

What is a Gay-Straight Alliance?

A Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) is a student-initiated and student-run club in a public or private school. The goal of a GSA is to provide a safe, supportive environment for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning (LGBTQ) and straight ally youth to meet and discuss sexual orientation and gender identity issues, and to work to create a school environment free of discrimination, harassment, and intolerance. (GSA Network <http://www.gsanetwork.org/about-us/faq>)

Why do straight youth become members of GSAs?

Straight youth are often members of GSAs because they have lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) family or friends. Straight youth who have been perceived as LGBT join to help stop harassment and intolerance in school. Some straight youth are involved because they see ending homophobia and transphobia as an important civil rights and human right issues. (GSA Network <http://www.gsanetwork.org/about-us/faq>)

Can GSA student clubs be banned from school?

No. GSAs cannot be banned if another non-curricular student clubs are allowed to exist at the school. The Federal Equal Access Act and the First Amendment of the US Constitution establish the requirement of equal treatment of all non-curriculum related clubs regardless of the content of speech at the club meetings. (GSA Network <http://www.gsanetwork.org/about-us/faq>)

What impact do GSAs have on the school climate?

Anecdotal evidence indicates that GSAs can greatly improve the school climate for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning students and their allies. GSAs that conduct student and teacher sensitivity training typically see a decrease in slurs, name-calling, and harassment following their advocacy efforts. GSAs also create safe spaces for students to meet and socialize in a harassment-free environment. (GSA Network <http://www.gsanetwork.org/about-us/faq>)

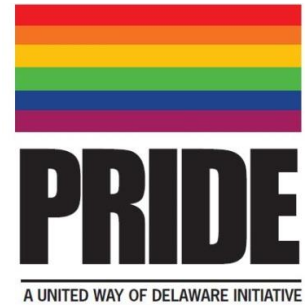
Why is it important to prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender?

Much of the harassment that occurs in schools, such as name-calling, is the result of gender non-conformity. For example, a female may be called “dyke” or “lesbo” not because of her actual sexual orientation but because she wears boyish clothing or likes to play sports. Similarly, a male may get called a “fag” or “homo” because his mannerisms are perceived as “effeminate” or he is in a dance class. Students who are transgender-identified also get harassed in schools. (GSA Network <http://www.gsanetwork.org/about-us/faq>)

Working to Improve the Lives of LGBTQ Youth and Adults

Facebook Group – UWDPRIDE

<http://uwde.org/affinity-groups/pride-council>



What is a Gay-Straight Alliance?

How can I obtain help in setting a GSA or similar student group?

Please contact Big Brothers Big Sisters of Delaware <http://bbbsde.org/> and ask to speak to a LGBTQ Case Manager 302.998.3577.

GLSEN Jump-Start Guide <http://glsen.org/jumpstart> This resource is for new and already-established Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) or similar clubs. Learn how to establish or re-establish your group, identify your mission and goals, and assess your school's climate.