

# START A GSA: 10 STEPS

www.gsanetwork.org



## 1. Follow Guidelines

Establish a GSA the same way you would establish any other group or club. Look in your Student Handbook or on the district website for the rules at your school. This may include getting permission from an administrator, finding an advisor, and/or writing a constitution.

## 2. Find an Advisor

Find a supportive teacher or staff member who has proven to be an ally around sexual orientation and gender issues to advise your club. It could be a teacher, counselor, nurse, or librarian. Tip: Find co-advisors for extra support.

## 3. Inform Your Administration of Your Plans

Tell administrators what you are doing right away. Having an administrator on your side can be very helpful when talking to teachers, parent groups, the community, and the school board. If an administrator is resistant to the GSA, let them know that forming a GSA club is legally protected.

## 4. Inform Guidance Counselors about the GSA

Counselors and social workers may know students who would be interested in attending the group.

## 5. Pick a Meeting Place

Pick a classroom or meeting spot that students can easily find and is located in a safe place, such as your advisor's classroom or a meeting room in the library. Post rainbow signs and other posters to help people find you. This is just a template and not all resources will fit perfectly into this template. Feel free to adjust spacing or text size as you feel appropriate.

## 6. Advertise (and Get Food!)

Figure out the best way to advertise at your school. It may be a combination of school bulletin announcements, flyers, social networking sites, and word-of-mouth. Also get food and tell people there will be food: people always come to meetings when you provide food!

## Hold Your First Meeting

You may want to start out with a discussion about why people feel having this group is important. The facilitator can ask questions like: What do you hope to get out of being part of this club? What would you like to see the GSA do this year? How can this club make lasting change at our school? Be sure to start every meeting with a go-around of name, year, and gender pronouns.

## 8. Establish Ground Rules

Ground rules help ensure that group discussions are safe, confidential, and respectful. Many groups have a ground rule that no assumptions or labels are used about a group member's sexual orientation or gender identity. This can help make members feel comfortable attending and being themselves in the space.

**If your flyers are defaced or torn down, don't be discouraged. Keep putting them back up to let others know you are committed to a safe place for all students. Advertising your GSA – using terms like gay and transgender – can be part of educating the school and can actually make students feel safer, even if they don't attend a single meeting.**

## 9. Plan for the Future

Develop an action plan with assigned members responsible for action items. Brainstorm activities. Set goals for what you want to work towards, including events and campaigns [learn more at [gsanetwork.org](http://gsanetwork.org)].

## 10. Register Your GSA!

Now that you've started it up, register your GSA with the GSA network in your state! Visit our National Directory to find your state's GSA network.

