

HOW TO START A GSA



In 10 Steps via GSA Network

1. Follow Guidelines

Different schools have different rules and guidelines for how extracurricular clubs are started. Make sure you get the most up-to-date information for your school! You might find this information in a student handbook, or by asking an administrator. Rules might include getting permission*, finding an advisor, or writing a constitution.

2. Find an Advisor

Find a supportive staff member -- they could be a teacher, librarian, counselor, nurse -- who is a visible ally to LGBTQIA+ students to advise your club. LGBTQIA+ staff members are often eager to help out, but may be concerned about perceptions. Finding multiple co-advisors can be a great way to get extra support, and allow advisors to support each other!

3. Inform the Administration

Talk with a supportive administrator about your plans. Having an administrator on your side will help if/when the GSA faces concerned parents, teachers, or community members. If an administrator is resistant, but you attend a public school, remember that you have a legal right to start a GSA.

4. Inform your Guidance Counselors

Guidance counselors can be key people in connecting your GSA with students who need support! They may know students who will be interested in joining.

5. Find a Meeting Space

Choose a meeting spot, such as your advisor's classroom or the library, that is easy for students to find, but also a safe space with the ability to maintain confidentiality and comfort. If it's safe, put up rainbow signs or posters to help folks find you.



6. Advertise

Decide on the best way to advertise your club meetings. For some schools, this might be a bulletin board or the morning announcements, while for others, word of mouth is safest. Social networking sites can be great options as well.

7. Hold your First Meeting

Each meeting should start with introductions including names and pronouns, so that folks can get to know each other. At your first meeting, the facilitator can ask questions like: what do you hope to get out of being part of a GSA? What would you like to see a GSA do this year? How can we make lasting change at this school?

8. Establish Ground Rules

Ground rules help ensure that any discussions are safe, confidential, and respectful. You might

have guidelines about labels and identities, confidentiality, or discussion participation.

9. Plan for the Future

Make a plan for your GSA - what is it that you want to accomplish? Brainstorm activities and set goals. Assign members to be responsible for projects so that everyone has a role.

10. Register your GSA

Visit www.kycoho.org to register your GSA with the Ohio GSA Network! This will get you connected to resources including an e-newsletter, special events, and national organizations. It can also let other students know there's a GSA at your school if they've been unable to find you!

If you attend a public school that has extracurricular clubs, the Equal Access Act of 1984 protects your right to have a GSA. If you need assistance with administration, contact us and we can help!

