



ALLY WEEK EDUCATOR GUIDE

Thank you for taking the time to learn more about GLSEN's Ally Week and how you, as an educator, can participate.

Launched in 2005, Ally Week is a student-powered campaign dedicated to focusing on LGBTQ students and out LGBTQ educators and the actions they need from their allies.

In this guide you will find:

- **#MyAllies Selfie Sign**
- **FAQ about Ally Week and GLSEN**
- **Ways to participate as an elementary or secondary educator**

Celebrating Ally Week at your school is a great way to start the year by showing solidarity with the LGBTQ community through positive messages that promote inclusion, affirmation, and love. The tools, resources, and messaging we provide can help any school celebrate visibility, affirmation, and support for their LGBTQ-headed families, students, and educators.

#MyAllies
educate
THEMSELVES.”

Ezra
2017-18 GLSEN's
National Student Council

ALLY WEEK
GLSEN

glsen.org/allyweek

DO YOU IDENTIFY AS LGBTQ OR HAVE STUDENTS WHO DO? HAVE THEM JOIN THE CONVERSATION ABOUT WHAT THEY NEED FROM THEIR ALLIES BY FILLING OUT THIS SELFIE SIGN AND SHARING WITH #MYALLIES



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ALLY WEEK FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is an Ally?

An ally is a person who takes demonstrable action supporting members of a marginalized group with which they do not identify. GLSEN's Ally Week focuses on allyship for LGBTQ youth, who face disproportionate bullying, harassment, and discrimination in K-12 schools. All educators can be allies to LGBTQ youth, and LGBTQ youth can be allies to one another, as well as to members of groups whose identities they do not share. For example, cisgender LGB students can always learn more about being allies to transgender or gender nonconforming students, and white LGBTQ students can always learn about being allies to LGBTQ students of color.



What is Ally Week?

Ally Week is a school-centered GLSEN program to spark a national conversation about the meaning of allyship and to encourage schools to show solidarity with the LGBTQ community. Ally Week is for everyone. Straight and cisgender allies, as well as LGBTQ youth, are encouraged to learn about what actions they can take to support their LGBTQ-headed families, students, and educators. Educator allies can use Ally Week as an opportunity to teach lessons about compassion and diversity. And LGBTQ youth can learn about how to support one another's overlapping, intersecting identities.

What Happens During Ally Week?

During Ally 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 holding an Ally 101 workshop, which outlines the basics of being an ally to LGBTQ youth. In addition, GLSEN has provided a list of actions anyone can take to support LGBTQ youth, including LGBTQ youth of color, trans and gender nonconforming youth, and LGBTQ youth with different abilities. Elementary educators are encouraged to read picture books with LGBTQ-headed



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families and trans and gender nonconforming students, and to begin a discussion of allyship with the LGBTQ community.

Who started Ally Week?

In 2005, members of GLSEN's Jump-Start National Student Leadership Team came up with an idea to encourage allies committed to ensuring safe and affirming schools for all to take action to support LGBTQ students. The idea turned into the first Ally Week celebrated in schools nationwide in September.

What is GLSEN?

GLSEN is the leading national education organization focused on ensuring safe schools for all students. Established nationally in 1990, GLSEN envisions a world in which every child learns to respect and accept all people, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

Ally Week Actions for Educators

As an educator, you have the opportunity to bring Ally Week into your classroom to focus on the LGBTQ students, educators, and family members in your school community. Having knowledge of your school's policies and procedures, you can offer suggestions on how your school as a whole can develop effective Ally Week activities that bring LGBTQ visibility into your school in a positive way. If you work with older students, you can also help them to advocate with administrators and other students who may need a better understanding of the value of celebrating Ally Week.

1. **Be a visible ally to LGBTQ Students:** Whether you are LGBTQ-identified or not, you can be an ally and advocate for LGBTQ visibility and support at your school. One simple way you can be an ally is to create a safe and inclusive space 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 how to begin your allyship as an educator, read GLSEN's [Safe Space Kit](#), our Elementary Tool Kit, [Ready, Set, Respect!](#) and download our Safe Space Stickers or Posters.
2. **Connect with GLSEN and other educators like you:** To help plan your week, connect with other educators who are planning Ally Week at their school. You can join our [Educator Forum](#) on Facebook as well as the [Educator Network](#) to discover more resources and ideas from like-minded educators. Connect with GLSEN as well on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) and follow #AllyWeek. If you are LGBTQ-identified, join the conversation and share what you need from your allies with #MyAllies.



