



# **2023**

## **Educator Guide**

**GLSEN's Day of Silence is a national day of action pushing back against the silencing of LGBTQ+ youth and the erasure of their experiences.**

**This year, GLSEN's Day of Silence takes place April 14, 2022.**

There is an unprecedented level of anti-trans and anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric and policy currently being weaponized against our community, and we thank you for everything you have been doing for and in solidarity with students.

As LGBTQ+ students and educators across the country face attacks on their rights to access **affirming books, healthcare**, and even the right to be called by **the right name and pronouns at school**, we use this day as a collective protest to demonstrate the power of our voices and the impact of our silence. Protest comes with risks, and we want to ensure that educators and students alike are prepared to shape actions that fit their schools and communities.

This year, the Day of Silence theme is **Rising Up**. As part of that theme, educators across the country will spend the day speaking up in every space online and offline in defense of the rights of LGBTQ+ students. In this time when LGBTQ+ students are being targeted, it is more critical than ever for adults to loudly claim a day of NO silence.

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 people on your campus to take action and join this campaign on April 14, 2023.

## PREPARE FOR THE DAY OF SILENCE

Action takes some prep work!

Here are some tips to get your started in planning for your Day of Silence:

- **Register** for GLSEN's Day of Silence to receive more information for engagement opportunities with celebrity influencers and additional resources
- Get familiar with the resources available for students and educators on the **GLSEN Day of Silence website**
- Reach out to **educators@glsen.org** with questions
- Connect with your local **GLSEN Chapter** for support in organizing your event
- Decide and share ahead of time how you will be participating as an educator
- Take this time to update your class syllabus, policies, bullying prevention and intervention skills and practice



For more information visit [glsen.org/DayOfSilence](https://glsen.org/DayOfSilence). Email questions to [educators@glsen.org](mailto:educators@glsen.org).

Once you have created a solid plan, share it with your school administration to encourage a more welcoming and inclusive school environment.

- 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
- 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
- Send a letter to your 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 teaching silently
- Encourage your students to register at [glsen.org/DayOfSilence](https://glsen.org/DayOfSilence) and check out the Student Guide for Participation

## WAYS TO PARTICIPATE

This year, educators can take action by speaking up at school and in community spaces, online and offline, taking and making every platform possible to speak out about what LGBTQ+ students are facing, and how other adults can take action to support them.

Check out GLSEN's most recent **National School Climate Survey** and **State Snapshots** for more information about what LGBTQ+ students are up against!

- Follow @GLSEN on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter where we'll post shareable and printable graphics, and repost creative ways that others are participating. Share how you're participating to inspire other educators!
- Change your profile/photo frame to a Day of Silence graphic from April 7 to April 14. By changing your profile, you are demonstrating how many of us are supporting LGBTQ+ students.
- Arrange for your classroom or school to participate in a moment of silence during the school day, preceded or followed by a statement of statistics included on this year's Palm Cards.
- Structure your lessons with writing or other artmaking that includes students who commit to staying silent and those who commit to speaking up.
- If you cannot be silent all day, have a moment of silence in your class and use this day to bring LGBTQ+ inclusive curriculum into your classwork.
- Join GLSEN's Breaking the Silence Rally on April 14th at 7pm ET to connect with youth and adults from across the country who took action, hear from students and influencers, and commit to our next call to action.

## Social Media

- Post on your social media accounts explaining why you're participating. Write a post about the experiences of LGBTQ+ students in your community. Identify ways that you are or plan to take action, and invite others to join you. Challenge your followers to share your post, and to create similar posts of their own.



See below for a sample template:

Today is the Day of Silence — a national student-led movement highlighting the silencing and erasure of LGBTQ+ people.

82% of LGBTQ+ students experienced first-hand harassment or bullying in their school. 71% of students reported that their classrooms did not include any LGBTQ+ topics. More than 30% of LGBTQ+ students reported missing school because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable. Over half of all LGBTQ+ students of color experienced in-person victimization based on race/ethnicity.

I am participating by breaking the silence around the attacks on LGBTQ+ students on the #DayofSilence.

