

ALLY WEEK ORGANIZING MANUAL

**Be an Ally.
Be the Change.**

GLSEN is proud to be encouraging students to end anti-LGBT bullying and harassment in K-12 schools with Ally Week! What better way to kick-off the school year than to have your student club identify and support allies in your school? Ally Week can be simple, passing out stickers to allies who sign the pledge, or more advanced with an event or series of events planned throughout the week. Check out the sidebar for ideas for Ally Week activities in your school. Remember, Ally Week is about identifying and supporting allies in your school and asking them to sign the Ally Pledge to intervene in bullying and harassment throughout the school year. Your Ally Week activities will be most successful if they help support allies in intervening in anti-LGBT bullying and harassment, but also make them feel good and proud to be allies!

Ideas for Ally Week Activities

- Tabling in school cafeteria
- Student and/or teacher training
- Pledge conversations at lunch
- Ask Allies to attend GSA meeting
- Ally bagel breakfast or pizza party
- Displays on bulletin boards
- After-school activities like LGBT Jeopardy or LGBT bingo
- Bring a local LGBT performance or speaker to school
- GSA Student Club Exchange

1. Get Permission

Doing any activity in your school usually requires the approval of the principal or other administrator, whether posting fliers, reserving a room or just making announcements. Especially if you're trying to identify or train Allies, other students and teachers in your school will be more comfortable when the school has Okayed it. The earlier you work with your school's administration, the easier it is to avoid problems and address concerns. It may help to prepare a presentation with the reasons you want to do the activity and how it will impact the school in a positive way. A presentation to your school administration also helps to show how the action fits into the school's mission to build community and/or educate students.

2. Build a Core Group & Action Plan

Working with others adds more perspective and ideas, as well as people power to get everything done. Work with a student club like a GSA to sponsor and help plan the event. You can even build a coalition and include other clubs and to bring in more ideas and share the work.

Strong goals help make your Ally Week activities more successful. How many events do you want to plan? How many allies do you want to sign pledge cards? How many other student clubs do you want to join your Ally Week Coalition? Be SMART: establish goals that are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant & Timely. This will help you focus and evaluate your Ally Week activities.

There's an endless list of activities you could do to identify and support allies; determine what you think will work best for your school or community. Consider partnering with other schools in your district or community to host community-wide Ally Week activities. Ally Week is flexible and adaptable, so you can be creative in your organizing. The Ally Week Action is a good place to start. Download Ally Week Pledge Cards, the Ally Week Pledge Form and instructions at AllyWeek.org/StudentsEducators.

Another way to build allies in larger numbers is to have a GSA Student Club Exchange, wherein members of your GSA or similar group visit a meeting of another student group. Take this

time to exchange information about each group, your missions and activities, and brainstorm ways that you can collaborate in the future. Another great way to start collaborating is to co-organize a party or picnic. There are several ways to find Allies, but keep your goals within reach, so you start off the year successfully!

3. It's Almost Always About the Numbers & Being Visible

If you have permission, a supportive team and a plan, it's time to get the word out! Outreach is important to a successful action. While even a small group of Allies may change the climate in your school, the more Allies you can identify, the larger an impact you'll make in your school. It's also important to determine how your Ally Week will create visibility for ending anti-LGBT bias and harassment throughout the school year. You can make posters or t-shirts, print stickers for participants, start a Facebook or Myspace group, buy buttons or wristbands... the list is endless! Ally Week is one week, but the organizing should continue all year long. Check out AllyWeek.org for more information on organizing and products including buttons, stickers and t-shirts. And don't forget to register your student club's participation at www.studentorganizing.org.

4. Be Safe

Are you the only one in your school who wants to work on this issue? Is your administration hostile to doing any activity that addresses LGBT issues? It's important to determine which actions are safe for you, the student club, and/or others involved in Ally Week. GLSEN's work is about ensuring the safety of everyone in K-12 schools, and we don't want you to put yourself and others in any harm. Therefore, it's always important to know how and whom to report any bullying or harassment.

If you are unsure about your rights, or feel your rights have not be granted, please contact us at info@allyweek.org.

5. Make an "Ask"

Ally Week is all about using advocacy in your student club and schools to improve the climate of your school by ending and/or reducing bullying and harassment. An "ask" is making a specific request to a decision-maker about something you want or need. If you have a solution in mind you should offer it and ask that others support it in the unique ways they can. For Ally Week you can ask Allies in your school to intervene in bullying and harassment and to sign a pledge. You can ask that Allies sign a petition or attend an event. You can ask the administration of your school to be Allies by approving your GSA as an official school club. Think about what your school needs to be a safer place and brainstorm how your Ally Week can make it happen!

What are you doing for Ally Week? Let us know by emailing info@allyweek.org.

For more information on this resource, contact:
GLSEN - Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network
Ally Week
90 Broad Street, 2nd Floor New York, NY 10004
212-388-8062/ 212-727-0254 (fax)
info@allyweek.org