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3. **Share Ally Week with Colleagues and Administrators:** Ally 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 supporting LGBTQ students. Provide your colleagues with the Educators' Guide to Ally Week, information about GLSEN's Safe Space Kit and discuss with them the need for LGBTQ allies in the school. Use the "Engage School Staff" section of the [Safe Space Kit](#) for more details on staff presentations. Arrange for a screening of one of our free-streaming films and a discussion to begin the year with LGBTQ students, families and educators in mind.

4. **Read an LGBTQ-Inclusive Picture Book:** While these picture books were written for an elementary audience, educators know that students in any grade enjoy a picture book now and then. Furthermore, reading books with LGBTQ and gender expansive characters can encourage students to engage in discussions around allyship and action. [The Boy with the Rainbow Heart](#) (K-3) is a simple story with a powerful message, and can be a good introduction to Ally Week for younger grades. Find accompanying lessons on [GLSEN's website](#). We also suggest *My Princess Boy* (K-3) by Cheryl Kilodavis, *I am Jazz* (1-5) by Jessica Herthel and Jazz Jennings, *You Be You* (3-6) by Jonathan Branfman, or *Red: A Crayon's Story* (K-3) by Michael Hall. If you can't find a copy of one of these books, try looking for a video reading on youtube to show to your class. Ask students how they could be allies or advocates for the characters in the book: what could you do or say to support?

5. **Discuss Ally Week with students:** Dedicate some class time during Ally Week to discuss LGBTQ people and identities, and the concept of allyship/advocating for others. Engage your students in discussion using the following prompts:
 - **For Elementary Grades:**
 - Have you seen this word before? What do you think of when you hear the word "ally"?
 - If your school celebrated Pride in June, continue the conversations or activities that were started then. What can allyship look like for the LGBTQ community at the start of a school year?
 - Read a book or have a discussion about two-mom and two-dad families. "These families might be in the LGBTQ community, and in ally week we think about being allies and friends to people in this community."
 - Show students a rainbow flag and ask them if they've seen this symbol before. Discuss the



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LGBTQ community, members in your school who are a part of it, and how to be an ally.

■ For Secondary Grades:

- › What do the letters LGBTQ stand for and who do we know that is in this community? (school, community, or media)
- › Where do you see LGBTQ people in the media? Are these portrayals positive, neutral, or negative?
- › How affirming do you think our school is for LGBTQ students? How do you know?
- › Why do you think it's important to be an ally to LGBTQ students?
- › If you're LGBTQ-identified, what do you need from your allies?
- › What are some actions people can take to be an ally in our school?

6. **Support students' Ally Week efforts:** If your school has a GSA, attend a meeting to support with Ally Week organization. Offer to take on tasks and help students with their efforts. Work with other educators to secure space for students to display Ally Week information as well as securing time and space for an auditorium or staff presentation. During Ally Week, students will be interacting with their peers. In some instances, students' peers could respond with name-calling and bullying. Use these as teachable moments to model support for LGBTQ students and Allies by intervening and insisting that your school be a safe space for ALL.
7. **Engage the Family Community:** Ally Week is a great time to demonstrate your school's commitment to LGBTQ visibility and support for the entire community. Consider hosting a panel of out LGBTQ-identified members of the school community in an evening event for families, or hosting an evening screening of one of the free and available films we offer for registrants. Administrators can also send a letter to families to explain why the school is celebrating Ally Week and advocating for the LGBTQ community.
8. **Continue the conversation:** Ally Week should not be the only time we discuss LGBTQ individuals in the classroom. Incorporate LGBTQ history, themes, and events into lesson plans you are already teaching. Get started with [GLSEN's LGBTQ-Inclusive Curriculum Guide](#) and know that LGBTQ History month begins in October!