## #DayOfSilence Challenge

Post a video or photo and challenge your friends, family, and community to participate. \*Avoid outing folks and use generic words like “friend, sibling, uncle, etc.”

You can write your own or use this template:

Today is the Day of Silence — a national day of action pushing back against the silencing of LGBTQ+ youth and the erasure of their experiences.

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I am participating by breaking the silence around the attacks on LGBTQ+ students on the #DayofSilence.

I challenge @\_\_\_\_\_ to join me in the Day of Silence by speaking out! #DayofSilence.

## 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 and 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.
- Plan a silent reading time when 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 transgender and gender nonconforming people.
- Have students conduct a silent audit of the classroom library. How many books have LGBTQ+ people or show characters breaking gender stereotypes? Students can tally these and the data can be analyzed in math. Students can then write their own stories to supplement this gap.



For more information visit [glsen.org/DayOfSilence](https://glsen.org/DayOfSilence). Email questions to [educators@glsen.org](mailto:educators@glsen.org).

- 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.
- 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 and invite families to be silent at 3:00 PM ET for 3 min on the Day of Silence. Then join GLSEN's National Breaking the Silence Rally on Discord. We will have special celebrity guests and students joining the rally!
- For educators of elementary-aged students, host a social justice/LGBTQ+ inclusive Read Aloud, and have students share what actions they will take to stop bullying.

## GSA ADVISORS

GSA Advisors can support students to take action by guiding them through their planning process and helping advocate for them among your peers.

- Make sure your GSA is **registered**.
- Have a supportive adult as the main contact in case the students run into any trouble.
- Help students prepare for the Day of Silence and a Breaking the Silence event.
- Use GLSEN's Virtual Student Day of Silence Guide for ideas.
- Support the students in taking action, planning a virtual gathering, and attending the Breaking the Silence event on April 14th on any of GLSEN's social channels. Follow GLSEN on **Tiktok**, **Facebook**, **Twitter**, and **Instagram** for campaign updates.

## HOST AN EVENT

### Host Your Own Breaking the Silence Rally

- Students can make a schedule of who is speaking, performing, a simultaneous moment to Break the Silence together.
- Connect with your local **GLSEN Chapter** for support in organizing your event.
- Invite a guest speaker to perform or share empowering words or stories to the group.
- Hold a discussion group to Break the Silence. Listen to their story, identify ways LGBTQ+ students in your group are experiencing 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?



## Virtual Ideas

- Set up a video call via Zoom, Google Hangouts, Skype, etc.
- Invite your GSA, student club, and others from your school district to join virtually.
- Select a time where you will all Break the Silence virtually together! Unmute yourself and yell, say an empowering word, ring a bell, bang a pot, howl etc. Get creative!
- Set up a virtual open mic with a list of performers and speakers.

## In Person Ideas

- Safety plan by understanding school safety protocols for events. For gatherings and events, create a safety plan for the event space that is communicated 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.
- Ring a bell or honk a horn and shout a word that makes you feel seen and strong!
- Set up an in person open mic with a list of speakers and performers.
- Host a panel discussion.

## Host a Viewing Party

You can watch Netflix with your friends virtually or in person. Break the Silence by watching an LGBTQ+ focused movie, show, or youtube influencer. Movies and TV Series like **HairSpray**, **Love Simon**, **Love Victor**, **The Half of It**, and **The Prom** have discussion guides you can use afterwards. You can also tune in to the National Breaking the Silence Rally!

## ACCESSIBILITY

As for all advocacy work, make sure your 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, offering 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 Intersectionality Summit.
- 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 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 D/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, writing on paper or online is the best option.

## ACTIONS TO TAKE AFTER GLSEN'S DAY OF SILENCE

- Get involved: Contact principals, superintendents, and state legislators to demand that they show visible support for LGBTQ+ youth. Stay connected by signing up for our Educator Network at [www.glsen.org/educators](http://www.glsen.org/educators).
- Use this activity to encourage students to dream and use a vision board to capture what safe schools mean. 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](#), [applying for a Rainbow Library](#) and adding LGBTQ+ people, themes, and events into lesson plans you are already teaching.

**Thank you for your continued support and advocacy for LGBTQ+ students!**



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