



2022 In-Person Educator Guide

My Silence, My Action.

GLSEN's Day of Silence occurs every April, when people in schools across the country engage in direct action through a silent protest to call attention to the silencing and erasure of LGBTQ+ people in schools. This year, GLSEN's Day of Silence is April 22, 2022.

We know it is a challenging time to be an educator. GLSEN is in deep gratitude for the continuous efforts of educators advocating for LGBTQ+ inclusion in schools. GLSEN is here to support the needs of educators like you who are committed to taking action, joining in solidarity, and rallying your students to participate in GLSEN's Day of Silence. As we continue to navigate and adjust to the ongoing challenges of life during the pandemic, GLSEN is here to provide support in your continued advocacy improving the lives and experiences of your students.

This year, the Day of Silence theme is *My Silence, My Action*. Where LGBTQ+ people in schools are often silenced and erased, this direct action is a reclamation of that forced silence and erasure. This time LGBTQ+ students and educators are choosing to be silent on their own accord and demonstrate the impact on the entire school community when LGBTQ+ people are silenced and erased. GLSEN's resources will provide opportunities for student leaders to organize their day of action and engage in creative and impactful ways to tell their story, especially by incorporating racial, gender, and disability justice. The purpose of this guide is to help educators like yourself participate and support folks on your campus to take action and join this campaign on April 22, 2022.

PREPARE FOR THE DAY OF SILENCE

Registrants for the Day of Silence will receive weekly emails leading up to April 22nd to help students and educators plan their Day of Silence and to update folks taking action on new material and celebrity influencer engagement! [Register now](#) to receive these updates!

- **Join our GSA Day of Silence Webinar** and learn about all of the resources, opportunities, and best practices GLSEN will be offering this Day of Silence.
 - The [@GLSEN](#) Bulletin on Instagram Live on Monday, April 18th will also be dedicated to Day of Silence. Tune in at 6:00 PM ET / 3:00 PM PT
- Become familiar with the resources available for students and educators on the [GLSEN Day of Silence website](#).
- **Register** for GLSEN's Day of Silence to receive more information for engagement opportunities with celebrity influencers, giveaways, and resources.
- Review [GLSEN's 2019 National School Climate Survey Report](#) to learn more about the experiences of LGBTQ+ students including students with disabilities, Black, Indigenous, students of color, and trans and nonbinary students.
- Connect with your local [GLSEN Chapter](#) for support in organizing your event.

Over 4 in 5 LGBTQ students don't see positive LGBTQ representation in their curriculum, nearly 9 in 10 experience harassment or assault, and almost a third miss school because they feel unsafe or uncomfortable.¹

¹Kosciw, J. G., Clark, C. M., Truon, N. L., & Zongrone, A. D. (2020). The 2019 National School Climate Survey: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer youth in our nation's schools. New York: GLSEN



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- Safety plan by understanding school safety protocols for tabling or participating in the Day of Silence. For gatherings and events, create a safety plan for the event space including making sure students are at least six feet apart and wearing masks. Communicate your plan to the students. Work with students to identify a safe location to hold an event or gathering as some students may feel unsafe being out in the open.
- Prepare materials ahead of time. If you have access to a printer, print the GLSEN material from our website that explains what Day of Silence is for folks participating. Graphics and logos can also be printed as decoration if you are tabling.
 - To save money and to create environmentally friendly material, print one or two copies of the GLSEN Day of Silence logo with the QR code. Students can scan the code and will be taken to the graphic explaining what Day of Silence is.
- If your school's GSA or LGBTQ+ club is participating, meet with the students to plan the pre-Day of Silence promotion.
 - Ask students to sign up for tabling shifts to promote the Day of Silence before school, during lunch, and after school. Choose the time that works best and that will reach the most students. Tabling ahead of time lets folks on campus know that GLSEN's Day of Silence is coming up and how they can participate.
 - Make posters to promote the event.
 - Send invitations to other clubs to participate in solidarity.
- Help your colleagues understand the need for Day of Silence by discussing it at faculty meetings and other school community events. Invite folks to participate.
- Decide and share ahead of time how you will be participating as an educator.
 - Have your students watch the **GLSEN Day of Silence video** which shares the history of how it started, why it is important, and encourage students to participate.
- Plan a school-wide event to end the Day of Silence at a "Break the Silence" event.
 - Create a signup list and leave room for an open mic style event.
 - Work with students to decide the flow of the event so you can promote the event to other students. If your school is allowing snacks and food, get sign ups for contributions. Remember to think about safety. It is probably safer to buy individually wrapped food and drinks rather than traditional homemade food. Check with your school safety codes around food handling, especially during the pandemic.
- Review your curriculum with GLSEN's **LGBTQ-Inclusive Curriculum Guide** and identify ways to break the silence of hidden curriculum by teaching about LGBTQ people and identity.
- Send a letter to your student's families to let them know that the Day of Silence is coming up, and why you and some of your students are participating.
- Order copies of our **LGBTQ History Cards** and use the biographies and activity ideas for silent teaching.



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PARTICIPATING IN THE DAY OF SILENCE AS AN EDUCATOR

It's tricky to teach silently, but not impossible, especially if you prepare your students and families before the Day of Silence. [Here are a few ways to participate:](#)

- Participate all day in being silent.
- If you cannot be silent all day, hold a moment of silence at the beginning or end of each class period and use the opportunity to introduce LGBTQ+ inclusion.
- Hold a moment of silence with the school before school, at lunch, or after school. Some schools are in hybrid scheduling, so there may only be one or two times throughout the day that everyone can gather to participate together. You can also plan this moment with the national moment of silence at 3:00 PM ET / 12:00 PM PT on April 22nd.

