



# How to Start a SASH Club



# Students Against Sexual Harassment

## How to Start a SASH Club

Welcome! We are so glad that you're starting a SASH Club and joining other youth across the country 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 your club. This guide offers suggestions to get started. 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's going or how we can help at [sashclub.org](https://sashclub.org) or [sashclub@ssais.org](mailto:sashclub@ssais.org).

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## Part 1: What is SASH Club?

Students Against Sexual Harassment (SASH Club) is an innovative program offering free ready-to-use resources that empower youth to end sexual harassment and assault in their schools and communities. It also offers resources to help youth protect themselves from sexual harassment and assault in their personal lives.

SASH Club is inclusive and welcoming. It brings together peers who share the goal of educating themselves and others about sexual harassment and assault, supporting survivors, and promoting change.

Anyone can freely download the SASH Club Power Topics presentations. They stimulate engaging, thoughtful discussions, sharing ideas, and taking positive action.

You can present them at school, in the community, in youth-serving organizations, and more.

## Part 2: Why Start a SASH Club?

SASH Club is a place for asking questions, sharing opinions, supporting each other, and making friends while working together to help end sexual harassment and assault in schools and communities.

SASH Club is appropriate for ages 12 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 discussions
- Brainstorm activities to educate others
- Take action to make positive change in your community

## Part 3: How to Start a SASH Club

Ask others in your school or group about starting a club. Consider reaching out to those in youth organizations or other school clubs.

We encourage you to tell us about your SASH Club at [sashclub.org](https://sashclub.org) to receive important updates and news, but it isn't required to start a SASH Club or use the materials.

You can also visit [sashclub.org](https://sashclub.org) for ready-to-use resources to promote your club, such as:

- **Introductory Presentation:** Use at a student club open house or to post online to announce your SASH Club and recruit members.
- **Flyer:** Announce your SASH Club and recruit members.

## The Role of Adult Advisors in a SASH Club

We recommend recruiting one or more adult advisors for your SASH Club to support activities and to guide use of the SASH Club Power Topics presentations. Advisors can be parents, school staff, counselors, young adult or college-age mentors, or members of the community. It's helpful to have a second advisor if one is unexpectedly unable to participate.

Adult advisors can also be advocates for starting a club at your school. The level of adult oversight may depend upon the ages of the club members, where the club is hosted, and the goals of the club.

**NOTE:** All SASH Club adult and faculty advisors should know their state laws defining the obligations of “mandated reporters,” who must report suspected child abuse and possibly child-on-child sexual misconduct to state child protective services or to law enforcement.

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

## Starting a SASH Club in a School

Consider 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 or activity fair. But you can launch a SASH Club at any time.

Review your school's instructions for forming and gaining approval of a new student club.

The school will likely require your club to have a faculty advisor. Consider reaching out to faculty members who take an interest in student issues and safety, gender equity, racial justice, GSA, etc. 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. If you have difficulty finding an advisor, reach out to advisors of similar clubs to get their help finding an advisor or advise your club too.

Your school might also require a club application or a proposal to a school administrator. In the application you can describe the purpose of the club, membership, what the club intends to do, how often you plan to meet, and other details.

## > Here is some guidance for the application form or the email correspondence:

- **Club Name:** SASH Club: Students Against Sexual Harassment, a project of the national nonprofit organization Stop Sexual Assault in Schools
- **Club Purpose:** SASH Club brings together students to educate themselves and others about sexual harassment and assault, support survivors, and promote change. It also provides information to help students stay safe off campus.
- **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 if your campus includes both middle and high schools. You could 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. The two clubs could work together and share resources for activities in the schools and community.
- **Conduct:** All club members are expected to listen openly, participate in good faith, and show patience and kindness towards each other. Promote respectful discussion and encourage questions from all points of view. Everyone has the opportunity to speak.
- **Meetings:** You could meet weekly or once or twice a month and hold meetings before or after school, or during the lunch period. Meetings may include a presentation, discussion, a guest speaker, a planning session, or other related activities. Explain that you plan to download and share materials from the Students Against Sexual Harassment website, [sashclub.org](https://sashclub.org), and that these are free for nonprofit, educational use.
- **Leadership:** 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 (if you establish social media accounts specific to your club), community project coordinator, or student outreach coordinator.
- **Club Identification:** Mention that your SASH Club will be identified by the logo and colors of the project Students Against Sexual Harassment at: [sashclub.org](https://sashclub.org).
- **Adult Advisor:** 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.

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**NOTE:** Your proposal should take a cooperative, positive tone, without mentioning any existing sexual harassment in the school. 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. Visit [Your Club Has the Right to Meet at School](#), National Youth Rights Association.

**The Appendix has a ready-to-use sample letter** to the principal or other school leader to request approval of your club. You can insert your own language in the shaded areas of the sample form.

