

## Educator Guide

Every April on the Day of Silence, people across the country engage in silent protest to call attention to the silencing and erasure of LGBTQ people in schools. We need motivated people to come together to take action by choosing silence and then breaking the silence to raise awareness and support for the LGBTQ community.

**Educators have a huge role to play leading up to and on the GLSEN's Day of Silence.**

Here are a few ways you can help:

### WHAT CAN I DO BEFORE THE DAY OF SILENCE?

- › Help your colleagues understand the need for Day of Silence by discussing it at faculty meetings and other school community events.
- › Plan a school-wide assembly to end the Day of Silence at a “Break the Silence” event.
- › Empower participating students by preparing to accept silent or written participation.
- › Teach your students about the history of silent protesting, the silencing of LGBTQ people and history, and the reason for participating in the Day of Silence.
- › Teach your students about breaking gender stereotypes and different types of families, including those with LGBTQ adults.
- › Send a letter to your families to let them know that the DOS is coming up, and why you and some of your students are participating.
- › Watch this video of [Tips for Educators](#).
- › Encourage your students to register at [www.glsen.org/dayofsilence](http://www.glsen.org/dayofsilence).

### HOW CAN I PARTICIPATE IN THE DAY OF SILENCE AS AN EDUCATOR?

It's tricky to teach silently, but not impossible! Especially if you're able to prepare your students and families before the Day of Silence.

#### K-5

- › Wear a Day of Silence T-shirt, button, or symbol to remind students why you are not speaking.
- › If you have a co-teacher or teaching team, arrange for them to speak while you communicate nonverbally, or remain silent during morning meeting, snack, lunch, or one lesson of the day and during the 3 minutes of community silence at 3:00 pm ET.

#### MS/HS

- › Wear a Day of Silence T-shirt, button, or symbol to remind students why you are not speaking.
- › Post information about the Day of Silence in your classroom.
- › Have your lesson instructions written out and use a notepad or computer to type your responses to students.
- › Silently facilitate one of the Day of Silence lessons or activities (listed below).



**THE DAY OF SILENCE IS STILL A SCHOOL DAY WHEN LEARNING NEEDS TO HAPPEN. BE CREATIVE WITH YOUR ASSIGNMENTS AND ACTIVITIES AND METHODS OF PARTICIPATION!**

### HOW CAN I SUPPORT MY STUDENTS ON THE DAY OF SILENCE?

The Day of Silence is still a school day when learning needs to happen. Be creative with your assignments and activities and methods of participation!

#### K-5

- › Have your students participate in the community silence and solidarity: 3pm ET/2pm CT/1pm PT/11am HT for 3 minutes.
- › Support students who choose to remain silent, and intervene if you witness any name-calling or harassment.
- › Plan a silent reading time where students read or look at social justice picture books and books with LGBTQ and gender-diverse people.
- › Plan a letter-writing lesson where students write to local state legislators, principals, or other school leaders to ask them to address bullying and support LGBTQ students and families.
- › Use sharing time or closing circle to discuss how students help people who are being teased for what they like, how they look, or who they love.
- › Show a film from Groundspark's [Respect for All Series](#), such as That's a Family or It's Elementary, and hold a discussion.
- › Hold an all-school assembly and invite families to be silent at 3:00 pm ET for 3 min. Then break the silence with a social justice/LGBTQ-inclusive Read Aloud, and have students share what actions they will take to stop bullying.

#### MS/HS

- › Support students who choose to remain silent and intervene if you witness any name-calling or harassment. Print out info cards for students who are participating.
- › Print out information on the Day of Silence, other silent protests throughout history, and statistics on anti-LGBTQ discrimination and bullying like from the

- [National School Climate Survey](#). Have students read and silently write about what they learned and what they can do to make a difference.
- › Have your students participate in the community silence: 3:00 pm ET for 3 minutes. Discuss the history behind the Day of Silence and anti-LGBTQ discrimination.
  - › Plan a letter-writing lesson where students call on local state legislators, principals, or other school leaders to support LGBTQ youth in schools. Use [GLSEN's Four Supports for Inclusive Schools](#) for students to reflect and to advocate for needed supports.
  - › Have students read GLSEN's [Pronoun Resource](#) or teach our [Beyond the Binary](#) lesson. Have students write about actions they can take to be more inclusive of transgender and gender nonconforming people.
  - › Ask students and colleagues to reflect on LGBTQ inclusion in your school policies, special events, and curriculum.
  - › Teach about Audre Lorde's writings on silence such as: "Your silence will not protect you." Ask students what this quote means to them, and how they can "break" the silence for LGBTQ people.
  - › Look through the living [LGBTQ History Timeline](#) to bring LGBTQ visibility into your classroom and have your students do this [LGBTQ History timeline activity](#).

### GSA ADVISORS

- › Have students complete a silent reflection-carousel where they answer questions about LGBTQ issues such as:
  - › What parts of your identity feel supported at school? What is being done to support this?
  - › What LGBTQ topics or people are missing from your curriculum that you would like to learn about? Why?
  - › What school rules or policies would help you feel more supported at school?
  - › If you could design your own supportive class or school, what would it look like?
  - › Guide students as they read GLSEN's [Know Your Rights Guide](#) and Know [Your Rights Guide for Trans Students](#). Encourage them to silently design a guide for your school.

### WHAT CAN I DO AFTER THE DAY OF SILENCE?

- › Get involved: Contact principals, superintendents, and state legislators to demand that they show visible support for LGBTQ youth. Join [GLSEN Up](#) to be notified about changes in legislation that affect the LGBTQ community.
- › Create or support a GSA or other LGBTQ student-led group at your school.
- › Create or support a faculty LGBTQ-affinity or interest group.
- › Continue the conversation! The Day of Silence should not be the only time you 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 for Educators](#).