

How to Start a SASH Club



Students Against Sexual Harassment

How to Start a SASH Club

Welcome! We are so glad that you want to start a SASH Club and join other youth across the country in doing the important work to end sexual harassment and assault. There are so many ways to run a SASH Club, and we look forward to hearing about yours. This guide offers suggestions to get started, but you and your peers are in control. We hope your club will be an inclusive, welcoming place where youth who care about this issue can make a difference. Let us know how it is going or how we can help at www.sashclub.org or info@sashclub.org.

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Part 1: What is SASH Club?

SASH Club – Students Against Sexual Harassment — is a national program providing free, ready-to-use tools and resources to empower youth to end sexual harassment and assault in their schools and communities.

SASH Club brings together peers — of all genders, races, ethnicities, and orientations — to educate themselves and others about sexual harassment and assault, support survivors, and make real change.

SASH Club tools are for use in schools, youth organizations, community groups, scouting, and youth faith-based organizations. All materials are free and ready to download immediately, with no registration. ***SASH Club tools are for everyone.***

Anyone can start a SASH Club chapter or freely download any of the educational SASH Club Power Topics presentations without starting a chapter.

To learn more about SASH Club after reading this guide, contact us at www.sashclub.org or info@sashclub.org.

Part 2: Why Start a Local SASH Club Chapter?

SASH Club is a place where youth can ask questions, share opinions, support one another, and make friends — all while working together to help end sexual harassment and assault in their school and community.

SASH Club is designed for youth aged 13 years and older. It may be hosted by a school, youth organization, community group, scouting or a youth faith-based organization, or have no connection to any organization. You can even form a virtual SASH Club and organize completely online.

After you launch a SASH Club with friends, you can:

- Lead club meetings
- Share SASH Club Power Topics
- Promote discussion
- Brainstorm activities to educate others
- Take action to make positive change in your community

SASH Club chapter leaders can choose from the many downloadable SASH Club Power Topics presentations to further the discussion about ending sexual harassment and assault. Use our suggested order or choose the topics most important to you. Your club can organize activities to share what you've learned with others and take action to make positive change in your community.

Part 3: How to Start a SASH Club

If you want to start a SASH Club chapter, initiate the conversation with others in your school or group. Launching a SASH Club with a team will enable you to split up tasks and share ideas.

In addition to talking to friends about starting a SASH Club chapter, consider reaching out to those in youth organizations or other school clubs that empower students to take action -- to find others who are likely to be interested in working to end sexual harassment and assault in your school and community. A SASH Club is for youth of all genders, races, ethnicities, and orientations.

We encourage you to register your SASH Club at www.sashclub.org to receive important updates and news, but registration isn't required to start a SASH Club or use the materials.

In addition to resources provided below to start a SASH Club, you can also visit www.sashclub.org for ready-to-use resources to promote your club, such as:

- **Introductory Presentation:** For use at a student club open house or to post online to announce your SASH Club chapter and recruit members
- **Flyer:** To announce your SASH Club chapter and recruit members

The Role of Adult Advisors in a SASH Club

At SASH Club you and your peers take ownership of creating your own dialogue around sexual harassment and assault.

We recommend you recruit one or more adult advisors for your SASH Club chapter to support activities and to guide use of the SASH Club Power Topics presentations. They can also help with launching the club, if you wish. The involvement of your adult advisors may depend upon the ages of the club members, where the chapter is hosted, and the goals of the club.

Adult advisors can be parents, school staff, counselors, young adult or college-age mentors, or members of the community.

NOTE: All SASH Club adult and faculty advisors should be aware of their state laws defining "mandated reporters," so that they and you are clear on any obligations they may have to report suspected child abuse and possibly child-on-child sexual misconduct to a state child protective services hotline or to law enforcement.

If your club includes an adult advisor with mandated reporter obligations, the club should review strategies that include use of hypotheticals (“what if” or “suppose” statements) for youth sharing details about specific situations. See the SASH Club Power Topics presentation on Confidentiality for more information on this.

Starting a SASH Club in a School

You may want to start planning a new SASH Club before the beginning of the new school year so you can participate in school-sponsored activities that promote student clubs, like a student club open house. But you can launch a SASH Club at any time.

Your school will make the decision to approve any new student club. Your school’s website or student handbook may provide instructions for forming and gaining approval for a new student club at your school.

For a SASH Club chapter hosted by a school, the school will likely require a faculty advisor. Faculty advisors are essential for gaining school approval to conduct activities at school. Consider reaching out to faculty members who take an interest in student issues and safety. You may want to secure the commitment of at least one adult advisor or the faculty advisor before seeking school approval of your SASH Club.

To seek approval, your school may require an application, or you may simply need to email a proposal to the school principal, dean of students, or another school administrator. In this email, you can describe the purpose of the club, membership, what the club intends to do, how often you plan to meet, and other details.