**Your SASH Club has the right to meet at school!** If your school does not grant permission to start a SASH club, here are some steps you can take:

- Show your school the Equal Access Act in **Your Club Has the Right to Meet at School, National Youth Rights Association** and the Supreme Court **decision**.
- Check school policies to see whether you have met the requirements to start a club. If you have a faculty advisor, you can get help from a counselor, parents, district office, or other advocate. Write to the school board asking for assistance.
- Explain that SASH Clubs can help reduce sexual harassment and assault that students face at school and/or off campus, thereby increasing their safety and emotional well-being that is necessary for academic success. You can cite the CDC's recent **Youth Risk Behavior Survey** discussing the alarming rates of abuse students face.
- Explain that by allowing SASH Club and gender equity clubs, the school is demonstrating that it is responsive to students who wish to ensure they are treated respectfully and equitably both on and off campus by peers and adults.
- Let the school know that the SASH Club resources appear in the American Federation of Teachers Share My Lesson Library.

If unsuccessful, we would appreciate knowing. Please contact [sashclub@ssais.org](mailto:sashclub@ssais.org) or via our website contact [form](#).

You could hold your meetings nearby, off-campus. A library, church, synagogue, or other religious organization, community center, youth organization (like YWCA, YMCA) may have reservable meeting rooms. You could also partner with a private school or sexual assault response organization to use one of their spaces and invite them to participate. Be creative and enlist help from supportive adults.

## Starting a SASH Club Elsewhere

You can also start a SASH Club in a youth organization, community group, scouting or youth faith-based organization, or without an affiliation to any organization.

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 [sashclub@ssais.org](mailto:sashclub@ssais.org) with any questions.

## Club Organization / Sample SASH Club Rules

Organize your SASH Club in the way that is best for your group. We recommend agreeing on the club rules at your first meeting. Here are some ideas:

### Membership

- Any student at 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.

### Rule changes

- Changes to the club rules can be proposed at any time as long as at least two members have discussed the proposal with each other. These members must inform at least one club officer of the proposed changes. The officer may decide when the club will discuss them.
- Officers and the adult advisor will act as moderators in any club discussion. Discussions will be respectful, and all opinions will be heard as time allows.
- The club will vote on the proposed rule changes. If there is no majority, or there are still open questions, the club members can decide whether to continue discussion.

### Club Identification

The club will be identified by the logo and colors of the project Students Against Sexual Harassment, found at: [sashclub.org](http://sashclub.org).



## Part 4: Using the SASH Club Power Topics

You can choose from many SASH Club Power Topics presentations to further the discussion. Select the topics that most interest you. Your club can organize activities to share what you've learned with others and take action to make positive change in your community.

Preview and download one or more [SASH Club Power Topics](#) on the SASH Club Power Topics webpage. Use these slide formatted PDF presentations to start a discussion.

**NOTE:** SASH Club Power Topics may include sensitive content that may be difficult to present and may possibly be triggering to some participants. 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 as indicated on the [SASH Club Power Topics](#) webpage.

If the presentation contains video, we recommend that you download it in advance from the [SASH Club Power Topics](#) webpage. You can also find the videos on the [SASH Club YouTube channel](#).

All materials are free 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.

Look for more SASH Club Power Topics coming soon. We want to hear your feedback and your ideas for future topics. Please email us at [sashclub@ssais.org](mailto:sashclub@ssais.org) or use the website [Contact form](#).

## Discussion When Sharing the SASH Club Power Topics Presentations

Most of the SASH Club Power Topics presentations run about 30 minutes including discussion breaks.

The diverse views and experiences of your group are essential to a robust exchange of ideas. Each presentation contains questions to stimulate 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.



## Part 5: SASH Club Activities

Besides presenting and discussing a Power Topic, your club can bring in a guest speaker, in person or virtually, to present 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.

Consider collaborating with other school clubs on one or more activities each year to share what you've learned.

Projects are exciting because members share 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 [sashclub@ssais.org](mailto:sashclub@ssais.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 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 sign at a central location with a pledge to ask for consent from others. Provide teal post-it notes and ask students 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 club 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 of the club, 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 [sashclub.org](https://sashclub.org) website.
- **Take it to the next level:** Contact the SASH Club project at [sashclub@ssais.org](mailto:sashclub@ssais.org) to collaborate on new SASH Club content. Share your club’s news on the SASH Club website or social media.
- **Talk to the adults:** With your 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 adult advisor, devise strategies to educate the school community about Title IX rights and protections.

Check out additional activities listed on the [Power Topics webpage](#).

# Congratulations!

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

Please contact us at [sashclub@ssais.org](mailto:sashclub@ssais.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.

## 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.

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. SASH Club also offers resources that empower youth to protect themselves from sexual harassment and assault in their personal lives.

It will be a place where students can ask questions, share opinions, support each other, and make friends -- 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 Students Against Sexual Harassment's website, [sashclub.org](http://sashclub.org). These materials 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 at [sashclub.org](http://sashclub.org).

**Adult Advisor:** The club will include at least one 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)