

Post Election Educator Resource

The Human Rights Campaign Foundation and Welcoming Schools are committed to ensuring educators have the tools to support LGBTQ+ students. Right now, educators need to provide support and affirmation for students by letting them know they are valued and that they have adults who will advocate and practice inclusivity to support LGBTQ+ students, families and school communities.

Welcoming Schools has compiled a list of **10 actions** that ALL classroom educators and school staff can do to support LGBTQ+ youth and families directly.

Classroom Management, Family Engagement and Student Support

Educators play a key role in creating a classroom climate that fosters belonging, empathy, understanding, and respect among all students. These practices build a foundation for a safe and welcoming school experience.

- 01 Use and Encourage Inclusive Language:** Address students using gender-inclusive language, such as “students” or “scholars,” referring to the school mascot, or terms related to grade level and subject, such as ‘7th graders’ or ‘artists.’
- 02 Creatively Group Students:** Sort students in ways that do not rely on gender or physical traits, such as by numbers, colors, and common interests.
- 03 Support Student Clubs:** Celebrate school student-led clubs, such as GSAs or Rainbow Clubs, that focus on LGBTQ+ support, education, and advocacy by becoming a club advisor, regularly attending events, and encouraging student participation.
- 04 Build Trust and Open Communication:** Be someone students know they can turn to. When students feel safe sharing with you, listen actively to their needs and experiences.
- 05 Establish a Safe Classroom Environment:** Create a culture where all students feel comfortable being themselves. Interrupt gender bias and stereotypes by encouraging students to explore a range of interests and activities. Use classroom agreements about kindness, respect, and inclusion, and reinforce that bullying and teasing are unacceptable.
- 06 Respond to Teachable Moments:** Be responsive and intervene with clear action against bullying behaviors and harassment. Be proactive in stopping any teasing or stereotypical comments related to gender, sexual orientation or family. When it occurs, calmly explain why such comments are unkind and remind students of the classroom values and agreements (#5).
- 07 Use Inclusive Language in All Communications:** In letters, emails, and forms, use terms like “parent,” “family member,” or “guardian” rather than “mom and dad” to acknowledge diverse family structures and home support teams. This also includes ensuring that communication is sent in the caregivers' home language.
- 08 Avoid Assumptions in Communication:** Be mindful not to assume the gender or marital status of student caregivers. Confirm who is in a child’s support network and include them in all communications and events. Be open to any family member being involved in various ways.
- 09 Organize Inclusive Events:** Design family events with inclusivity in mind using neutral titles like “Family Night” or “Muffins in the Morning.” Respecting cultural practices and religious holidays to avoid scheduling conflicts and increase attendance is critical.
- 10 Ensure Privacy and Confidentiality:** Some LGBTQ+ families may be cautious about how much they share. Respect family privacy and avoid singling out students or families based on identity.

Be Diligent About Addressing Biased-Based Bullying

In the last year, there has already been a significant uptick in anti-LGBTQ+ motivated violence, harassment, and bullying in K-12 schools. Sadly, this is likely to increase in the coming year. Educators and administrators should be diligent in their efforts to address biased-based bullying and keep all students safe.

Resources on addressing bias-based bullying:

- + HRC's Welcoming Schools [Bullying Resources, Booklists and Lessons](#)
- + HRC's Welcoming Schools and Anti-Defamation League's [Centering Youth Voices: Addressing Identity-Based Bias](#)

For those with the capacity to do more, here are ways you can engage and support your students.



Amplify LGBTQ+ Support Resources:

- + [The 988 Lifeline](#) - call, text, or chat: 988lifeline.org
- + [The Trevor Project](#) - 24/7 crisis counseling
- + [TrevorSpace](#) - LGBTQ+ affirming online community for 13-24 year olds
- + [Trans Lifeline](#) - connecting trans folks to resources and communities of support.
- + [CenterLink's Database of Local LGBTQ+ Centers & Programs](#) - find a local LGBTQ+ center or program for support and community
- + [PFLAG](#) - support of family members of LGBTQ+ people with local chapters across the country
- + [Q Chat Space](#) - online moderated chat for LGBTQ+ youth ages 13-19
- + [imi Guide](#) - resources for LGBTQ+ youth by LGBTQ+ youth



Be Aware of Signs & Symptoms of Suicidality & Mental Health Distress:

- + [The Trevor Project - Resources for Talking About Suicide](#)
- + [Active Minds - Signs & Symptoms](#)
- + [Mental Health American - Helping Someone Else](#)



Hold Space for LGBTQ+ Students & Families to Process: Provide a safe and affirming space for LGBTQ+ and allied students to share their concerns, fears, and anxieties about the recent election. Ensure you amplify resources for all students, but allow them to lead the discussion. Teach students self-advocacy skills, helping them articulate their needs and boundaries with confidence. Practice scenarios with them or provide language they can use to assert themselves respectfully.



Visible Signs of Pride: Show your support visibly by displaying recognizable symbols of Pride in your classroom, if accessible, or on your personal items like water bottles or laptop bags. Common options include the Welcoming Schools [lanyard](#), a rainbow pin, a coffee mug, stickers on your reusable water bottles, or other noticeable items in your classroom. Always defer to your building and district policies before adhering permanent stickers to school property.