



Information Booklet 2022 – 2023

Promoting Positive Mental Health in
Our Communities



Vision

Promoting positive mental health and well-being in communities through shared participation, knowledge, and empowerment.

1. Promoting Positive Mental Health

2. Enhancing inclusivity through teamwork and social support

Objectives

3. Reducing risk factors through increased awareness and education

4. Improving quality of life for those with mental health challenges

Dear Amber Flag Team,

The Pieta Amber Flag Initiative recognises the efforts of primary and secondary schools, Youthreach, third-level institutions, further education and training organisations, and clubs 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 contact the Pieta Amber Flag Team on amberflag@pieta.ie.

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

Dates for your Diary 2022 – 2023		
Registration Closing Date 16th December 2022 	Secondary Schools, Youthreach, Further Education and 3rd Levels: Submit Completed Applications 28th April 2023 	Primary Schools, Clubs and Others: Submit Completed Applications 19th May 2023 

Amber Flag Applicants

Primary Schools

- Primary schools can offer their students the opportunity to begin their well-being journey, where they can learn the basics of positive mental health.
- As per the Well-being Policy & Statement Framework for Practice 2018–2023 (Department of Education & Skills, 2018), promoting the well-being of our children and young people is a shared community responsibility.
- Schools can play a major role in enhancing protective factors and minimising risks.
- Primary school subjects such as Aistear, SPHE, Arts Education and PE, as well as others, can be good places to start the children on their well-being journey and will help in gaining an Amber Flag.'

Secondary Schools

- Secondary schools offer students the opportunity to continue on their well-being journey.
- Research shows that adopting a whole school approach provides a wide range of educational and social benefits including: improved behaviour, increased inclusion, improved learning, greater social cohesion, increased social capital and improvements to mental health (Weare and Gray, 2003).
- The Amber Flag is a great way to tie together a secondary school's well-being programme that often includes SPHE, PE and CSPE.

Further Education and Training Organisations

- Many students attend various organisations to further their skills, training and education
- The Amber Flag is the perfect initiative to promote teamwork and gives students an opportunity to meet and work alongside others.
- Students can learn life skills and be supported and educated in how to cope with challenges that they face.

Youthreach

- Youthreach is an ideal setting for the Amber Flag as there is a strong emphasis on personal development and the individual needs of students.
- The Youthreach curriculum focuses not just on the academic but equally on vocational and soft skills development.
- Most Youthreach are doing subjects such as SPHE, Sports, Art, Design & Mixed Media, Drama etc., all of which can help to build self-confidence and self-esteem which leads to positive mental health.
- Many Youthreach are already doing the foundation work for the Amber Flag so it would be great if their efforts were awarded at a national level.

Third Level

- Third-level institutions in Ireland have a huge role to play in people's mental health
- Almost 75% of all serious mental health conditions first emerge between the ages of 15 and 25 (Kessler et al., 2005). The vast majority of full-time undergraduate entrants fall within that age group (HEA 2018); and for that reason students are identified as a high-risk group for mental health difficulties
- Our hope is that all third-level institutions in Ireland get involved with the Amber Flag as they work towards implementing the National Student Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Framework (2020).

Clubs

- Clubs are the perfect opportunity to promote positive mental health.
- The ethos of the majority of clubs is teamwork and participation.
- Through these, a club can illustrate what it's members can do to educate and reduce stigma around mental health.
- By having an Amber Flag awarded to them, clubs are showing their communities the importance they place on promoting positive mental health.

How to Achieve an Amber Flag

1. Complete Registration Form at the start of the academic year on www.pieta.ie

2. Create an Amber Flag Committee with a cross section of students/service users/club members/staff

3. Carry out an audit on what has already been done to promote positive mental health

4. Set and complete a minimum of 3 mental health awareness goals

5. Submit completed Amber Flag Application by the closing date along with evidence of the goals achieved

6. Receive a physical flag and certificate

7. Maintain Amber Flag Initiatives

8. Apply for Amber Flag Renewal

Step 1: Register for the Amber Flag Initiative

- When you have read through the full document, please fill in the registration form found on our website and send it to amberflag@pieta.ie.
 - You are now ready to begin the Amber Flag Initiative!
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Step 2: Establish an Amber Flag Committee

- You must establish an Amber Flag Committee. The names of the team members should be recorded in your Amber Flag Application.

The Amber Flag Committee should consist of:

The Co-ordinator: This must be a staff member.

The Committee: The team should comprise of a cross section of participants.

