

GLSEN[®]

SOLIDARITY

WEEK



2022

**Middle and
High School
Educator Guide**

Here it is! Everything you need to know about Solidarity Week. This guide will share resources, the history of Solidarity Week, and ideas for how you as an educator can participate! Also, don't forget to register, you could receive giveaways, news and updates, emails with information and useful tips for organizing, and invitations to join conversations happening across the country!

Originally known as Ally Week, this program was created by students from GLSEN's Jumpstart program and launched in 2005 during the week leading up to National Coming Out Day. GLSEN changed this program to Solidarity Week in 2020.

Solidarity Week is a student-powered campaign dedicated to building collective support for LGBTQ+ students and educators. This week-long program helps people learn about and practice solidarity across different communities.

Collective advocacy and organizing for action during Solidarity Week is a great way to build inclusion among diverse groups of students and educators at your school: this includes LGBTQ+ students, BIPOC students, and students with disabilities.

In this guide you will find:

- FAQ about Solidarity Week and GLSEN
- Letter to Administrators for Participation
- Newsletter or Email Announcements to Families
- How do I Prepare for Solidarity Week?
- Ways to Participate as an Educator

Solidarity Week Frequently Asked Questions

What is solidarity?

Solidarity is voluntary, collective, sustained action based on an understanding that we don't all share the same risks, and we must work across all differences to ensure that every student has the right to a safe, supportive, and LGBTQ+-inclusive K–12 education. Beyond a declaration of allyship, solidarity involves ongoing work to leverage power and create change across different communities. Instead of a one-off transaction, it involves transformation of oneself, of communities, and of the status quo. Solidarity involves bringing together different people based on finding common objectives and solutions. Solidarity work happens when you show up to support others experiencing harm and oppression by centering their experiences, leadership, decisions, needs, requests, and ideas.



What is LGBTQ+ solidarity?

GLSEN's Solidarity Week focuses on advocacy actions for LGBTQ+ youth, who face disproportionate bullying, harassment, and discrimination in K–12 schools. All educators can show up in solidarity with LGBTQ+ youth, and these students can work in solidarity with one another, as well as with non-LGBTQ+ students. This can look like cisgender students joining in solidarity with trans or nonbinary students to advance inclusive sports participation and bathroom access policies in their school. This can look like white LGBTQ+ students working in solidarity with LGBTQ+ Black people, Indigenous people, and other people of color (BIPOC) to examine the presence of BIPOC historical figures and authors, including BIPOC LGBTQ+ historical figures and authors, in the school curriculum.

Solidarity work happens in many forms and on many different issues.

The important part of understanding solidarity work is that collective action is powerful in enacting change. In fact, solidarity can either be the biggest threat to oppression or one of the biggest enablers in upholding and reinforcing it. How you show up, or don't, makes all the difference.

How do I tell my students about solidarity?

You can share this **Student Guide** with your students, which speaks directly to them and shares ways to participate. Here is some sample language for telling them about ways they may have already participated in solidarity as a tool for liberation: "You may have probably already practiced solidarity in some form, whether using a peer's correct pronouns or signing a petition. In the days after the school shooting in 2018 at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, students organized the largest single day of protest against gun violence in history. In June 2020, protests broke out across the country demanding justice for George Floyd, a Black man who was killed by police in Minneapolis, MN. As more murders of Black people including Black transgender women, young people started organizing their own protests addressing anti-Blackness and racism in their schools. Many of you participated in GLSEN's Day of Silence, the largest LGBTQ+ student focused and led action to raise awareness around the bullying, harassment and erasure of LGBTQ+ students in schools."

What happens during Solidarity Week?

During Solidarity Week, students and educators organize activities at school that focus on encouraging and enhancing solidarity with the LGBTQ+ community, in their school and beyond. GLSEN recommends using activities from our **One Brick at a Time resource** to begin essential conversations that build practices of solidarity. Middle and High School educators are encouraged to add books to their lesson plans with LGBTQ+-headed families and trans and gender diverse people, and to begin discussions of solidarity with the LGBTQ+ community with their students.



