

Day of Silence

April 10th, 2026

National Organizing Call Tool Kit

Day of Silence History

2026 marks the 30th year of the first Day of Silence. Originally held by students at the University of Virginia, in response to the bullying and harassment of LGBTQ+ students, it has grown to a national day of action pushing back against the silencing of intersectional LGBTQ+ youth and the erasure of their experiences.

A Youth-Centered Action led by youth across the nation centered on:

- Silent protest as a form of resistance
- Youth breaking the silence to show their power
- Adults supporting youth and their chosen ways to honor Day of Silence

Silent Protest Examples:

- The Silent Parade (1917)
- Kaepernick's Knee (2016-2017)
- NOH8 Campaign (2008-present)
- Day of Silence (1996-present)

Back to Silence

In our deepening cultural and political divide, LGBTQ+ students are more directly targeted than ever before. From harmful legislation to erasing LGBTQ+ history from school curriculum, it is now more important than ever to take a step back and let our communities know what it feels like when we are stripped of our voices.

2026 Calls to Action

- Youth
 - Take a vow of silence
 - Host a "Break the Silence" event.
 - Ideas - Rallies, Social Events, Social Media, teach in, etc.
 - Post why you're participating on social media, using the hashtag #dayofsilence.
- Adults
 - Take a vow of silence in solidarity with youth
 - Support youth actions and events
 - Set an automated away email reply explaining why you're silent today and link to glisten.org/dayofsilence.
 - Post why you're participating on social media, using the hashtag #dayofsilence.
 - Support Glisten via time, talent, and/or donation

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Youth Organizing

Getting Organized and Answering the Call to Action

- How can your community get organized and respond to the call to action?
- How can you work with other student leaders to choose the right approach for your context, community, capacity, & goals?

Assess your **CONTEXT & COMMUNITY**

- Does your school have a GSA?
 - YES
 - Is it a group of mostly LGBTQ+ youth & allies?
 - More of a diverse coalition?
 - NO
 - Are there other student leaders who would be interested in working together for DOS?
- Know the laws & policies (school, district, & state)
 - Are there any laws that uphold the rights of LGBTQ+ students specifically?
 - Are there any laws that present a challenge?

Assess your **CAPACITY**

- What is the culture of student action at your school?
 - Have there been other actions in recent memory?
 - Have you or anyone else organized Day of Silence before? What can be learned?
 - What is each person's work capacity?
 - What resources and tools do you all already have access to?
 - What role do you want to play throughout the day?

Goal Setting

- Short Term
 - What do you want your school community to **know or do** as a result of your silence?
- Long Term
 - What structural changes are still needed?
 - What are your asks of school leadership?
 - Comprehensive Policies
 - Inclusive Curriculum
 - Supportive Educators
 - Student Voice & Leadership

Adult Allies

- Communicating with your grownups and guardians at home
- What is the role of teachers and other trusted adults in school buildings?
- Should your student leadership talk directly with school administration?
- Adult allies in the community

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Educator Organizing

The Role of Educators During and After Day of Silence

Day of Silence is a student-led action that raises awareness about the silencing and erasure of LGBTQ+ people.

Educators play a key role in:

- Protecting student safety and dignity
- Responding to challenges that may arise
- Turning a symbolic moment into ongoing support for LGBTQ+ students

How can your community get organized and respond to the call to action?

- How can you work with other student leaders to choose the right approach for your context, community, capacity, & goals?

Protection does not mean control.

- Silence is the protest.
- Safety is the priority.

Educators help create conditions where students can participate without harm or retaliation.

From Symbol to Strategy

Building Ongoing Support

- Day of Silence is one action, not the entirety of the work.

After Day of Silence, what questions might students be asking without saying them?

- About safety
- About belonging
- About policy or visibility

What is one action educators could support in the next 30 days?

- GSA support
- Staff learning or discussion
- Policy or practice review

Reflection and Commitment

- Whose participation in Day of Silence might feel most vulnerable in your school?
- What is one action adults can take to reduce that risk?
- What educators do after Day of Silence determines whether students feel supported or silenced.

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Other Considerations

Safety & This Political Moment - Centering Safety is key to Day of Silence Success.

- If school is not a safe space, you hold DoS programming outside of the school day.
- If you cannot be silent all day, can you be silent during social times (i.e. passing period, lunch, etc.)?
- Digital Participation - use social media as opposed to in person avenues - change profile pics, “Break the Silence” with a post/ story, etc.
- Educators - even if you cannot take part in DoS. Think of other ways to show support. Having materials out on a table, choosing not to call on students taking part in DoS, etc.

Accessibility & Day of Silence - All Students Should have Access to Participate.

- Have options for how to “Break the Silence.” It does not need to be auditory. It can be written, via art, through movement, etc.
- “Low stakes participation” not all folks can be silent for long periods of time - focus silence on social times (passing periods, breaks, lunch, etc.)
- Events - make sure physical space is accessible to all participants, have a “chill space” to aid with sensory needs, offer a variety of activities, etc.



Visit glisten.org/dayofsilence for more information, digital resources, Glisten materials store, and to watch the National Organizing Call.