SUPPORTING YOUR 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, activities, and methods of participation!

- Support students who choose to remain silent, and intervene if you witness any name-calling or harassment.
- 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.
- For K-5 students, plan a silent reading time where students read or look at social justice picture books and books with LGBTQ+ and gender-diverse people.
- Have students read GLSEN's [Gender Triangle Education Guide](#) or teach our [Beyond the Binary](#) lesson. Have students write about actions they can take to be more inclusive of trans and nonbinary people.
- Have students conduct a silent review of the classroom library books. How many books have LGBTQ+ people or show characters breaking gender stereotypes? Students can tally these and analyze the data with math. Students can then write their own stories to supplement this gap and advocate for more inclusive LGBTQ+ books.
- Plan a letter-writing lesson in which students write to local state legislators, principals, or other school leaders to ask them to address bullying and support LGBTQ+ students.
- Use sharing time or closing circles to discuss how students can help people who are being teased for what they like, how they look, or who they love.
- Hold an all-school assembly to be silent at 3:00 pm ET for 3 min on the Day of Silence. Then, break the silence together!
- Join GLSEN's National Breaking the Silence Rally on all of GLSEN's social platforms. We will have special celebrity guests and students joining the rally! The rally takes place on April 22nd virtually.
- For K-5 students, have a social justice/LGBTQ+ inclusive Read Aloud, and have students share what actions they will take to stop bullying.



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GSA ADVISORS

- Make sure your GSA is registered to participate in the Day of Silence.
- Have a supportive adult as the main contact in case students run into any trouble.
- Help students prepare for the Day of Silence and a Breaking the Silence event.
- Use GLSEN's [In-Person Student Day of Silence Guide](#) and the [Breaking the Silence Guide](#) for ideas.
- Hold a discussion group to Break the Silence. Listen to student stories and identify the ways LGBTQ+ students in your group experience silencing and erasure.
 - Why was it important to you to take action and participate in the Day of Silence?
 - How are LGBTQ+ students at this school experiencing silencing and erasure?
 - Identify things at this school that make you feel unsafe.
 - What is your vision for a liberated school environment? What does it look like? What does it smell like? Who is there with you? How do you feel? What is different about this vision from your current reality?
- Support students in taking action, planning a virtual gathering, and attending the Breaking the Silence event on April 22nd on any of GLSEN's social channels. Follow GLSEN on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#) for campaign updates.

ACCESSIBILITY

As for all advocacy work, make sure that your participation and your students' participation is accessible and does not perpetuate or engage in ableist behavior. Here are suggestions on how to participate with mindfulness and centering access needs.

- If you are planning an in-person event, offer all the ways your event will be accessible. For example, let folks know if the event will have live interpreters, wheelchair accessible, fragrance free for folks sensitive to smells, seating availability prioritized for folks who cannot stand for any length of time or need to be closer to the event for visibility. If an interpreter is needed, ask if they have a preferred interpreter. It is important to center the needs and requests of the folks you are supporting.
- Make a note of who to contact and get contact information if someone has accommodation requests such as interpreters, live captioning, image descriptions.
- Some people have light sensitivity, so avoid using flashing lights or give a warning if there will be flashing lights at the moment they happen. Give folks a chance to look away and let folks know when the flashing lights have stopped.
- Use image descriptions for folks who cannot see the image you are promoting or sharing. Here is an example of an image description for a photo. Image description is of a person with short pastel orange hair in a light blue t-shirt and jeans standing on a stage and passing a microphone to another person with long black hair wearing overalls with flower prints on them. For more information about why this is important, [check out this list of "Ways to Create Access"](#) from the Disability Accessibility Summit.



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- Make sure folks are using correct names and pronouns by having name tags and encouraging students to add their pronouns.
- Should they be mentioned or discussed, share content warnings for heavy topics such as mental health, death, violence, slurs, etc.
- Invite students to move up to the front, but do not force or pressure them. For some students, it may have taken a lot for some students to get through the door. Let folks be where they are most comfortable and feel the safest.
- This is the Day of Silence. For hearing folks, using American Sign Language (ASL) or making up gestures like scattergories should not be entertaining, funny, or used as a substitute for not speaking. American Sign Language is a complex and effective language of communication for Deaf and hard of hearing communities. It is ableist and offensive to try and make up gestures to communicate. If you or your peers need to communicate, using a chat feature is the best practice.

ACTIONS TO TAKE AFTER GLSEN'S DAY OF SILENCE

- Get involved: Contact principals, superintendents, and state legislators to demand they show visible support for LGBTQ+ youth. Stay connected by signing up to be a part of our Educator Network at www.glsen.org/educators.
- Use this activity to encourage students to dream and create a vision board to capture what it means to have a safe school environment. Use this **#SafeToBe Vision Board** activity to guide questions and students can identify safety and liberation with and through their education.
- If you did not have the time to review your class syllabus or school policies, form a task force or a coalition at your school to review and advocate for LGBTQ+ inclusion. Work towards becoming an anti racist school, center the needs of disabled students/students with disabilities, and use an intersectional framework when learning how to support students holding multiple oppressed identities.
- Continue the conversation. The Day of Silence should not be the only time you discuss LGBTQ+ individuals in the classroom. Break the silence of hidden curriculum by using our **Inclusive Curriculum Guide** and adding LGBTQ+ people, themes, and events into lesson plans you are already teaching.

For more information visit GLSEN's Day of Silence landing page. You can also email us at educators@glsen.org.

Thank you for your continued support and advocacy for LGBTQ+ students.



