



Sample Goals & Activities

This document suggests sample goals and activities that you may find helpful when planning your Amber Flag journey.

Many ideas are based on the wonderful contributions of previous Amber Flag awardees. You can use them as inspiration for developing the mental health goals you feel would benefit your community most (having conducted your audit).

Some activities are more suited to younger children, while some are more suitable for secondary students, adults or staff. Please tailor activities to suit the needs and abilities of your community.

Holding either a Mental Health Awareness Day or Wellbeing Week is a required goal for both New and Renewal Applicants.

Holding a fundraiser (or joint fundraiser) for Pieta is a required goal for New Applicants.

All applicants must set one additional mental health goal.

While a Mental Health Awareness Day or Wellbeing Week is a required goal, the content of that day or week can be unique to your school or organisation. Similarly, with additional mental health goals, you can adapt activities or create your own. The aim is to promote positive mental health in a way that best meets the needs of your community.

Please see the Amber Flag Information Booklet for further information.

Sample Goals

Hold a Wellbeing Week to promote positive mental health and wellbeing in our community

Sample Activities/ Events

Sample activities held throughout wellbeing weeks (these activities can also be tailored to meet another goal):

- Conduct wellbeing survey with staff/ students/ parents/ participants
- Guided meditations
- Mindful colouring
- DEAR- Drop Everything and Relax
- Gratitude jar
- Random acts of kindness
- Thank you cards
- Yoga
- Identify your strengths activity
- Develop a wellbeing resource pack
- Wellbeing homework (given instead of written homework)
 - Gratitude journal- write/ say/ draw 3 things you're grateful for
 - Play your favourite game with a friend
 - Dance to a song you love
 - Give someone a compliment
 - Do something helpful or kind
 - Do 15 minutes of your favourite exercise, or sport or hobby
 - Do some breathing to help you relax (lots of resources on YouTube)
 - Walk the dog
 - Go for a bike ride
 - Help out in the garden

- Some schools also give wellbeing homework to parents/ guardians and staff during wellbeing week
- Ideas to promote staff wellbeing:
 - Thank you cards/ notes to staff from students/ service users
 - Weekly baking rota for staffroom treats
 - Anonymous self-care packages delivered between staff- similar to Secret Santa
 - Staff yoga/ mindfulness/ exercise classes
 - Wellbeing webinar/ speaker for staff
 - Staff shoutouts
 - Wellbeing journal/ planner- plan to include your favourite aspects of self-care in your week

Hold a Mental Health Awareness Day

Promote a culture of Mental Health Awareness in our community

Reduce stigma around Mental Health in our community

- Have an assembly focused on some aspect(s) of mental health awareness
- Suggest that interested teachers/ facilitators/ coordinators complete HSE National Office for Suicide Prevention approved training in safeTALK/ Understanding Self-harm (<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/mental-health-services/connecting-for-life/training/types-of-training/>)

- Suggest that interested teachers/ facilitators/ coordinators complete other relevant Continuing Professional Development (CPD) e.g., mindfulness training, Brain Calm, Incredible Years, Zones of Regulation, Jigsaw: One Good School, Supporting the Mental Health of LGBTI+ Young People etc.

Please also see 'Useful Websites' section below

- Engage in programmes such as the A Lust for Life Schools Programme (primary students) or Pieta's Resilience Academy (secondary students)
- Invite a guest speaker to speak on a mental health topic (please note that Pieta does not currently offer school talks, but this is something our Education and Training Team are looking at developing)
- Explore the concept of 'One Good Adult'
- Signposting- distribute contact details of services that can help in times of crisis (you can find these in your Application Booklet)
- Students/ service users create a video about mental health awareness based on what they feel are the most pressing issues
- Worry boxes to encourage anonymous sharing of worries and concerns- possibility of generalised lesson plans or discussions surrounding common anxieties identified
- Teach self-regulation techniques

Hold a fundraiser* to support Pieta's work and increase awareness of Pieta's services

