

The background features a light blue gradient with faint outlines of a person's legs and hands holding a large, light pink rectangular sign. The hands are stylized with light blue skin and red nail polish. The sign contains the main text.

BACK TO  
SCHOOL

WITH **GLSEN**<sup>®</sup>

**EDUCATOR GUIDE**

# Welcome Back, Educators!

**We hope that you and your loved ones were able to decompress and recharge this summer. As you prepare to welcome back students, we encourage you to tap into GLSEN resources to make your classroom and school as safe and welcoming a place as possible for all students, including LGBTQ+ learners.**

GLSEN is excited to present the [GLSEN Back To School Campaign!](#) The GLSEN Educator Guide provides support, tips, and resources to help you prepare for the new school year — whether you are in person, virtual, or hybrid. In this guide, you will find best practices, programming, inclusive classroom resources, policy information, and connection to other supportive educators through the GLSEN educator network.

**Thank you for working to make your school community safer and more welcoming for everyone, including LGBTQ+ students.**

## BEST PRACTICES

As you start the school year, here are some strategies for making your classroom inclusive and accessible.

### Refresh Your Skills

Being in the know about LGBTQ+ related issues is essential to building trust with LGBTQ+ students.

**Take advantage of these resources to refresh and expand your knowledge in key areas:**

- [GLSEN Webinars and Workshops](#)
- [GLSEN National School Climate Survey](#)
- [GLSEN Educator Webpage](#)
- [GLSEN Educator Virtual Resources](#)
- [GLSEN Blogs](#)
- [LGBTQ+ Terminology via The Transgender Language Primer](#)

### Set The Tone

Set expectations that cultivate respect, such as classroom agreements. Be explicit about naming what is and is not appropriate in the classroom. If your school or state does not have enumerated policies protecting LGBTQ+ students, you can take action and ensure that your classroom is welcoming for all and create at least one safe space at school. Some classroom agreements can be adapted from the GLSEN [Guidelines for Respectful GSAs](#).

### Support GSAs

If there is a GSA or LGBTQ+ student club at your school join as a staff supporter or become a co-advisor. If there is not a GSA at your school, offer to be the advisor and provide a space for the students to meet before school, during lunch, or after school. Students may want to start a club but are unsure of whom to ask. Hanging something like a [Safe Space sticker](#) or a pride flag in your classroom can indicate that you are someone LGBTQ+ students can trust. Safe Space stickers and kit are free to print or you can purchase them in our store at this link. To help you get started, check out GLSEN [10 Actions for GSA Advisors](#).

## PLAN AHEAD

There are opportunities throughout the year to be inclusive and advocate for LGBTQ+ identities. This section will connect you to the GLSEN School Year Calendar and GLSEN Programming.

### Changing the Game

GLSEN's Changing the Game program aims to help schools provide safe and inclusive opportunities for LGBTQ+ students in sports as well as physical education. This program offers resources for administrators, physical education teachers, coaches, families, and students.

### GLSEN Rainbow Library

This program sends LGBTQ+ affirming K-12 texts and resources to schools across the country — for free! Schools in nearly 31 states are eligible to request a set, and we plan to continue expanding over the course of this school year. Over 60% of the books on our list were written by BIPOC LGBTQ+ authors and over 40% were written by trans or nonbinary authors.

### Solidarity Week

Solidarity Week is a student-powered campaign dedicated to building collective support for LGBTQ+ students and educators. The purpose of this campaign is for young people to experience and learn about the importance of collective work to enact change.

### Liberation Week

Liberation Week aims to orient young people to envision what liberation means, create understanding and deepening analysis of resistance and survival of BIPOC LGBTQ+ people, generate inclusive curriculum for the classroom that uplift BIPOC LGBTQ+ history and initiate activism and advocacy in young people by developing critical thinking of current systems centered in social justice.

### Day of Silence

This is the largest LGBTQ+ student led day of action! Every year, students, educators, and community members take a vow of silence to protest the harmful effects of harassment and discrimination of LGBTQ+ people in schools. At the end of the day, they Break the Silence in celebration of their identities, existence, and day of action.

## RESOURCES

GLSEN provides students and educators with free resources that cover a wide range of topics. In this section, you will find links to resources for educators and resources to share with your students. Even resources intended for students can help educators learn more about what students are navigating and how to support or respond to situations.

### Creating Community for Students

Some students do not have access to local LGBTQ+ affirming organizations or a supportive home environment. Connecting students to others expands their support system and builds peer-to-peer learning.

**Here are links to some spaces where students can connect with other students or programs:**

- [GLSEN Youth Membership](#)
  - This program connects students interested in advocacy through monthly meetings for different programs such

as GSA or student club organizing, athlete networking through Changing the Game, and webinars, workshops, and social media live engagement opportunities.

- **Changing the Game Ambassador Program**

- Game Changer Ambassadors have potential opportunities for media engagement, GLSEN's platform to talk about experiences as an athlete. Ambassadors will receive potential swag giveaways, resources to bring to your team, activity ideas for Pride game days, updates on laws that could affect state and schools, and encouraging shout outs from pro athletes and peers from across the country to let them know that they are not alone!

