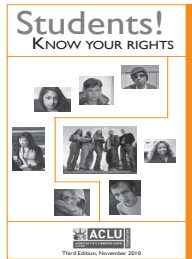


## Students! Know Your Rights: Order Form

Want to know more about your rights? Check out [www.acluohio.org](http://www.acluohio.org) to download a new edition of our Students! Know Your Rights guide, which includes important information on:

- Freedom of speech and expression
- Religious freedom
- Search and seizure
- Discrimination
- Privacy
- Discipline



Please send \_\_\_\_\_ copies of *Students! Know Your Rights* at \$2 each (25 or more, \$1 each). Shipping is \$2 for orders less than \$10, free shipping for orders \$10 or more. For more information, please call (216) 472-2220. Download the guide for **free** at [www.acluohio.org](http://www.acluohio.org).

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City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable and return to:  
ACLU of Ohio Foundation 4506 Chester Ave.,  
Cleveland, OH 44103 or fax to (216) 472-2210.

## Starting a Gay/Straight Alliance in Your School



ACLU of Ohio  
4506 Chester Ave.  
Cleveland, Ohio 44103-3621  
(216) 472-2200



[www.acluohio.org](http://www.acluohio.org)

**Gay/Straight Alliances, or GSAs,** are student-led school clubs that aim to create a safe, supportive, welcoming and accepting environment for all youth, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

### **Your Right to Start a GSA**

Under federal law, there are two types of clubs in public high schools: curricular clubs (that relate directly to things taught in school, like Math Club) and non-curricular clubs (like Key Club or Chess Club).

The federal Equal Access Act says that if a public high school allows students to form any non-curricular clubs at all, then it must allow students to form any non-curricular clubs they want. The school also must treat all non-curricular clubs equally.

### **Steps to Starting a GSA**

**1. Know your purpose.** Under the law, you don't have to have a reason to start a non-curricular club, but it's important to be able to explain why you want a GSA to people who oppose you or who want to know more about the club.

**2. Find out your school's rules for starting a club.** Get a copy of your student handbook, and look up your school's requirements for student organizations so that you can be sure to follow the rules carefully.

**3. Find a faculty advisor or sponsor.** Almost all schools require that clubs have faculty advisors or sponsors. Even if your school doesn't, it's not a bad idea to have one. Ask a teacher who has shown herself or himself to be supportive of LGBT students to sponsor your GSA.

**4. Inform the administration of your plans.** Talk to your principal or assistant principal and let him or her know that you plan to

start a GSA. A supportive administrator can really help move things along. If he or she says that a GSA won't be allowed, ask why so that you can prepare yourself to address his or her concerns, and tell him or her that preventing a GSA from forming is against the law under the federal Equal Access Act.

**5. Prepare and turn in any necessary paperwork.** Make sure you follow the rules thoroughly and correctly. Keep dated copies of any forms or other paperwork, and keep notes on when and to whom you turned them in as well as any conversations you have with school officials about starting the club.

**6. Start meeting!** If your school turns you down, tells you that you need to change the name of your GSA, or tries to place restrictions on the GSA that it doesn't place on other clubs, you should contact the ACLU. We might be able to help!

**For more tips, visit [www.aclu.org/lgbt-rights\\_hiv-aids/tips-starting-gsa](http://www.aclu.org/lgbt-rights_hiv-aids/tips-starting-gsa).**