Guidance for the application form or the email correspondence:

- **Club Name:** SASH Club: Students Against Sexual Harassment, a local chapter of Students Against Sexual Harassment, a project of the national nonprofit organization Stop Sexual Assault in Schools
- **Club Purpose:** SASH Club will bring together students in our school to educate themselves and others about sexual harassment and assault, support survivors, and make real change. It will be a place where students can ask questions, share opinions, support one another, and make friends, all while working together to end sexual harassment and assault in our community.
- **Membership:** Open to any high school student; or you may choose to include students in both the high school and middle school/junior high school. [NOTE: This decision may depend on the size of your schools and community, the proximity of the schools, and the culture. To make a strong start, you can establish a SASH Club in the high school

first and then partner with younger students to launch a separate club in the middle school/junior high school; this way discussions and actions in each can be tailored to the age level and experiences of the participants. The two clubs can work together and share resources for activities in the schools and community. But you are free to choose whatever you, your team, and adult advisor determine is the best approach.

- **Conduct:** All club members are expected to listen openly, participate in good faith, and show patience and kindness towards one another. We promote respectful discussion and encourage questions from all points of view. Everyone has the opportunity to speak.
- **Meetings:** You may choose to meet weekly or once or twice a month. You may decide to hold your meetings after school or during the lunch period. You should mention that meetings may include one or more of the following activities: a presentation, discussion, a guest speaker, a planning session, or other related activities. You should also say that you plan to download and share materials from the national project Students Against Sexual Harassment’s website, www.sashclub.org, and that these are free for nonprofit, educational use.
- **Leadership:** Your club should have a group of co-leaders or officers. Your school may have requirements for selecting club leadership but you should expect to name at least a president and vice president. You may choose to have other positions such as treasurer, secretary, social media coordinator (you may wish to establish social media platforms specific to your chapter), community project coordinator, or student outreach coordinator, if needed by the club.
- **Club Identification:** You should mention that your SASH Club will be identified by the logo and colors of the national project Students Against Sexual Harassment which you will find at: www.sashclub.org
- **Adult Advisor:** You should identify the name(s) of the faculty advisor and/or the adult advisor. If not school staff, your adult advisor will need to get independent clearances to be a volunteer with a student club at the school. The school can advise them on how to do this.

****NOTE**** Your proposal should take a cooperative, positive tone. This is not the place to speak of any existing sexual harassment in the school of which you may be aware. The goal of the club should be described in the proposal as working to end sexual harassment and assault “*in the community.*” A neutral, non-adversarial tone will facilitate gaining approval.

In the Appendix you will find a ready-to-use sample letter to the principal or other school leader to request approval of your club. With a few copy-and-paste customizations that you add to the shaded areas it will be ready to use.

Starting a SASH Club Elsewhere

You can start a SASH Club chapter in a school, youth organization, community group, scouting or youth faith-based organization, or without an affiliation to any organization. The ways you may bring together peers to form a SASH Club to end sexual harassment and assault in your community are limitless.

How you form a SASH Club will depend on the requirements of the organization. You may follow the same basic principles as detailed in “Starting a SASH Club in a School” above, and adapt to your organization’s requirements.

Please email us at info@sashclub.org with any questions.

Club Organization / Sample SASH Club Constitution

You may organize your SASH Club in the way that is best for your group. Your school or sponsoring organization may require a constitution or charter to form a club. Even if a constitution is not required, outlining the club rules is recommended. This sample constitution may help you structure your club:

Membership

- Any student of the school will be allowed to join the club.

Leadership

- The club can be led by one youth leader or a group of co-leaders.
- Other potential youth positions include treasurer, secretary, and vice president if there are no co-leaders.
- New positions can be established as needed by the club. Possible positions: social media coordinator, community project coordinator, student outreach coordinator.
- The club will have at least one adult advisor.

Meetings

- Regular meetings will be structured around pre-determined discussion topics. Conversation will be allowed to grow organically, incorporating all points of view and questions.
- Meetings may also include a guest speaker, a planning session, club election days, or other activities.

- Conversation will be moderated to allow for multiple points of view. Participants will speak and listen respectfully. Participants will share only their own stories.

Amendments or By-Laws

- Constitutional amendments or by-laws can be proposed at any time as long as at least two members have discussed the proposed with one another; the proposing members must declare their proposal(s) to at least one club officer. Officer(s) may decide when to discuss the amendments as a club.
- Officers and the adult advisor will act as moderators in any club discussion of a proposed amendment or by-law. Discussions will be respectful and all opinions will be heard as time allows.
- Following discussion, there will be a secret vote on the proposal, with a majority (51%) vote among present club members passing them. If there is no majority, or there are still open questions, the club members can come to a consensus as to whether to continue discussion or to abandon the proposed amendment.