- **Q-Chat**

- A CenterLink program, Q Chat Space provides online discussion groups for LGBTQ+ teens ages 13 to 19. It is not a forum. It is live and chat-based; there is no video or audio. Everyone chats during the same pre-scheduled time. Conversations are facilitated by experienced staff who work at LGBTQ+ centers around the country. *\*Note: Q Chat Space facilitators are NOT mental health professionals.*

## Student Focused Resources

- **10 Back to School Tips for LGBTQ+ Students**
- **Coming Out Resource**

## Supporting Trans and Nonbinary Students

- **Pronoun Guide**
- **Reggie's Guide to Name Changing Your Name**
- **Trans Action Kit**

## Show Your Support

Visual support for LGBTQ+ students in the classroom is just one way you can show you can Rise Up for LGBTQ+ youth. Head to our GLSEN Shop ([hyperlink to shop.glsen.org](https://shop.glsen.org)) to purchase some magnets, stickers, pronoun buttons, lanyards, or a t-shirt to start the school year off right. Each of these items is designed to let LGBTQ+ students know that they are welcomed and supported both in and out of the classroom. When the most marginalized students are supported, all communities are supported. All proceeds from GLSEN merchandise support our work to create safe and inclusive schools for all.

## Inclusive Curriculum

According to the 2019 GLSEN National School Climate Survey, LGBTQ+ students at schools with an LGBTQ+ inclusive curriculum have better grades, are less likely to hear anti-LGBTQ+ remarks at school, and are less likely to report missing school due to feeling unsafe.<sup>1</sup> Some states even require schools to teach an LGBTQ+ inclusive curriculum. Regardless of where you live, we encourage you to use resources to incorporate LGBTQ+ affirming content into your instruction this year.

- **Reading The Rainbow: LGBTQ-Inclusive Literacy in the Elementary Classroom**
- **GLSEN Inclusive Curriculum Guide**
- **National Student Council Book Recommendations**

- GLSEN's National Student Council put together a list of books that focus on diverse stories and LGBTQ+ characters for elementary, middle, and high school students. While this booklist highlights many LGBTQ+ authors, not all

of them may be part of the community. Instead, they show solidarity through highlighting LGBTQ+ stories and characters. The resource lists what identities are represented in each book, as well as any content that may be sensitive for certain readers.

## POLICY

Federal court decisions, as well as directives from the U.S. Department of Education, have affirmed nondiscrimination protections of LGBTQ+ students and educators. We encourage you to review these resources to become more familiar with these protections, and to see what other inclusive policy changes you can advocate for in your school, community, or state.

- [LGBTQ+ Educator Rights](#)
- [LGBTQ+ Student Rights](#)
- [Policy Maps](#)
  - [Gender Affirming and Inclusive Athletics Participation \(Issue Brief\)](#)
  - [Inclusive Curricular Standards \(Issue Brief\)](#)

## Register to vote!

Registering to vote, and exercising the right to vote is essential, especially with LGBTQ+-exclusionary legislation being introduced at an alarming rate. You can check your registration and sign up for election reminders [here](#). You can also help young people prepare to be active and engaged citizens by sharing our [Pledge to Register](#) tool, which will send a reminder text on their 18th birthday and help them register to vote. Your voice matters — [register to vote now!](#)

## Model Local Education Agency Policy on Transgender and Nonbinary Students

According to the 2019 GLSEN National School Climate Survey, 22% of LGBTQ+ students reported they were prevented from using their chosen name or pronouns in school.<sup>2</sup> This is especially an issue for transgender and nonbinary students, who face increased rates of marginalization at school. This model policy, developed by GLSEN and the National Center for Transgender Equality, can guide your school or district to ensure all transgender and nonbinary students benefit from a safe and welcoming educational environment.

## The Safe Schools Improvement Act

(SSIA) protects every student from bullying and harassment in K-12 learning communities. SSIA requires states that receive federal funds under Title IV of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) ensure that local education agencies (LEAs) adopt evidence-based best practices to prevent and effectively respond to bullying and harassment. SSIA has earned bipartisan support from members of Congress since it was first introduced over a decade ago.

## The Equality Act

Amends the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and other civil rights laws to establish explicit federal nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ people in housing, employment, public education, credit, public spaces, federally funded programs, and jury service. It also prohibits discrimination against women for the first time in public spaces and federal programs, and prohibits racial and religious discrimination in public spaces not covered by current law.

Check out our [Action Center](#) for additional advocacy opportunities and supports.

## GET CONNECTED

Remember, you have support through GLSEN and the thousands of educators working hard to ensure schools are inclusive for LGBTQ+ students.

- [Educator Network](#)
- [Find Your GLSEN Chapter](#)
- [TrevorSpace](#)
- Connect with GLSEN! Email [educators@glsen.org](mailto:educators@glsen.org) for questions and comments

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Kosciw, J. G., Clark, C. M., Truong, 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.

<sup>2</sup> Kosciw, J. G., Clark, C. M., Truong, 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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