Solidarity Week Letter to Administrators

The following letter can be adapted to send to administrators or other school leaders to let them know about Solidarity Week. If you are supporting a GSA or students who want to bring this week to the school, be sure to connect with them first. If you have families or colleagues who would also like to celebrate Solidarity Week, ask if they are willing to have this letter be sent from you all.

Dear [Administrator],

I am writing on behalf of my (students, GSA, LGBTQ+ families) who would like to participate in GLSEN's Solidarity Week this fall. GLSEN is the leading national education organization focused on ensuring safe, affirming schools for all students in K–12 schools.

Solidarity Week is a school-centered National GLSEN program about the meaning of solidarity that encourages schools to show solidarity with the LGBTQ+ community and their own LGBTQ+ students, educators, and families. Solidarity Week is for everyone. Launched by GLSEN student organizers in 2005, this program helps educators and students across the country start the school year with positive, affirming messages and actions needed to combat harassment and marginalization of LGBTQ+ people in schools. Solidarity Week supports our students' ability to empathize, connect, and collaborate with a diverse group of peers: skills that are of increasing importance in our multicultural, global society. Our solidarity week activities will enable students to see their potential to effect change and will better equip them with the tools to take risks to achieve their goals.

Regardless of recent efforts of some states and school districts to censor books that affirm LGBTQ+ and BIPOC people, these efforts **go against students' and families' civil rights**, and are being **rolled back by courts** across the country. Solidarity Week offers a way for schools to affirm students' identities and start conversations among learners, educators, and families, about ways communities can come together to break down harmful practices and build inclusion.

National education and mental health organizations consistently support LGBTQ+ inclusive policies and practices for schools. This includes the **National Association for Secondary School Principals**, **National Association of School Psychologists**, **American School Counselors Associations**, and the **National Education Association**, which all, for example, recognize the importance of educators using a student's self-identified name and pronouns.

This year, Solidarity Week occurs on November 7-11, 2022. Our GSA would like to [do a presentation at the faculty meeting, host a screening of a free film offered by GLSEN for students or families, share about solidarity tips and actions at the morning meeting announcements, facilitate a discussion about what LGBTQ+ students need at our school]. As an educator, I'd like to [teach LGBTQ+ inclusive lessons, let my families know about this week, host a screening free film, and/or invite other students to our GSA meeting].



Solidarity Week is most effective as a school-wide initiative to begin the year with LGBTQ+ visibility and affirmation. I am happy to help organize a whole-school assembly for Solidarity Week so that all of our students have a chance to participate in this national program.

Please let me know if you would like to set up a meeting with me [and my students] to discuss these plans more, or if there is any other information you need.

Thank you!

[Name]

Solidarity Week Letter for Families

Dear Families,

This year, we will be participating in Solidarity Week, an annual school-centered National GLSEN program about the meaning of solidarity. This program encourages schools to show solidarity with the LGBTQ+ community and to highlight our own LGBTQ+ students, educators, and families. It is also an opportunity for all students to reflect on their identities and to practice listening to groups of people who are facing discrimination in our country and taking actions to better support them.

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Solidarity Week supports our students' ability to empathize, connect, and collaborate with a diverse group of peers, skills that are of increasing importance in our multicultural, global society. Our Solidarity Week activities will enable students to see their potential to effect change and will better equip them with the tools to take risks to achieve their goals. We are thrilled to join students across the country who want to elevate positive, affirming messages and actions for LGBTQ+ people in schools.

This year, Solidarity Week occurs on November 7–11, 2022.

During Solidarity week, we will organize activities at school that focus on encouraging and enhancing solidarity with the LGBTQ+ community. We will [share programming ideas and events planned.]

If you have any questions or suggestions for the week, please feel free to reach out to me.



How do I Prepare for Solidarity Week?

1) Do the internal work

As we engage in solidarity work, it is important to understand and acknowledge your own privileges. When you are aware of the privileges you bring into different spaces (it might shift depending on the folks in the room or environment you are in), you will engage with more intention around making space and taking space appropriately. Knowing your privileges also helps you offer ways you can be useful to a group taking collective action to address oppression. For example, if you have access to money or food, and know others who can help, you can offer to support resources for mutual aid at your school or in your community. As an adult, you can be mindful of adultism and ensure you are centering your students in solidarity efforts, even when you share identities.

