



EDUCATOR GUIDE

HISTORY OF NO NAME-CALLING WEEK

No Name-Calling Week was inspired by a young adult novel entitled “The Misfits” by popular author, James Howe. The book tells the story of four best friends trying to survive the seventh grade in the face of all too frequent taunts based on their weight, height, intelligence, sexual orientation, and gender expression. Motivated by the inequities they see around them, the “Gang of Five” (as they are known) creates a new political party during student council elections and run on a platform aimed at wiping out name-calling of all kinds. The No-Name Party, in the end, wins the support of the school’s principal for their cause and their idea for a “No Name-Calling Day” at school.

Motivated by this simple, yet powerful idea, the No Name-Calling Week Coalition created by GLSEN and Simon & Schuster Children’s publishing, consisting of over 40 national partner organizations, organized an actual No Name-Calling Week in schools across the nation. The project seeks to focus national attention on the problem of name-calling in schools, and to provide students and educators with the tools and inspiration to launch an ongoing dialogue about ways to eliminate name-calling in their communities.

WHY SHOULD SCHOOLS CELEBRATE NO NAME-CALLING WEEK?

GLSEN Research continues to highlight the prevalence of biased language, name-calling, and bullying in U.S. schools. In one GLSEN study of school climate, elementary school students and teachers reported frequent use of disparaging remarks like “retard” and “that’s so gay” in their schools and classrooms.¹ GLSEN’s National School Climate Survey reports on students’ experiences of being verbally or physically harassed because of their appearance or body type, gender, sexual orientation, gender expression (how traditionally masculine or feminine they appear), race/ethnicity, religion, and disability. Overall, victimization based on appearance or body size was by far the most commonly reported type of bias-related victimization. It’s important to note that LGBTQ students more frequently experienced sexual harassment, having rumors/lies spread about them, property damage, and cyberbullying than their non-LGBTQ peers.² It is clear that name-calling in schools is a problem.

There are a variety of reasons why educators organize and implement a No Name-Calling Week (NNCW) in their school. It can be used for prevention as much as it can be useful as an intervention. Some see NNCW as an opportunity for a midpoint of the school year reminder for students about expectations for respectful behaviors while others utilize the week to build upon school-wide efforts to create a yearlong climate of respect. Still, others find NNCW an effective overall strategy for addressing specific school-based issues related to respect. In order to gain the maximum benefits of NNCW, it is important for educators to recognize the intent they have for organizing the week in their





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school. As such, those thinking of planning a local NNCW should follow the tips and steps described below.

KNOW YOUR SCHOOL AND YOUR STUDENTS

What concerns exist in your school around issues of name-calling, bullying, and bias? Begin the planning process by engaging your colleagues in conversations to share observations of student behaviors and language and student attitudes around difference while identifying school practices that may promote these (either positively or negatively), or that may fail to address them. Consider answering the following questions:

- What types of harmful language do we hear students use in our school?
- What do educators in our school do when students use such harmful language?
- How do educators in our school use such moments as opportunities for learning?
- Do students know what to do when such moments take place?
- Do students in our school know about and apply intervention behaviors when others are called names?
- Are students being taught about their identities and words that they want to use to describe themselves?
- Are students being supported in choosing their own names and pronouns, and are those decisions being respected?
- In what ways do we model respectful behaviors and language for students?.

Using GLSEN's Local School Climate Survey (www.glsen.org/lscs) can provide additional data for you and your colleagues to use as you develop a plan. The survey is also a great way for students to begin to think about the issues themselves and the results can even be used as a math lesson on data!

SET GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Once you have critically examined your own school, consider what you want students to learn and the skill building you want to provide for them so that they apply these to their everyday interactions with peers, teachers, and others in the school setting. Consider all students in your goals, not just those for whom you may have concerns. Goals might include:

- Incidents of name-calling will decrease by ____%
- Students will engage in "up-stander" behaviors in ____% of all name-calling incidents.
- All students and teachers will use a common vocabulary and apply a shared set of expectations for respectful language.

