benefits enough students, it is typically seen to be a benefit for the student body.

Q. How and when will reimbursement happen?

A. You must apply for financial assistance BEFORE you purchase or pay for anything and please wait for our feedback. Once the request is approved, and you have submitted your receipts, the Verein will reimburse you, using the account reflected in the request form. We do not do reimbursement without prior approval of the Board.

Q. Can the Verein pay for the request directly instead of me paying with my own money upfront?

A. Yes, as long as it's indicated in the request form, and the invoice reflects:

- . Verein der Eltern und Freunde der John-F.-Kennedy-Schule zu Berlin e.V.
- . Teltower Damm 87-93, 14167 Berlin

Q. How far ahead do I have to plan and submit my request?

A. The request form must be submitted to the Verein Board no later than TWO WEEKS prior to the project date. Typically, requests will be reviewed during board meetings which occur once a month. There is a separate process by which a request can be approved outside of board meetings; however, due to the nature of the all-volunteer board and the need to properly assess the request against BOTH the above criteria as well as any precedence set for a particular type of funding, the approval process requires at least this two-week time-frame.

Q. Given your two-week turnaround time on a request, how do I know when my request has been considered as “submitted”?

A. Requests are considered submitted if either acknowledged in writing by a board member, or if sent to info@theverein.com. There is also the possibility of submitting a request via the Verein mailbox in the HS teacher’s lounge; however, this is checked at least once weekly and may extend the turnaround time for a decision, given the due diligence required for each request (as described above in “Funding Request Process Guidelines”).

Q. Do I have to attend the Verein Meeting when I have a request that is pending approval?

A. Typically providing additional information (if available) can be attached to the request as a cover letter and should be sufficient. From past experiences, however, presenting your request/project in person at our board meetings can be helpful as the Board may need further clarifications that only you can provide hence avoiding any potential delays.