

## Year 10 Personal Development – Parent Overview

*The Safeguarding Curriculum at Thornden School*

**Headteacher - Caroline Lowing**

### Dear Parents and Carers,

At Thornden, Personal Development (PD) is a vital part of our Safeguarding and Wellbeing Curriculum, supporting students to stay safe, healthy, and prepared for the challenges of modern life. Through carefully structured lessons and tutor sessions, we ensure all young people receive high-quality, preventative education that builds resilience, encourages critical thinking, and promotes emotional, digital, and physical wellbeing.

In an increasingly complex world—where teenagers face growing pressures around identity, media, mental health, and relationships—our PD curriculum provides essential space to explore these issues in a safe, inclusive, and thoughtful environment. It equips students with the confidence, empathy, and maturity they need to make informed decisions, manage risk, and thrive as responsible young adults.

### Our Intent – Deepening Understanding and Independence

The Year 10 curriculum builds on the safeguarding foundations laid throughout Key Stage 3. Students begin to consider more complex ethical, social, and personal issues that link directly to their real lives and emerging independence. We place a particular focus on:

- Strengthening mental health literacy and support-seeking behaviour
- Navigating digital risks and misinformation
- Promoting healthy body image and balanced health awareness
- Encouraging early health responsibility and cancer prevention
- Building resilience and emotional regulation

This year also marks the beginning of KS4 preparation for post-16 pathways, with career planning, interview preparation, and practical life skills interwoven across PD and tutor sessions.

### A Spiral Safeguarding Curriculum – Revisiting Key Themes

The curriculum is structured around a spiral model, revisiting three core safeguarding themes each year with increasing maturity:

Half-Term Theme Structure (Year 10)

Autumn 1 – Health and Wellbeing

Autumn 2 – Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)

Spring 1 – The Wider World

Spring 2 – Health and Wellbeing  
Summer 1 – RSE  
Summer 2 – The Wider World

This approach ensures progression, depth, and continuity across all year groups.

### **Autumn 1 – What Your Child Will Learn**

In the first half of the Autumn term, students are focusing on the Health and Wellbeing strand. Lessons are designed to help students manage pressure, evaluate the credibility of information online, and understand their physical and emotional health.

#### **Topics include:**

- Anxiety and Social Anxiety: Identifying symptoms, managing responses, and building confidence
- Loneliness and Digital Illusion: Understanding emotional wellbeing in the social media age
- Social Media, Resilience and Trigger Warnings: Navigating emotional reactions and digital influences
- Deepfakes and AI Misinformation: Evaluating online content, risks to safety, and UK legal context
- Cancer Awareness and Self-Examination: Promoting early detection, screening, and lifestyle responsibility
- Body Image and Online Influence: Critically analysing social media messaging around weight, health, and self-worth

These lessons are supported by structured booklets, case studies, guided reading, and practical activities. They are delivered with care and sensitivity by trained staff and regularly signpost students to school and external support services.

Also in Year 10, Personal Development is delivered through one dedicated lesson each week, taught by experienced staff as part of a carefully designed rotation. Students study a range of interlinked topics including Careers, Health and Wellbeing, God on Trial (exploring the problem of evil and belief), Ethics and Beliefs, Living in the Wider World, and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE). This model ensures full coverage of all statutory requirements, including the Gatsby Benchmarks for Careers, statutory RSE guidance, and the promotion of British Values and SMSC (Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development). The rotation provides students with the time and depth needed to explore these issues meaningfully, while also reinforcing the safeguarding intent at the heart of the curriculum.

### **Intended Impact – Empowering Students for Real Life**

By the end of the year, students will:

- Recognise mental and physical health concerns and know how to seek support
- Understand the impact of digital content and develop digital resilience

- Feel more confident in navigating misinformation, peer pressure, and identity issues
- Begin to take increased responsibility for their future, lifestyle, and wellbeing
- Make informed, respectful, and safe decisions as they progress through KS4

### **Working in Partnership with Parents**

We believe safeguarding and personal development work best when home and school collaborate. We will continue to share half-termly updates on the PD curriculum, and we welcome your feedback and engagement throughout the year.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss any aspect of the curriculum—especially regarding RSE or digital safety—please don't hesitate to contact us.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. Thomas', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Mr A. Thomas**

Deputy Headteacher

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Thornden School