- Professionals such as Guidance Counsellors, SPHE teachers, Instructors, Rehabilitation Officers and Coaching Staff have an invaluable role to play and should be consulted prior to the formation of the committee, where possible.
- It is up to each committee 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* and link to the objectives of the Amber Flag Initiative.

Step 3: Audit of Past and Current Activities

- It is important to acknowledge and enhance the good work that is already being done in relation to mental health and well-being.

This section requires the Amber Flag Committee to look at:

1. What is already being done to promote positive mental health?
2. Where could there be improvement in the promotion of positive mental health?

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

Step 4: Goals and Objectives

Once the Amber Flag Committee have audited/reviewed the current activities and services, it is time for setting this year's goals and objectives.

- The team should identify a minimum of **3 main goals/tasks** in line with the objectives of the Amber Flag Initiative.
- These should be achievable between the months of August 2022 – April/May 2023.

Amber Flag Initiative Requirements:

1. **Mental Health Awareness Day or a Well-being Week:** One goal/objective must be a Mental Health Awareness Day or a full Well-being week in the school, Youthreach, organisation or club.
2. **Fundraising Event:** One goal/objective must be a fundraising event for Pieta. The type of fundraising event is up to the committee. This can also be a joint fundraiser for Pieta along with another charity or community organisation.

Samples of Amber Flag Goals

The best ideas should emerge from the committee and the audit but the following are some goals/tasks from previous years:

Well-being Charts	Gratitude Diary	Amber Flag Notice Board	Positive Affirmations
Compliment Day	Active Breaks	Poster Competition	Friendship Week
Well-being survey to staff, students and parents	Morning Mindfulness	Art Project	Wellness Walls
Random Acts of Kindness	Nature Day	Buddy Bench	Well-being Newsletter
Daily Mindful Minute	Mental Health Webinars	Christmas Cards for Local Nursing Home	Positive Thought Jar
Yoga	Wellness Walk	School Mural	Well-being Resource Pack
Multi-Cultural Celebrations	Kindness Café	Movement Breaks	Positivity-Tree
Staff Coffee Morning	Sensory Garden	Worry Box	Staff Appreciation Day
Mindful Mondays	Thankful Tuesdays	Wellness Wednesday	Thoughtful Thursdays
Feel Good Fridays	Amber Flag Slogan Competition	Well-being Section on Website	Brain Breaks
Inside Out Day	Check and Connect Station	Guest Speaker	Mentoring Programme

Step 5: Submit Amber Flag Documentation

The fully completed Application Booklet, and any evidence (photos etc.) pertaining to the above events, must be completed and uploaded to your SharePoint Folder or submitted to amberflag@pieta.ie by:

Upload Completed Applications to your SharePoint Folder or by email to amberflag@pieta.ie

- Secondary Schools, Youthreach, Further Education and 3rd Levels:
28th April 2023
- Primary Schools, Clubs and Others:
19th May 2023

Step 6: Receive Flag and Certificate

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

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

Step 7 and 8: Maintain Amber Flag Initiatives and Apply for Amber Flag Renewal

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

The process for retention is similar with some minor differences.

As in previous years you must:

- Register your intent to renew the Amber Flag through the Renewal Form on the Pieta website and send to: amberflag@pieta.ie.
- Elect a new team at the beginning of the year. Some existing team members can stay on the team, however it is important to try to get a good cross section each year.
- **You will need to submit a renewal application at least every second year to retain your Amber Flag.**
- Goals/Targets must be set with a 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 Pieta Amber Flag Team on amberflag@pieta.ie.
- 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 to show this excellent achievement.

Consent

- It is up to the school/club/organisation to ensure any images that contain Under 18's have received parental/guardian consent prior to sharing with Pieta.
 - In addition, any Under 18's who attend Amber Flag events are the responsibility of the school, organisation or club, and must be supervised at all times by a staff member.
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Important Information

- 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 the organiser to check the qualifications and appropriateness of each/any individual/group/ agency invited to speak to participants.
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Guidelines for your Fundraising Event

- As part of the Amber Flag remit you are required to carry out a fundraiser for Pieta, along with another charity or community organisation if you wish.
 - Remember: fundraising is two-fold – it raises vital funds but, just as importantly, it raises awareness. It is also a great way to get everyone involved!
- **BEFORE YOU BEGIN, PLEASE REGISTER YOUR FUNDRAISING EVENT HERE:**
<https://www.pieta.ie/register-your-fundraiser/>.
- Once you register, a member of our Fundraising Department will get in touch with you directly to support you in organising your event.

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.