Setting specific objectives will help you choose the most appropriate activities for your NNCW. These





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might include:

- Students will identify ways that words can be used to hurt others.
- Students will identify ways that words can be used to help everyone feel respected.
- Students will create word banks of hurtful and helpful words.
- Students will apply “safe” strategies to incidents of name-calling and bullying.

DESIGN YOUR NNCW

GLSEN has a menu of possibilities for creating the most effective NNCW for your school at www.glsen.org/nncw.

Besides lessons, you will also find ideas for school-wide activities on the site. It is important to note that not every school will do NNCW the same way, and not everyone can celebrate NNCW at the same time. Be sure to choose an annual time that works best for your school, as our resources are available throughout the year. As you set new goals and objectives each year, you will probably find reasons to modify your school’s NNCW celebration. Choose activities that relate to your goals and objectives and that resonate most with your students’ needs.

Be sure to include ways to involve parents/caregivers and other community members in your NNCW. Let them know what you are doing and why you are doing it as well as what you hope all students will learn from your school’s NNCW. Invite parents to join you if possible and/or extend learning opportunities to the home.

You may also want to consider including school-wide activities such as assemblies, playground games (such as the one used in the NNCW Physical Education lesson “Blowing the Whistle on Name-Calling”), or creation of hallway or lunchroom displays of student slogans, writing, and artwork. As visual reminders and sources of individual and collective pride, these kinds of activities can help promote the kind of climate you may be seeking to develop. [Use GLSEN’s Annual Planner for a day-by-day plan for your week](#). Register today at www.glsen.org/nncw, where you can also find more lesson plans and planning resources.

IMPLEMENT AND OBSERVE

In addition to implementing your plan, it is important that students see you and all of the adults in the school community as active participants in creating a climate of respect. As with any learning opportunity, observing your students as they engage in NNCW activities can help you assess their understanding, redirect your instruction as needed and respond to questions so that the lessons learned and skills developed during NNCW can be applied all year long.





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LOOK BEYOND NO NAME-CALLING WEEK

As with any learning activity, it is important to provide closure so that students can attach personal meaning and relevance to what they have learned. It is also important for you and your colleagues to take a moment to recognize the important work in which you have engaged and articulate what you learned from your students and your own engagement with them around these issues. We recommend that educators engage their students and if applicable, the school's GSA, in a closing discussion with reflections from the week, and to get their input how the school can continue this work throughout the year. After receiving feedback from the students, think about and discuss the following questions with your colleagues:

- What did you notice about your students as they engaged in this learning?
- Are there skills that need to be further reinforced or developed?
- What was it like to teach lessons about respect?
- What can you bring forth from the week and do more regularly?

In addition to resources that help educators to support student-led days of action, like Ally Week and the Day of Silence, like Ally Week or the Day of Silence, GLSEN provides tools designed to support student learning across the school year. In addition to a comprehensive NNCW Bibliography of titles that address name-calling, bullying and bias there is Ready, Set, Respect! GLSEN's Elementary School Toolkit. Developed in partnership with the National Association of Elementary School Principals and the National Association for the Education of Young Children, Ready, Set, Respect! provides three sets of thematically developed and grade-span specific (K-2 or 3-5) lessons aligned with both Common Core and McRel standards. GLSEN's Safe Space Kit is an educator's guide to LGBTQ allyship, and gives concrete support to educators who want to create more affirming spaces for LGBTQ youth.

CONNECT WITH GLSEN

GLSEN continually develops K-12 resources designed to help educators create safe, respectful, and affirming schools for all. Visit www.glsen.org/educators for more resources and to join GLSEN's growing Educator Network email list for regular updates.

1 - GLSEN and Harris Interactive (2012). *Playgrounds and Prejudice: Elementary School Climate in the United States, A Survey of Students and Teachers*. New York: GLSEN.

2- Greytak, E.A., Kosciw, J.G., Villenas, C. & Giga, N.M. (2016). *From Teasing to Torment: School Climate Revisited, A Survey of U.S. Secondary School Students and Teachers*. New York: GLSEN.