2) Show solidarity by centering the folks who are most impacted by oppression

Oftentimes the people we are advocating for do not actually get to advocate for themselves because they are silenced. Practice listening to what others' need instead of telling them what they need. *For example, it would be inappropriate for a cisgender person to tell transgender people what they need and deciding their priorities, or for white LGBTQ+ students to say what their Black LGBTQ+ peers need.* Making assumptions about what is best for people and making decisions for them is just another form of oppression, even with good intentions. The first step of showing solidarity is to listen and follow the lead of those who are most system-impacted or oppressed.

3) Learn about collective work and leadership

Solidarity work is not possible from an individualistic practice. It is a collective action involving more than one person. You can demonstrate this in the ways that you facilitate discussions with your students, and how collective decision-making is expected in group work. Group meetings should start with respectful space agreements so everyone understands the boundaries and expectations of the group. Share our [Guidelines for Respectful Shared Spaces](#) with your students and see which guidelines work for them, and call for others they may want to add. Centering the folks who are most impacted by oppression or discrimination is very different from creating oppressive hierarchies within your event or movement. Collective work means coming together to make decisions and contributing to conversations where all points are valued. In collective work, a person does not hold the power to make decisions because of their financial contributions, labor, or time invested in the work. People should be able to opt in to tasks and committees and should not be assigned. Reflecting on collective work and organizing, and discussing this with your students can better prepare for solidarity week and inform how your GSA or groups run throughout the year.

4) Support students' organizing efforts

If your school has a GSA, attend a meeting to support Solidarity Week organizing. Offer to take on tasks and help students with their efforts, especially regarding advocacy with administration or organizing faculty presentations or whole school assemblies. Work with other educators to secure space and time for students to share Solidarity Week information. During Solidarity Week, support students in discussing LGBTQ+ Solidarity with their classmates. In some instances, students' peers could respond with disrespect, name-calling, or harassment. Use these as teachable moments to model support for LGBTQ+ people by intervening and insisting that your school be a safe space for all. For more support with intervention techniques, see our [Safe Space Kit](#).



5) Determine the identities/communities you and your students are in solidarity with

Solidarity and collaboration are not a one way street and there are so many ways we can show up for each other. If we understand that each of us experiences the world as multiple, intersecting identities, we can always find opportunities to practice solidarity and invite others to be in solidarity with us.

For example, below is a selection of resources focused on specific communities:

<p>LGBTQ+2S Native American and Indigenous Experiences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Erasure and Resilience: The Experiences of LGBTQ Students of Color Report • Beyond the Gender Binary • LGBTQ Youth Explain Why Schools Should Teach About These 17 Native Icons • LGBTQ+ History Card Highlights: Ty Defoe, Candi Brings Plenty, Hinaleimoana Wong-Kalu
<p>LGBTQ+ Disability Justice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenging Ableist Language • I’m a Trans, Disabled Young Person, Not One or the Other • LGBTQ+ History Card highlights: Frida Kahlo, Chella Man
<p>AAPI LGBTQ+ Experiences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Best At It (Realistic fiction book for 3rd - 7th Grades) • Boys Run the Riot (Manga series for 8th - 12th Grades) • Flamer (Graphic novel for 8th - 12th Grades) • Hani and Ishu’s Guide to Fake Dating (Realistic fiction book for 9th - 12th Grades) • I’ll Be the One (Realistic fiction book for 7th - 10th Grades)
<p>Intersex and Trans Youth Experiences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 Steps to Ending Intersex Erasure • 8 Ways You Can Be in Solidarity with Intersex People • GLSEN Changing the Game • Gender Affirming Athletic Participation • Trans Action Kit • LGBTQ+ History Card highlights: Caster Semenya, Chris Mosier, Patricio Manuel