Club Identification

- The club will be identified by the logo and colors of the national project Students Against Sexual Harassment, found at: www.sashclub.org

Part 4: Using the SASH Club Power Topics

Each regular SASH Club meeting will generally include a pre-determined discussion topic.

The www.sashclub.org/sash-club-power-topics webpage provides a menu of SASH Club Power Topics: ready-to-use educational presentations. Choose from these slide-formatted .pdf presentations to share with your peers to start the discussion about how to end sexual harassment and assault. Then organize activities to make change in your community.

SASH Club Power Topics are free for anyone – not just SASH Club chapters – and ready-to-use. Preview and download one or more of them with no registration required. Use our suggested order or pick and choose any topic you want -- at any time. Click the preview icon for each topic to quickly review the slides and choose the presentations most relevant to your group.

NOTE: SASH Club Power Topics may include sensitive content that may be difficult to present and may possibly be triggering to some participants. You should preview all content with an adult advisor or other knowledgeable person before presenting to others.

Some SASH Club Power Topics presentations have downloadable presenter notes represented by the icon to the right of the presentation download button on the www.sashclub.org/sash-club-power-topics webpage.

Some presentations may have notations in places to show a short video. We recommend that you download in advance any video(s) accompanying a presentation from the www.sashclub.org/sash-club-power-topics webpage, using the icons on the webpage. Or, if you have connectivity when showing the presentation, you may go to the SASH Club YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCa-S865GXY2xeYU3v2GfcxA> where you will find all of the videos.

Our Terms and Conditions provide you free use of all of these materials for non-profit educational purposes. Please do not alter or revise any SASH Club Power Topics slides or use the SASH Club logo on additional content you may create.

Remember to speak with an adult advisor or other knowledgeable person for support and guidance before presenting any SASH Club Power Topics presentation.

Look for more SASH Club Power Topics coming soon. We want to hear your feedback on the topics now available as well as your ideas for future topics you want to see. Please email us at info@sashclub.org or use the Contact Us form at www.sashclub.org/contact-us/

Discussion When Sharing the SASH Club Power Topics Presentations

Most of the interactive SASH Club Power Topics presentations run about 30 minutes including discussion breaks built in for participants to share their thoughts and opinions.

The diverse views and experiences of the members of your group -- including those of all genders, races, ethnicities, and orientations -- are essential to a robust exchange of ideas. You should actively promote discussion, take as much time as needed to make sure everyone is heard, and consider the possible viewpoints of those not represented at the meeting.

Each presentation will provide questions to stimulate discussion, and you can also devise other questions to promote open discussion.

If your club includes an adult advisor with mandated reporter obligations, the club should review strategies that include use of hypotheticals ("my friend" or "what if" scenarios) for youth sharing specific situations. See the SASH Club Power Topics presentation on Confidentiality for more information on this.

Part 5: SASH Club Activities

Your club meetings need not be restricted to only presenting and discussing a topic. You can bring in a guest speaker, in person or virtually, to present any topic at a SASH Club meeting. This could be an educator from a local sexual assault or teen dating violence support center, a college student mentor, or a leader from a nearby SASH Club.

Your club should consider collaborating with other school clubs on one or more activities each year to share what you've learned with others and make a broader impact to end sexual harassment and assault.

Projects are exciting because members share good ideas, educate others, and bond with like-minded people. The results make a positive contribution and demonstrate the impact of the club on the culture and practices of your school or organization. Projects are also a memorable part of the SASH Club experience and can be a powerful way to attract new members.

Below are some sample club projects to get you started. Some are specific to particular SASH Club Power Presentations. This list is intended to stimulate your thinking: what other activities can you and your club members recommend? We want to hear about your innovative and successful activities; please share them with us at info@sashclub.org.

- **Create signage and print campaigns:** Gain your school or organization's approval to post posters and flyers educating students about what to do if experiencing or observing sexual harassment, including how to report it to the school and, if necessary, to law enforcement. Provide contact information for a local sexual assault resource center, domestic violence resource center, and information about SASH Club.
- **Devise public service announcements:** Gain approval to have information from one or more of the SASH Club Power Topics presentations included in the morning announcements to share with the entire school community.
- **Plan special events:** Create a campaign for National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month in February or Sexual Assault Awareness Monday in April, including speakers, signage, announcements, and other activities.
- **Develop social media campaigns:** Create a social media presence on popular platforms for your SASH Club, post notices about club activities and meetings, and share information from the SASH Club Power Topics.
- **Collaborate on projects:** Partner with other school clubs or a local community group advocating against sexual harassment and assault and host a fundraiser or other event.
- **Organize a high-visibility event:** Gain approval for your SASH Club chapter to lead a "consent event" week at your school or organization – an extended program including signage and announcements about how consent is defined and why it is important, using

information from the SASH Club Power Topics presentations. Post a huge sign at a central location with a pledge to ask for consent from others. Provide teal post-it notes and ask students them to sign or initial them and stick on the pledge.