**Please remember to register your fundraiser here:
<https://www.pieta.ie/register-your-fundraiser/>*

- Bake sale
 - Crazy Hair Day
 - Odd Sock Day- to celebrate diversity
 - Inside Out Day- clothes worn inside out to remind us that sometimes it helps to show what we're feeling on the inside
 - Fun run
 - Jumble sale
 - Collectively run/ travel a marathon
 - Pyjama/ Self-Care Day
 - Participate in Darkness into Light for Pieta - the event usually falls after the April closing date for application submissions. However, if you register and provide details in your Application Booklet, this will fulfil your fundraiser requirement for Amber Flag
- You can register here: <https://www.darknessintolight.ie>

A note on fundraising:

With cost of living in mind, we truly appreciate your efforts to fundraise. While all money raised is very gratefully received and supports Pieta's vital work, please do not feel pressure to raise very large amounts. Some schools previously asked for small voluntary donations on fundraising days or held staff fundraisers instead of a whole school/ organisation fundraiser where it was more appropriate. You can also hold a joint fundraiser. Funds raised can be shared between Pieta and another charity of your choosing.

Create a wellbeing slogan/ motto/ poster for our school/ organisation

- Run a competition or take a collaborative approach
- Winning slogan displayed in a prominent place as a daily visual reminder
- Design a poster/ collective mural based on the new slogan
- Art competition to explore different expressions of the slogan
- Decide on supporting actions and activities to embed new slogan into school/ organisational culture

Promote physical activity as an important part of positive mental health

- Explore how movement makes us feel good
- Incorporate 10-15 minutes more movement into each day
- Daily activities/ movement/ dance breaks e.g., Cosmic Yoga/ Go Noodle
- 'Bizzy Breaks' from the Irish Heart Foundation
Please see 'Useful Websites' section below
- Rainy day dance breaks
- Collectively walk/ cycle/ run/ travel the length of Ireland/ your county/ another country over a period of time
- Engage in a range of activities to appeal to all participants- not just sports!
- Step challenge/ hikes/ yoga/ outdoor activities for staff

Create a 'Buddy Bench'

- Allocate an area/ bench for children to sit and talk to develop friendships and promote inclusion
- Draw up instructions for using the Buddy Bench (e.g., when you sit on the Buddy Bench... / If you see someone sitting on the Buddy Bench... etc.)
- Ensure the concept is explored age-appropriately with different groups, revisited regularly and supported by staff on yard duty

Promote friendship and kindness in our community

Hold a Friendship Week

- Have students/ participants complete an anonymous friendship survey to assess feelings of connectedness/ issues around loneliness/ identify any concerns
- Introduce group playground games to include all at breaktimes during Friendship Week in the hope that they will be used as a basis for group play going forward e.g., Duck, Duck, Goose, What time is it Mr. Wolf?, Tip the Can etc.
- Older classes promoting inclusive yard games with younger classes during some break times
- Explore the qualities of a good friend
- Take part in Christmas Shoebox appeal

- Deliver/ send Christmas cards to local nursing home – www.carepack.ie is a valuable resource here
- Celebrate World Kindness Day (November 13th)
- Lesson plans/ talks on animal welfare
- 'Caught you being kind!' awards- specific small acts of kindness identified and celebrated
- Compliment circles
- Elect a kindness committee/ kindness monitors
- Secret acts of kindness/ kindness challenge
- Kindness Café at lunchtime/ before school/ work

Develop a mentoring programme

Promote friendship and support across age-ranges in our community

- Older students paired with younger/ incoming students- meet regularly to offer advice, information, and support (Secondary Schools)
- Buddy reading/ jigsaw-making/ yard game facilitation pairing older and younger children (Primary Schools)

Give students/ participants tools to help alleviate anxiety

Embed relaxation/ mindfulness/ resilience practices in our community

- Social stories/ lessons around what helps us to navigate anxiety, e.g.: physical activity, connection, sharing our worries etc.
- Teach a range of calming techniques so participants have a bank of resources to draw on when they feel overwhelmed e.g. breathing techniques, grounding exercises (e.g., the 5-4-3-2-1 method- <https://youtu.be/30VMIEmA114>)
- Ensure regular practice of techniques
- Develop pack of age-appropriate resources around mindfulness and meditation techniques for teachers or facilitators to utilise (many resources available on YouTube, e.g., Niall Breslin's Mindful Moments for Children for younger participants)
- Engage in programmes such as the A Lust for Life Schools Programme (Primary Schools) or Pieta's Resilience Academy (Secondary Schools)
- Invite a guest speaker to speak on a mental health topic (please note that Pieta does not currently offer school talks, but this is something we are looking at developing in the future)

