

# Planning **NO NAME-CALLING WEEK** in Your School: A Guide

## Why was No Name-Calling Week created?

Research conducted by GLSEN (the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network) continues to highlight the prevalence of biased language, name-calling and bullying in U.S. schools. In one GLSEN study of school climate, elementary school students and teachers reported frequent use of disparaging remarks like “retard” and “that’s so gay” in their schools and classrooms<sup>1</sup>. Another GLSEN study found that in the course of a single school year, two-thirds of teens reported being verbally or physically harassed because of their perceived or actual appearance, gender, sexual orientation, gender expression, race/ethnicity, disability or religion with most teens also reporting that they heard students making negative or offensive remarks related to these characteristics in their schools<sup>2</sup>. It is clear that name-calling is a problem.

In partnership with Simon and Schuster Children’s Publishing, GLSEN created No Name-Calling Week (NNCW) in 2004 in an effort to support educators’ attempts to address issues of bullying, name-calling and bias in their schools. At its core, NNCW exists to ensure that all students feel safe and respected and develop respectful attitudes and behaviors.

Since its inception, the NNCW website has provided a set of tools to help educators design a NNCW that’s right for their school. In 2007 the National Association of Elementary Principals worked with GLSEN to develop a set of lessons for the week. These lessons continue to be a core part of the complete NNCW toolkit. With feedback and ideas from educators across the county, GLSEN continues to add to this set of resources each year. This planner is designed to help educators utilize GLSEN’s NNCW tools to design and implement their school’s NNCW.

## Why organize a No Name-Calling Week in your school?

There are a variety of reasons why educators make the decision to organize and implement a NNCW in their school. It can be used for prevention as much as it can be used as an intervention. Some see NNCW as an opportunity for a mid-point of the school year reminder for students about expectations for respectful behaviors while others utilize the week to build upon school-wide efforts to create a yearlong climate of respect. Still others find NNCW an effective overall strategy for addressing specific school-based issues related to respect. In order to gain the maximum benefits of NNCW It is important for educators to recognize the intent they have for organizing the week in their school. As such, those thinking of planning a local NNCW should follow the tips and steps described below.

### KNOW YOUR SCHOOL AND YOUR STUDENTS

What concerns exist in your school around issues of name-calling, bullying and bias? In *The Misfits*, the book that inspired the creation of NNCW, the characters work together to create a No Name-Calling Day in their school. Establishing a NNCW can be a great activity for a professional learning community or a committee. Begin the planning process by engaging your colleagues in conversations to share observations of student behaviors and language and student attitudes around difference while identifying school practices that may promote these (either positively or negatively) or that may fail to address them. Consider questions such as:

- What types of harmful language do we hear students use in your school?
- What do educators in our school do when students use such harmful language?

- How do educators in our school use such moments as opportunities for learning?
- Do students know what to do when such moments take place?
- Do students in our school know about and apply “up-stander” behaviors when others are called names?
- In what ways do we model respectful behaviors and language for students?

Using the Name-Calling and Verbal Bullying Student Survey found on the NNCW website can provide additional data for you and your colleagues to use as you develop your plan. The survey is also a great way for students to begin to think about the issues themselves and the results can even be used as a math lesson on data!

### SET GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Once you have critically examined your own school, consider what you want students to learn and the skill building you want to provide for them so that they apply these to their every day interactions with peers, teachers and others in the school setting. Consider all students in your goals, not just those for whom you may have concerns. Goals might include:

- Incidents of name-calling will decrease by \_\_\_\_%
- Students will engage in “up-stander” behaviors in \_\_\_\_% of all name-calling incidents.
- All students and teachers will use a common vocabulary and apply a shared set of expectations for respectful language.

Setting specific objectives will help you choose the most appropriate activities for your NNCW. These might include:

- Students will identify ways that words can be used to hurt others.
- Students will identify ways that words can be used to help everyone feel respected.
- Students will create word banks of hurtful and helpful words.
- Students will apply “safe” strategies to incidents of name-calling and bullying.

