

GLSEN[®]

SOLIDARITY

WEEK



**2022
Elementary
Educator
Guide**

As an intentionally K–12 organization, we understand the importance of beginning conversations about LGBTQ+ people and families in elementary school. While many LGBTQ+-inclusive school supports begin in middle or high school, it is critical for elementary schools to establish a foundation of respect and understanding for all people. You can find more resources for LGBTQ+ Elementary Advocacy on our website.

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. 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.



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?

Even the youngest elementary students can begin conversations about solidarity and discuss the concept that injustice or unfair treatment to one is injustice to all. Elementary students are often already thinking about fairness and right and wrong, and are interested in learning about the world and how it runs. Talking about equity vs. equality, and how not everyone has the same needs can help young students to better work together in diverse groups. When having conversations about solidarity, it's helpful to point to a school's mission or respectful classroom rules. For example, "Our school mission is [or in this classroom, we want] to affirm and accept the full identities of all people. Part of our identity is who we love and who we are. We act in solidarity with all kinds of families, especially those not treated fairly because of who they love. We act in solidarity with all people, no matter what their gender is, how they look, or how they dress."

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 elementary students joining in solidarity with trans or nonbinary students to learn about and advance practices that make sure students are called by their self-identified name and pronouns at school. This can look like white LGBTQ+ students working in solidarity with LGBTQ+ Black students, Indigenous students, and other students of color (BIPOC) to read books about and by BIPOC historical figures and authors, including BIPOC LGBTQ+ historical figures and authors.

What is Solidarity Week?

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.

Solidarity Week is for everyone. Non-LGBTQ+ people and LGBTQ+ people are encouraged to learn about what actions they can take to support their school's LGBTQ+ families, students, and educators. Educators can use Solidarity Week as an opportunity to teach LGBTQ+ affirming lessons about empathy and equity, and to have conversations about LGBTQ+ issues and identities. And all students can learn about how to support one another's overlapping, intersecting identities while centering LGBTQ+ peers.



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. Elementary educators are encouraged to read picture books 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) Determine the identities 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, Hinalaimoana 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>Intersex and Trans Youth Experiences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 Steps to Being An Intersex Ally • 8 Ways You Can Be An Ally to Intersex • GLSEN Changing the Game • Gender Affirming Athletic Participation • Trans Action Kit • LGBTQ+ History Card Highlights: Caster Semenya, Chris Mosier, Patricio Manuel
<p>AAPI LGBTQ+ Experiences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Boy and the Bindi (Picture book for Kindergarten - 2nd Grades) • The Best At It (Realistic fiction book for 3rd - 7th Grades) • Kapaemahu (Folktale book for Kindergarten - 3rd Grades)
<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"> • One of a Kind, Like Me / Único Como Yo: Great for first through third grades, this bilingual picture book tells the story of Danny, who aspires to be a princess for the school parade. From School Library Journal: “This inclusive bilingual picture book belongs in public and school libraries.” • When We Love Someone, We Sing to Them / Cuando Amamos, Cantamos: Selected for the American Library Association’s 2019 Rainbow List, this bilingual picture book is great for 2nd-3rd grade readers. • GLSEN Solidarity Story Time Bilingual Read Aloud Video: ¡Viva, Qué Día! / Hooray, What a Day! • 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.

5) 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.

6) 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 families 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](#), our Elementary Tool Kit — [Ready, Set, Respect!](#), and download our Safe Space Stickers or Posters.

2) Talk about identity

Teaching young people about identity helps them to learn about their own unique identities, as well as the myriad identities in their classroom communities. Try our lessons: [I am Me: Talking About Identity](#) (K-2) and [Identity Flowers](#) (3-5) where students explore their own identities and personal experiences with race, culture, ability, family structure, religion or spirituality, and gender identity and expression. These lessons support each student's ability to empathize, connect, and collaborate with a diverse group of peers — skills that are of increasingly important in our multicultural, global society. Consider creating an Identity Museum, where each student brings in objects, pictures, or writes about aspects of their identities and their families' identities that are important to them. Families can help students to create their Identity Exhibits, and even be invited to the museum! This can be a helpful way for educators to also share their identities with students and families in a supportive way.

3) Read 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 elementary Rainbow Library set has a book that is bilingual (English and 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) Teach LGBTQ+-inclusive lessons

Bringing in positive representations of LGBTQ+ people, issues, and history into your practice is a valuable support for any educator. You can find recommended Book Lists and an **Inclusive Curriculum** Reflection Guide on our Inclusive Curriculum page, and more lessons in our **Elementary Resources**. Solidarity Week is a great time to start teaching about gender and to ensure that your family studies are LGBTQ+-inclusive. Additionally, find lesson plans for Rainbow Library books on the **Rainbow Library Curricular Resources Webpage**.

5) Invite in guest speakers

Solidarity Week is a great time for students to practice learning by listening. Inviting out LGBTQ+ administrators, faculty, staff, families or students (with family permission) to speak to your class can be a valuable way to celebrate. Have them share what they need to feel safe, affirmed, and respected at school. Have your students write thank you notes to any guest speakers including actions they will take to show solidarity with them.

6) 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. Incorporate LGBTQ+ history, themes, and events into lesson plans you are already teaching. 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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