<p>Black LGBTQ+ Experiences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dear My Black Bisexual Freshman Self: You Are Enough • Here’s What I Need a Black Queer Student • I’m a Black Queer Student, and My School Needs to Recognize My Entire Self • Erasure and Resilience: The Experiences of LGBTQ Students of Color, Black LGBTQ Youth in U.S. Schools • Webinar: Erasure and Resilience: The Experiences of LGBTQ Students of Color, Black LGBTQ Youth in U.S. Schools • Condemning Police Brutality, Calling for Greater Support for Black Lives • 4 Ways You Can Support Black, Queer, Trans & GNC Educators Today • LGBTQ+ History Card Highlights: Audre Lorde, #BlackLivesMatter, James Baldwin, Patricio “Pat” Manuel, Miss Major Griffin-Gracy
<p>Latinx LGBTQ+ Experiences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Insiders: Best for 4th through 6th grades, this fantasy debut from Mark Oshiro follows a young Latinx boy, Héctor Muñoz, as he starts a new school in an unfamiliar town • Cemetery Boys (Spanish version: Los Chicos del Cementerio): Great for 9th through 12 grades, this supernatural romance tells the story of Yadriel, a Latinx teen boy in East L.A., and his quest to become a brujo • Familia es Familia: Tres Gotas de Agua: This video is in Spanish with English subtitles and shares the stories of three immigrant mothers and how they continued to love their children after they came out
<p>LGBTQ+ Immigrant Youth</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Together, Our Differences Make a Strong and Beautiful Community in School • LGBTQ+ History Card Highlights: Urooj Arshad, The UndocuQueer Movement, Bamby Salcedo

What are some other identities you could highlight during Solidarity Week? You and your students can follow @GLSEN for new resources that will be released daily during Solidarity Week and host conversations about solidarity along with us. Talk with your students and reflect on your school community and current events to determine the identities you could highlight during this year’s Solidarity Week.

6) Share Solidarity Week with colleagues and administrators

Solidarity Week is most effective as a school-wide initiative to begin the year with LGBTQ+ visibility and affirmation. As an educator, you have the unique opportunity to engage other school staff and administrators. If possible, invite a student leader or GSA to make a presentation on the importance of LGBTQ+ inclusion and support. Provide your colleagues with this Educators’ Guide, information about GLSEN’s Safe Space Kit and discuss with them the need for LGBTQ+ supports in your school. Use the “Engage School Staff” section of the **Safe Space Kit** for more details on staff presentations. Having knowledge of your school’s policies and procedures, you can offer suggestions on how your school as a whole can develop effective activities that bring LGBTQ+ visibility into your school in a positive way.



7) Connect with GLSEN and other educators like you

If you don't know other LGBTQ+ supportive educators at your school, it can feel daunting to start something new like Solidarity Week. Remember that you are not alone! There are thousands of educators across the country who are celebrating Solidarity Week and having these conversations with their administrators. To help plan your week, connect with other educators to ask questions, share ideas, and get support if needed.

Join our [Educator Forum on Facebook](#), subscribe to [GLSEN's Educator Network](#), and connect with [your local GLSEN chapter](#) to discover more resources and ideas from like-minded educators. Follow GLSEN on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter and follow the hashtag #SolidarityWeek.

8) Engage the family community

Solidarity Week is a great time to demonstrate your school's commitment to LGBTQ+ visibility and support for the entire school community. Send a notice home to families about Solidarity Week to inform them about any events you have planned, and if it is possible, invite them to participate.

Consider hosting a panel of LGBTQ+ members of the school community in an evening event for families, or hosting an evening screening of one of the free films we offer for registrants. Administrators can also send a letter to families to explain why the school is celebrating Solidarity Week and advocating for inclusion of the LGBTQ+ community throughout the year.

Administrators or Equity Officers could host a Coffee and Questions open time for families who would like to learn more about the week, the programming that will happen, and ways that LGBTQ+ visibility supports student growth and learning, and is aligned with the mission or vision of the school.

Solidarity Week Actions for Educators

As an educator, you have the opportunity to bring actions of solidarity into your classroom to focus on the LGBTQ+ students, educators, and family members in your school community.