### DESIGN YOUR NNCW

The NNCW website has a menu of possibilities for creating the most effective NNCW for your school. Besides lessons, you will also find ideas for school-wide activities on the site. It is important to note that not every school will do NNCW the same way, and as you set new goals and objectives each year, you will probably find reasons to modify your school’s NNCW each year. Choose activities that relate to your goals and objectives.

Many educators have found the findings from the year one and year four evaluations of No Name-Calling Week to be useful in selecting lessons and other activities for their school’s NNCW observation. The evaluations can also help build an evidence-based rationale for organizing a NNCW. For example the Year One Evaluation indicates the effectiveness of NNCW. Fewer students reported witnessing name-calling in their school, from about 94% of students prior to NNCW to about 80% of students at the end of the year in the schools studied.

Be sure to include ways to involve parents/caregivers and other community members in your NNCW. Let them know what you are doing and why you are doing it as well as what you hope all students will learn from your school’s NNCW. Invite parents to join you if possible and/or extend learning opportunities to the home.

You may also want to consider including school-wide activities such as assemblies, playground games (such as the one used in the NNCW Physical Education lesson), or creation of hallway or lunchroom displays of student slogans, writing and artwork. As visual reminders and sources of individual and collective pride, these kinds of activities can help promote the kind of climate you may be seeking to develop. GLSEN provides opportunities for your school and students to earn national recognition for such work. See the NNCW website for details.

### IMPLEMENT AND OBSERVE

Beyond implementing your plan, it is important that students see you and all of the adults in the school community as active participants in creating a climate of respect. As with any learning opportunity, observing your students as they engage in NNCW activities can help you assess their understanding, redirect your instruction as needed and respond to questions so that the lessons learned and skills developed during NNCW can be applied all year long.

## LOOK BEYOND NO NAME-CALLING WEEK

As with any learning activity, it is important to provide closure so that students can attach personal meaning and relevance to what they have learned. It is also important for you and your colleagues to take a moment to recognize the important work in which you have engaged and articulate what you learned from your students and your own engagement with them around these issues. Think about and discuss the following questions with your colleagues:

- What did you notice about your students as they engaged in this learning?
- Are there skills that need to be further reinforced or developed?
- What was it like to teach lessons about respect?
- What can you bring forth from the week and do more regularly?

In addition to resources that help educators to support days of action (student-led advocacy initiatives) like Ally Week or the Day of Silence, GLSEN provides tools designed to support student learning across the school year. In addition to a comprehensive NNCW Bibliography of titles that address name-calling, bullying and bias there is Ready, Set, Respect! GLSEN's Elementary School Toolkit. Developed in partnership with the National Association of Elementary School Principals and the National Association for the Education of Young Children, Ready, Set, Respect! provides three sets of thematically developed and grade-span specific (K-2 or 3-5) lessons aligned with both Common Core and McRel standards.

## CONNECT WITH GLSEN

GLSEN continually develops evidence-based K-12 resources designed to help educators create safe, respectful and affirming schools for all. Visit [glsen.org](http://glsen.org) to learn more and register for our growing network of educators.



Ally Week



DAY of SILENCE



ThinkB4YouSpeak

*Unheard Voices*

*An LGBT History Resource*

<sup>1</sup> GLSEN and Harris Interactive (2012). *Playgrounds and Prejudice: Elementary School Climate in the United States, A Survey of Students and Teachers*. New York: GLSEN.

<sup>2</sup> Harris Interactive and GLSEN (2005). *From Teasing to Torment: School Climate in America, A Survey of Students and Teachers*. New York: GLSEN.

# No Name-Calling Week Annual Planner

SCHOOL/CLASSROOM GOAL(S):

DAYS	OBJECTIVE(S)	ACTIVITIES
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		