



Year 11 Personal Development – Parent Overview

The Safeguarding and Wellbeing Curriculum at Thornden School

Headteacher - Caroline Lowing

Dear Parents and Carers,

At Thornden School, Personal Development (PD) forms a key part of our safeguarding and wellbeing curriculum, helping ensure all students are safe, informed, and prepared for the demands of life beyond the school gates. In today's rapidly changing world—digitally, socially, emotionally, and economically—our PD program supports students to manage risk, maintain their wellbeing, form respectful relationships, and engage critically with the society around them.

Year 11 is a pivotal time in a young person's education, filled with academic pressures, personal choices, and emerging independence. Our curriculum is designed to empower students with the tools and confidence they need to navigate this period safely and successfully—both now and in the future.

Our Intent – Maturity, Responsibility, and Readiness

In Year 11, students consolidate their prior learning and apply it in real-world contexts. The focus is on:

- Building emotional resilience in preparation for exams and transition
- Understanding reproductive and sexual health, fertility, and respectful relationships
- Critically engaging with digital risks, identity, and social misinformation
- Strengthening awareness of personal safety in public and private spaces

Each lesson is carefully selected to reflect the safeguarding risks, responsibilities, and decisions students will increasingly encounter as they approach adulthood.

A Spiral Curriculum Approach

Our PD curriculum follows a spiral structure, where key safeguarding themes—Health and Wellbeing, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE), and The Wider World—are revisited with increasing depth and maturity as students move through school.

In Year 11, these themes are delivered through both:

- Weekly Personal Development lessons (on a rotation across tutor groups)
- Weekly tutor-led PD sessions (30 minutes)

Autumn Term – What Your Child Will Learn

This half term, Year 11 students will engage with a series of Health and Wellbeing lessons focused on both mental and physical safety, including advanced safeguarding content linked to their stage of development.

Core topics include:

- **Obsessive and Compulsive Behaviour:** Understanding how thought loops and fixed routines affect wellbeing
- **Neurodiversity and Inclusion:** Celebrating difference and recognising the strengths of neurodivergent minds
- **Fertility and Reproductive Health:** Exploring male and female fertility, menstrual health, and how lifestyle choices affect reproductive wellbeing
- **Gender Identity and Trans Awareness:** Clarifying the difference between gender and sex, understanding dysphoria, and respecting identity
- **Mob Mentality and Misinformation:** Analysing how extremist views spread, the dangers of social media echo chambers, and the importance of critical thinking
- **Street Safety and Bystander Action:** Learning how to keep safe in public and support others at risk

Each topic is delivered with maturity-appropriate sensitivity, with opportunities for discussion, case studies, media analysis, and guided reading. Students are regularly signposted to internal and external support services.

In Year 11, Personal Development is delivered through one dedicated lesson per week, taught on a structured rotation. Students engage with six key areas: Careers, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE), Health and Wellbeing, Traditions, Medical Ethics, and Believing and Belonging. These units support students to reflect on identity, decision-making, personal values, and global perspectives as they prepare for adult life. The curriculum is designed to meet all statutory requirements for RSE, the Gatsby Benchmarks for Careers, and the promotion of British Values and SMSC. It also helps students consider their post-16 options, manage personal wellbeing during exams, and develop informed, respectful views on belief, culture, and ethics in an increasingly complex world.

Intended Impact – Prepared for Life Beyond School

By the end of the academic year, your child will:

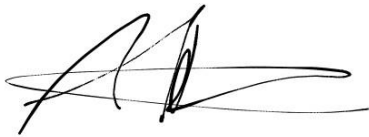
- Understand their reproductive and emotional health
- Be equipped to manage exam stress and personal pressures
- Think critically about digital content, group dynamics, and harmful narratives
- Know how to access help for themselves and others
- Be confident, respectful, and responsible in making life decisions

This learning plays a crucial role in protecting students from harm, promoting positive choices, and encouraging future readiness—whether for college, apprenticeships, work, or life in the wider world.

Working in Partnership with Parents

We believe that Personal Development is most effective when there is a strong partnership between home and school. Each half term, we will continue to share updates about the content of PD and RSE lessons to support open, informed conversations with your child. If you ever have questions about the content or delivery of these sessions, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. Thomas', with a stylized, cursive style.

Mr A. Thomas
Deputy Headteacher
Designated Safeguarding Lead
Thornden School