Dedicate one day a week to promoting positive mental health e.g., Wellbeing Wednesdays/ Feel-Good Fridays

- Please see activities listed for Wellbeing Week/ Friendship Week

Develop a mentoring programme

Promote friendship and support across age-ranges in our community

- Explore a different theme/ concept monthly
- Include posters re. upcoming wellbeing events, positive quotes, kindness awards, photos of recent events etc.
- 'I feel happy when...' - pieces of art or writing about what helps us to feel good
- Gratitude Wall/ Tree
- Examples of positive self-talk

Hold an Anti-Bullying Week to promote tolerance, kindness and respect in our community

- Invite a speaker to discuss internet safety/ cyberbullying
- Conduct a monthly/ regular anonymous anti-bullying survey
- Some teachers undertake the FUSE programme:
<https://antibullyingcentre.ie/fuse/>
- Age-appropriate activities to promote your school's/ organisation's particular approach to tackling bullying

Promote diversity and inclusion

Make our school/ organisation a safe and welcoming place for all

Hold a Stand Up Awareness Week to promote inclusion

- Explore the concept of equality vs equity
- Explore and discuss neurodiversity
- Explore anti-racism- actively challenging racism in the community, the concept of allyship
- Explore LGBTQ+ awareness and the concept of allyship
- Inclusive Library: Ensure a diverse range of age-appropriate books is available in school/ staff libraries- by authors with various racial and gender identities and sexual orientations, about diverse experiences of life etc.
- Have a staff member/ external support staff teach some Irish Sign Language or Lámh to members of the school/ organisation/ community to support the diversity of needs around communication methods
- Promote respect, understanding, appreciation and inclusion through lesson plans, exploration of school/ organisational culture, role-play, discussion, story etc.
- Hold events to promote greater awareness of cultural diversity e.g. parent/ guardian coffee mornings, food tastings, intercultural baking days
- Inclusion of different cultural celebrations to recognise all members of the community
- The Yellow Flag Programme (www.yellowflag.ie) explores diversity, inclusion and racism

Spend more time in nature to encourage positive mental health

- Create a garden/ sensory garden
 - Learn about plants/ vegetables/ flowers
 - Learn what seeds need to grow
 - Plant seeds
 - Prepare beds
 - Paint stones/ create signs to decorate garden or label plants
 - Weed and water regularly
 - Harvest your vegetables and fruit
 - Learn about the wildlife that visits the garden
 - 'Incredible Edibles' is a useful resource here
- Include regular nature/ sensory walks in timetable
- Hold a Nature Day
- Sensory, play and reflective spaces on yard
- Incorporate outdoor time/ physical activity for staff into the working week

Useful Websites Recommended by Previous Amber Flag Awardees

- FUSE anti-bullying and online safety programme: <https://antibullyingcentre.ie/fuse/>
- Yoga and mindfulness for children: <https://cosmickids.com/>
- Mindfulness in schools: <https://www.mindfulnessmatters.ie/>
- Resources for various aspects of mental health: <https://schools.au.reachout.com/>
- Jigsaw schools' programmes: <https://jigsaw.ie/schools-hub/>
- A Lust for Life schools' programmes: <https://alfschools.com/>
- Useful resources for schools on kindness, gratitude and mental health: <https://www.twinkl.ie>
- For children experiencing loss following bereavement and separation: <https://www.rainbowsireland.ie/>
- Bizzy Breaks (from the Irish Heart Foundation): <https://irishheart.ie/schools/primary-schools/bizzy-breaks-for-active-school-week/>
- Mindfulness resources for children and adults: <https://www.mindfulteachers.org/>
- Connecting for Life training: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/mental-health-services/connecting-for-life/training/types-of-training/>
- Samaritans- resources for workplaces, prisons, schools, healthcare and military personnel - <https://www.samaritans.org/ireland/how-we-can-help/>
- Minding Your Wellbeing Programme for adults: <https://www2.hse.ie/healthy-you/minding-your-wellbeing-programme.html>

