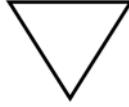


## Letter from a GSA

*A friend of Safe Schools Coalition's GSA sent his school's administration a lovely letter asking for some concrete protections and thanking them for what they have done to date. Here it is (edited for confidentiality) as an example of what a GSA might do if the problems at their school are not reaching resolution after verbal attempts.*



Dear \_\_\_\_\_ High School Administration,

March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2008

We, the members of the \_\_\_\_\_ Gay Straight Alliance (GSA), are writing to the administration today in order to express our concerns regarding the safety of students and the learning environment at \_\_\_\_\_. It has come to our attention that anti-Gay Straight Alliance hostility and anti-LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) bias from \_\_\_\_\_ students has manifested itself in the form of vandalism and the outright targeting of Gay Straight Alliance members and other students.

We thank district policy on code of conduct specifically outlining a zero-tolerance policy on graffiti, demeaning slurs, and name-calling on the basis of sexual orientation. We are writing to the administration to communicate our concerns for the safety of, and of a safe learning environment for all \_\_\_\_\_ students.

Some specific examples of anti-Gay Straight Alliance hostility that have been reported include but are not limited to the following:

1. Our main concern is that GSA posters are consistently vandalized, ripped down, and ripped up when they are in high-risk locations such as the \_\_\_\_\_. We have lost over 18 posters since September 2007.
  - a. GSA posters have been spit upon in the \_\_\_\_\_ near the staff workroom – and are actually still visible as of 3/11/08.
  - b. A prized and highly decorated GSA poster had a large cardstock genitalia taped on it in the \_\_\_\_\_ across from the security office on February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2008. This act was clearly premeditated, as the offending cardstock was obviously constructed beforehand with the specific intent of defacing the poster. We removed the cardstock and contacted Ms. \_\_\_\_\_.
  - c. The same poster near the security office on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2008 had glue splattered on it, and the following day it was forcefully removed along with three others by unknown students.
    - i. We feel that the targeting against GSA posters is to intimidate and isolate members and supporters of the GSA in the \_\_\_\_\_ community.
2. Bathroom vandalism and targeting such as:
  - a. “\_\_\_\_\_ is a faggot and should die” on the bathroom wall in the \_\_\_\_\_ (10/07).
  - b. “\_\_\_\_\_ is an anorexic dykie bitch” in the girls’ bathroom in the \_\_\_\_\_ (10/07).
  - c. “\_\_\_\_\_. sucks cock” on a B hall bathroom stall (11/07).
3. Members have been pushed, tripped, kicked, spit upon, punched, and shoved immediately following their being openly recognizable as members of the GSA or LGBT and allied community at \_\_\_\_\_.
4. A prominent Gay Straight Alliance member was sexually harassed by students who made provocative and sexually demeaning comments in the B hall bathroom during the week of March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2008.
5. Outright cyber bullying against \_\_\_\_\_ students who are open about belonging to the \_\_\_\_\_ Gay Straight Alliance by fellow students on popular social networking sites such as Myspace, Facebook, and YouTube.

The \_\_\_\_\_ Gay Straight Alliance appreciates your past efforts in ensuring a safe learning environment for all students. We are eternally grateful for the teacher training, the school-wide climate survey, the compassion expressed by \_\_\_\_\_ staff, and renewed commitment in the form of teachers signing ally pledges and hanging up safe zone fliers. We applaud this vast improvement and commitment to a safer \_\_\_\_\_.



However, we are suggesting that the \_\_\_\_\_ Administration take further action in resolving this unfortunate matter. We are proposing that \_\_\_\_\_ amend school policy (in reference to group posters) and release a public statement denouncing the vandalism of property of any students, or groups of students, including the Gay Straight Alliance. We recommend that the administration release a PA announcement, and either a letter to the parent newspaper, or the student newspaper. We can work with the administration in providing any help or services the administration may need to accomplish this goal in ensuring the stand against harassment is clear. Our hope is that the \_\_\_\_\_ Administration can proclaim that this type of hate and injustice is not tolerated at \_\_\_\_\_ in any possible way.

We understand that we will continue to work together to make \_\_\_\_\_ a safe place to learn for all students, and we hope that \_\_\_\_\_ can only grow into a more understanding and compassionate school. We really need the administration as an ally in order to promote a safer \_\_\_\_\_. Without the administration backing and supporting targeted students the goal of a less hostile and more respectful \_\_\_\_\_ will fail.

Lastly, we have also included a summary of the survey results for the class of 2008 and the class of 2009. We look forward to meeting with the administration to discuss our request for a safer \_\_\_\_\_.

With warm regards,

\_\_\_\_\_  
GSA President

\_\_\_\_\_  
GSA Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
GSA Vice President

\_\_\_\_\_  
GSA Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
GSA Advisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
GSA Advisor

Agreeing GSA Members:

#### Resources and References:

Students Rights and Responsibilities – Code of Conduct and Bias Free School Policy Statement  
Revised Code of Washington 28A.300.285  
National Education Association  
<http://www.nea.org/schoolsafety/glb.html>  
Washington State Human Rights Commission  
Wadington v. Holmdel Township Board of Education  
<http://www.hum.wa.gov/Sexual%20Orientation/wadington.html>  
Safe Schools Coalition  
<http://www.safeschoolscoalition.org/blackboard-law&policy.html>