

Back-to-School Guide for Creating LGBT-Inclusive Environments

A new school year provides each of us with the opportunity to do things differently, make changes and grow! Why not make this the year to learn how to help all of your students feel safe, respected and included in your classroom and school? Here are some important steps you can take right now to make your classroom or even your whole school a more inclusive and safer space for LGBT students.

1. Read the Safe Space Kit (6-12) or Ready Set Respect! (K-5)

The Safe Space Kit, Guide to Being an Ally to LGBT Students provides step-by-step instructions on how you can support LGBT students, educate about anti-LGBT bias and advocate for changes in your school. Download or purchase the [Safe Space Kit today](#).

[Ready Set Respect](#) provides a set of tools that help prepare educators to seize teachable moments. The lessons focus on name-calling, bullying and bias, LGBT-inclusive family diversity and gender roles and diversity and are designed to be used as either standalone lessons or as part of a school-wide anti-bias or bullying prevention program.

2. Set Expectations that Cultivate Respect For All in Your Classroom

You probably do this each year anyway. When addressing such issues as racist, sexist and other forms of bias-based language and attitudes, be sure to include how you will address homophobic and transphobic speech. You'd be surprised how much this can mean to an LGBT student.

3. Display LGBT-inclusive Materials

Make your classroom or school inclusive by displaying LGBT inclusive materials. Hang the Safe Space poster or stickers, display posters for LGBT History Month, [LGBT Pride Month](#) or other LGBT material. These will let students know that your classroom or school is an inclusive space. Displaying LGBT-inclusive visual aids and materials sets expectations of respect in the classroom.

4. Incorporate LGBT Themed Materials into Curriculum

GLSEN's National School Climate Survey tells us that when asked whether they had been taught about LGBT people, history or events in school, a vast majority of students report that such topics were not taught in any of their classes. You can make a difference. Include LGBT people and history in your curriculum in your classroom. See GLSEN's [LGBT-Inclusive Curriculum Guide for Educators](#).

5. Teach About the Impact of Anti-LGBT Bias and Behavior

You can use [GLSEN's Educators Guide](#) to the [Think Before You Speak](#) Campaign. The guide will show you how to teach your students about respect and anti-LGBT bias and language in schools. Show your class the PSA videos that feature Wanda Sykes and Hilary Duff and use these as a tool to teach about anti-LGBT language.

6. Support Student Participation in a GLSEN Action

Encourage your students to participate in one of GLSEN's Actions. You can support your students' [Day of Silence](#) (April) or [Ally Week](#) (October) efforts. Also, don't forget to read the Educators' Guides to the [Day of Silence](#) and [Ally Week](#).

7. Participate in No Name-Calling Week

Each January schools across the country celebrate kindness by participating in No Name-Calling Week (NNCW). NNCW is held each year in schools everywhere with activities and lessons aimed at ending name-calling of all kinds. GLSEN provides schools with all of the tools needed to launch an on-going dialogue about ways to eliminate bullying in your community. You can find [NNCW lesson plans](#) here to use in your classroom, during No Name-Calling Week or at any time during the year.

8. Support GSA's

If your school already has a Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) or other LGBT student club, you can support the club's efforts. If your school doesn't have one yet, you can work with students to get one started. Check out the [Jump-Start Guides](#) for detailed information about creating and sustaining a successful GSA in your school.

9. Join the GLSEN Educator Network

As a member of the [GLSEN Educators Network](#) you'll receive a monthly newsletter that highlights GLSEN's resources and provides news and up-to-date information on GLSEN research, policy initiatives, youth programs and professional development.

10. Change the Game with the GLSEN Sports Project

If you're a coach or PE teacher, you can also work towards making your school a safe space for LGBT students. [Changing the Game: The GLSEN Sports Project](#) is an education and advocacy program focused on addressing LGBT issues in K-12 school-based athletic and physical education programs. [Click here](#) to find Game Plans for PE teachers, coaches, administrators or parents.