



The Amber Flag Initiative

**Promoting Positive Mental Health
in Our Communities**

Information Booklet



Dear Amber Flag Team,

The Pieta Amber Flag initiative recognises the individual efforts of schools, companies and groups to create healthy and inclusive environments that support mental well-being. It unites these groups in their efforts to work together towards a happier, healthier Ireland and eradicates the stigma associated with mental health issues.

Inside this booklet you will find the step by step process to proceed with your amber flag application.

If you have any queries regarding anything outlined in this booklet please do not hesitate to contact the Pieta Training and Education Team at amberflag@pieta.ie or on **085 870 4830**.

We look forward to working with you on the promotion of positive mental health.

Step 1: Register your school for the Amber Flag Initiative

When you have read through the full document, please complete and sign the Amber Flag application document and return **that page only** to amberflag@pieta.ie.

This registers your school as beginning the Amber Flag Initiative process. The full Application Booklet should be submitted by the **19th March 2021**.

Step 2: The school must establish an Amber Flag Project Team

The school must establish an Amber Flag project team. The names of the team members shall be recorded in the Amber Flag Application Booklet.

The Amber Flag Team should consist of:

The co-ordinator: This must be a staff member of the school.

The Team: The team should comprise of a cross section of the school community but the majority must be students. For example, a student representative from each year group. Professionals such as Guidance Counsellors and SPHE teachers have an invaluable role to play and should be consulted prior to the formation of the committee, where possible.

It is up to each school to decide how the team shall operate. Records of meetings should be kept as evidence of the work of the team.

The terms of reference of the team should be to *Promote Positive Mental Health* in the school and should take cognisance of roles already in existence in the school.

Step 3: Audit of past and current school activities in the promotion of positive mental health

- ▶ The **AMBER FLAG** initiative aims to encourage schools to promote and actively bring about a culture change in the promotion of positive mental health within the educational system and other organisations.
- ▶ It enhances the already good work that is being done where mental health is concerned by offering an award.
- ▶ The Amber Flag will acknowledge these efforts and unite all schools in the promotion of **Positive Mental Health**.

This section is to allow the Amber Flag Team to look at:

- (1) What is our school already doing to promote positive mental health?
- (2) Where could the school improve their promotion of positive mental health?

Once established, the team shall prepare an audit of the activities and services in the school that promote an ethos of Positive Mental Health. Please see audit sheet in the Application Booklet.

Step 4: Goals & Objectives

Once the Amber Flag Team have audited/reviewed the current activities and services in existence in the school that promote an ethos of Positive Mental Health, it is time for setting this year's goals and objectives.

The team should identify a minimum of **3 main goals/tasks** to enhance the existing educational provision and support structures in the area of mental health promotion in the school. These should be achievable in the duration of one school year.

Amber Flag Initiative Requirements:

1. **Mental Health Awareness Day:** One goal/objective must be a mental health awareness day in the school.
2. **Fundraising Event:** One goal/objective must be a fundraising event for Pieta. The type of event is entirely up to the school, and is solely to support the mental health services we provide at Pieta.

The best ideas often emerge from the team itself but the following are some popular goals/tasks utilised by schools in previous years:

- Establish an Amber Flag Notice Board
- Publish a newsletter or add a piece into an existing newsletter to promote Amber Flag activities
- A Buddy Bench in the school yard
- Design a poster competition or an art project focusing on the Amber Flag/Mental Health
- Wellbeing Week in the school
- School Danceathon / football tournament
- Yoga/ Mindfulness activities in the school
- The Pieta Resilience Academy

Step 5: Submit Amber Flag Documentation.

This fully completed document, and any evidence pertaining to the above events, must be completed and submitted to amberflag@pieta.ie by the **19th March 2021** in order to be reviewed by the Education and Training Team.

Once the Education and Training Team are satisfied that you have completed the tasks, you will be awarded the Amber Flag Status.

The flag must be flown outside the school building in a conspicuous place, where it will convey the caring ethos of your school and the importance it places on Mental Health.

Important Information

It is up to the school to ensure any images that contain students have received parental consent prior to sharing with Pieta. In addition, any students who attend the Amber Flag event are the responsibility of the school, and must be supervised at all times by a school staff member.

Pieta shall not be held accountable or take any responsibility for the qualifications, content or themes delivered by external individuals or outside agencies in relation to promoting positive mental health through Seminars/Talks/Awareness Events under the remit of the Amber Flag Project. It is entirely the remit of each school to check the qualifications and appropriateness of each/any individual/group/ agency invited to speak to participants. It is entirely the remit of the school/group to check the qualifications and appropriateness of any individual/group/ agency invited to the school to deliver any workshops/training.

Retaining Amber Flag Status/Consecutive Applications

Whilst achieving an Amber Flag is a great accomplishment, the continuation and maintenance of Positive Mental Health Initiatives in schools is equally important.

As outlined in previous pages, the process for retention is similar with just minor differences.

As in previous years the school must:

- Elect a new team at the beginning of each school year. Some existing team members can stay on the team, however, it is important to try to get a good cross section of students in each year.
- You will need to submit a new application for each consecutive year.
- Goals/Targets must be set with new application. **HOWEVER** only two new goals/targets need to be set and achieved in each new application.
- Once you have achieved the targets you have set out, return your application to the Education and Training Team.
- Once reviewed, you will be awarded an Amber Flag Certificate for each year that you achieve your goals. This certificate should be displayed in a prominent place within the school to show this excellent achievement.

Guidelines for your Fundraising Event

As part of the Amber Flag remit you are required to carry out a fundraiser to benefit Pieta.

Remember fundraising is two-fold, it raises vital funds but, just as importantly, it raises awareness.

It is also a great away to get the whole school involved.

Below are some guidelines that under good governance and transparency must be adhered to:

- ▶ The event should not, by association, have the potential to adversely affect the image of Pieta or conflict with our mission and values.
- ▶ Text describing the work of Pieta must be approved by Pieta prior to use.
- ▶ All funds raised by your fundraiser should be passed on to Pieta at the earliest opportunity – within 8 weeks of the event – referencing *Amber Flag*. This is for security and insurance reasons as well as for transparency. A receipt will be issued for all funds received.
- ▶ Street collections require a Garda Permit. Pieta must be advised of the intention to apply for a permit prior to application. Sealed buckets are required for collections and a copy of the permit must be issued to all collectors.
- ▶ Door to door collections are not allowed.
- ▶ New web pages or Facebook pages using the Pieta logo or name cannot be created. Please advise if you need a copy of our logo.
- ▶ Your event can be added to the Events Page on the Pieta website by a member of the Fundraising Department.
- ▶ Pieta commits the organisation to the highest standards of good practice and to ensuring that all their fundraising activities are respectful, honest, open and legal. Fundraisers must at all times conduct themselves with integrity, honesty and trustworthiness. They should at all times act openly and in such a manner that donors are not misled.
- ▶ Please do not represent conflicting or competing interests without the consent of Pieta. The general public must, at all times, be treated with the utmost respect.
- ▶ Pieta will support your event by supplying Posters, flyers, leaflets, T shirts, collection buckets with secure lids and a letter of authority to fundraise on behalf of Pieta

Please email amberflag@pieta.ie for more information on how to register your fundraising event.