Here are some actions you can take throughout the week, and beyond:

1) Make your support visible

Whether you are LGBTQ+-identified or not, you can advocate for LGBTQ+ inclusion and support at your school. One simple way you can show support is to display LGBTQ+ inclusive signs or posters in your classroom or office. This symbol means that you are open to learning about student identities, can affirm any identity shared with you, and that you can direct the student to someone in the school who can support them further. To learn about more ways to show support as an educator, read GLSEN's [Safe Space Kit](#) and download our Safe Space Stickers or Posters.



2) Teach LGBTQ+-inclusive lessons

Bringing in positive representations of LGBTQ+ people, issues, and history into your practice is a valuable support for any educator. Reading books with LGBTQ+ and gender diverse characters can encourage students to engage in discussions around respect and advocacy. You can find recommended Book Lists and an **Inclusive Curriculum Reflection Guide** on our Inclusive Curriculum page. Ask students how they could show up in solidarity for the characters in the book: what could you do or say to support? Find lessons and activities to teach during Solidarity Week and beyond at www.glsen.org/lgbtqhistory.

3) Teach grade-aligned LGBTQ+-inclusive books

GLSEN's Rainbow Library program sends sets of LGBTQ+ affirming grade-aligned books and resources to schools — for free! If you're in one of the 30 states eligible for the program, you are welcome to **request a free Rainbow Library set today**. Over 60% of Rainbow Library books on our Fall 2022 lists were written by BIPOC authors and over 40% were written by trans or nonbinary authors. Every middle and high school Rainbow Library set has a book that is in Spanish. In a state that's not yet eligible to receive free Rainbow Library books? **You can still purchase Rainbow Library titles from our Bookshop Storefront**. For every dollar spent at the GLSEN Rainbow Library Storefront, a portion goes back to supporting the program.

4) Facilitate LGBTQ+ Solidarity Week discussions

Dedicate time during Solidarity Week to discuss LGBTQ+ people and identities, and the concept of showing solidarity with and advocating for others.

Engage your students in discussion using the following prompts:

- What identities do you hold? How does that impact your daily experience in school? What do you wish people knew about your experiences?
- How affirming is your school for LGBTQ+ students? Is this different for each identity in the acronym LGBTQ? How can we practice solidarity, thinking especially about students with multiple marginalized identities, such as BIPOC LGBTQ+ students and LGBTQ+ students with disabilities?
- What does solidarity look like for you? How do you practice solidarity with others? How do you need others to practice solidarity with your communities?
- Where are you knowledgeable about other communities, and where do you need to learn more?
- Where do you see LGBTQ+ people in the media? Can you share a time you felt represented in the media and how this impacted you?
- How are you using your own power and privilege to disrupt injustice?
- What are some issues at your school that can bring people together to create change?



5) Solidarity Selfie #SolidarityWeek

Join thousands of students and educators across the country in sharing how you practice solidarity.

- Take a selfie or photo and add this comment to your post: Solidarity for my identity means _____ ” and I practice and engage in solidarity by _____ ”. How are you showing up? #SolidarityWeek @GLSEN.
 - Side note: make sure to add an image description to make sure your post is accessible. For more information about why this is important, check out this list of [“Places to Start” from the Disability and Intersectionality Summit](#).
- Use our GLSEN Solidarity Week GIFY stickers on Instagram stories. Search “GLSEN” or “Solidarity Week” in the GIFs section while creating your story to use these leading up to and during Solidarity Week.

Continue the Conversation

Solidarity Week should not be the only time we discuss LGBTQ+ individuals in the classroom, and solidarity work does not stop when Solidarity Week is over. Print out and hang up the [GLSEN 2022–2023 School Year Calendar](#), so you can keep leading solidarity work over the course of the year.

Remember, there is not one way to organize and be in solidarity! Be mindful of your capacity and be open to different ways to show up. If there is a march happening and you are unable to attend, make signs for folks to pick up and use, or offer to help promote the event, fundraise, or create flyers. Remember that disabled folks have been organizing remotely and have built the foundation for accessible actions; make sure you are learning from them and following their leadership. And finally, solidarity work does not stop when Solidarity Week is over, it is just the beginning! This event should help launch other year-round programs and actions. And GLSEN is here to support you!

Tag us on social media at @GLSEN for questions, ideas, or just to share your photos and videos from Solidarity Week actions!



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