- **Plan an all-school assembly:** Work with an adult to put on an assembly for the school on one or more SASH Club Power Topics presentations.
- **Reach out to local media:** Contact your local newspaper or radio or TV station with a story about what your chapter is doing and ask to be interviewed for publication or broadcast. Provide information on how other schools in your area might start a SASH Club.
- **Build solidarity:** Conduct a fundraiser and order custom teal silicone wristbands, buttons, or stickers imprinted with “SASH Club – Students Against Sexual Harassment” and distribute them to members of the school community to demonstrate that they stand against sexual harassment and support survivors. Or have club members make pinnable teal awareness ribbons to distribute.
- **Boost club identity:** Conduct a fundraiser and order custom “SASH Club – Students Against Sexual Harassment” t-shirts and encourage club members wear them on the same day to build awareness for the club chapter, to make a public stand against sexual harassment and assault, and to support survivors.
- **Build alliances:** Ally with other student groups or community organizations to explore areas of common interest.
- **Contribute to school culture:** Write an article for your school paper, create content for the school TV, radio, or website, or partner with students in the creative arts to use their talents to build awareness.
- **Expand the network:** Encourage club members to contact their peers in other schools and organizations to share SASH Club news and refer them to this guide or the SASH Club Power Topics presentations on the www.sasclub.org website.
- **Take it to the next level:** Contact the national SASH Club project at info@sashclub.org to collaborate on new SASH Club content.
- **Talk to the adults:** With your chapter’s adult advisor, reach out to your school’s parent teacher organization and/or local community parents’ group to share and build support for the goals of your club.
- **Talk Title IX:** With your chapter’s adult advisor, devise strategies to educate the school community about Title IX rights and protections.

Congratulations! You are on your way to starting your SASH Club, a place where your peers can ask questions, share opinions, support one another, and make friends -- all while working together to end sexual harassment and assault in the school and community.

Please contact us at info@sashclub.org with questions about starting a SASH Club and feedback on this guide or any of the other tools to help you start a SASH Club.

We wish to acknowledge the contributions of Chellie Labonete and Tori Siegel to the original edition of this guide.

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Appendix: Sample email to Principal or School Leader

Dear (principal or other school leader):

(I/We) would like to start a new student club for the (year-year) school year. It will be called SASH Club: Students Against Sexual Harassment, a local chapter of the national project Students Against Sexual Harassment.

Our SASH Club will bring together students in our school to educate themselves and others about sexual harassment and assault, support survivors, and make real change.

It will be a place where students can ask questions, share opinions, support one another, and make friends -- all while working together to end sexual harassment and assault in our community.

I look forward to your approval of this club soon so we may start preparing and recruiting members.

Can you kindly reply to confirm receipt of this email and let me know by (date: one week later) if I have permission to start this SASH Club by emailing me at (email address) and copying my (parent or guardian or adult advisor) at (email address).

I am eager to start planning for the club's activities, finding students interested in organizing the club, selecting meeting topics, and arranging for guest speakers. Below are key details about the club:

Membership: I propose that SASH Club should be open to any (high school student OR high school and middle school/junior high school student).

Meetings: Meetings will be (how frequently) (when) and (where). We will post the activities of our meetings. Our meetings may include one or more of these activities: a presentation, discussion, guest speaker, planning session, or other related activities. We plan to download and share materials from the national project Students Against Sexual Harassment's website, www.sashclub.org, which are free for nonprofit educational use.

Conduct: All club members will be expected to listen openly, participate in good faith, and show patience and kindness to one another. We will promote respectful discussion and encourage questions from all points of view. Everyone will have the opportunity to speak.

Leadership: The club will have a group of co-leaders or officers. We expect to have a president and vice president. We may have other positions such as treasurer, secretary, online media coordinator, community project coordinator, or student outreach coordinator if needed by the club.

Club Identification: Our SASH Club will be identified by the logo and colors of the national project Students Against Sexual Harassment which you will find at: www.sashclub.org

Adult Advisor: The club will include an adult advisor, proposed to be (trusted adult). (Trusted adult) (has/will get) independent clearances and can update those if needed. Please confirm that (trusted adult) can serve in the role of adult advisor. Also, if a separate faculty advisor is required, please let me know

If you have any questions, (I am/we are) glad to discuss this further, or, please email them to me and copy (parent or guardian or adult advisor) at (email address).

Thank you for your prompt consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

(Your Full Name, School, Grade, and Student ID Number)