

Thornden School Personal Development Intent, Implement and Impact Document 2025–2026

Intent

At Thornden School, our Personal Development (PD) curriculum is central to our commitment to developing well-rounded, resilient, informed and responsible young people. The curriculum ensures students develop the knowledge, skills and values required to live healthy, safe, productive lives and to contribute positively to society.

Our intent is to provide a structured, spiral programme of learning that is responsive to students' needs, national and local safeguarding priorities, and key societal issues. The PD curriculum is built on the core values of 'Care, Belong, Aspire' and contributes to safeguarding, emotional literacy, citizenship, equality, and critical thinking.

Key aims include:

1. Embedding statutory RSE, Health Education and Citizenship content across KS3 and KS4
2. Promoting British Values and SMSC through assemblies, tutor time and curriculum delivery
3. Raising awareness of protected characteristics and celebrating diversity
4. Preparing students for life beyond school – socially, emotionally, and economically

Implementation

Our PD curriculum is implemented through a range of planned delivery models:

- Weekly tutor sessions (30 minutes each) across Years 7 to 11, with sessions mapped to a spiral curriculum model that aligns with statutory and suggested PSHE guidance. Each half term is themed around one of the three core PSHE strands: Health and Wellbeing, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE), and Living in the Wider World. Sessions include structured resources, reflective questions, and RAG-based self-assessment activities.
- A timetabled weekly Personal Development lesson in Years 10 and 11, delivered on a rotation of six-week units. These include bespoke content around RSE (e.g. consent, contraception, sexual harassment), Health (e.g. cancer awareness, addiction, body image), and Citizenship/World Issues (e.g. racism, prejudice, protected characteristics in employment).
- A KS3 curriculum of structured schemes of work, sequenced to build from foundational knowledge in Year 7 (e.g. friendships, puberty, emotional literacy), into more

complex societal themes in Years 8 and 9 (e.g. online harms, global citizenship, identity, and discrimination). • A termly assembly rota that reinforces core values, national awareness events, safeguarding priorities, and British Values. Each term is themed around Care (Autumn), Belong (Spring), or Aspire (Summer), and includes events such as Anti-Bullying Week, Holocaust Memorial Day, Black History Month, International Women's Day, and Pride. • Cross-curricular and enrichment links: subjects such as English, RE, History, Science, and PE do not simply reference PD themes superficially, but integrate them meaningfully into curriculum content, pedagogy, and assessment. In English, students explore themes of prejudice, justice, identity, and morality through core texts such as 'Of Mice and Men,' 'An Inspector Calls,' and 'Noughts and Crosses.' These units include explicit links to diversity, inclusion, and moral reasoning, reinforcing the PD curriculum through literature and discussion.

RE, History, Science, and PE do not simply reference PD themes superficially, but integrate them meaningfully into curriculum content, pedagogy, and assessment. In English, students explore themes of prejudice, justice, identity, and morality through core texts such as 'Of Mice and Men,' 'An Inspector Calls,' and 'Noughts and Crosses.' These units include explicit links to diversity, inclusion, and moral reasoning, reinforcing the PD curriculum through literature and discussion.

In Religious Education and Philosophy, ethical dilemmas, belief systems, and respect for difference are central to the curriculum. Topics such as abortion, euthanasia, war, and prejudice are analysed in depth, complementing the PD units on Medical Ethics and God on Trial. History explores British Values, the rule of law, and equality through topics such as the Holocaust, Civil Rights Movement, and the development of democracy.

Science delivers statutory RSE content such as reproduction, STIs, and mental health within the biology curriculum, ensuring that this knowledge is reinforced across multiple contexts. PE addresses mental health, teamwork, resilience, and body confidence through both theory and practice, directly supporting the Health and Wellbeing strand of PD.

Departments are expected to map their SMSC, British Values, and PD contributions annually. Curriculum audits ensure that all departments embed and evidence these contributions, making Personal Development a consistent thread throughout the student experience. Extra-curricular opportunities such as student leadership, charity involvement, debating, and enrichment days further promote personal growth, civic responsibility, and inclusive values. • . Texts such as "The Bone Sparrow," "Ghost Boys," and "The Dark Lady" provide rich narrative foundations for discussing equality, identity, discrimination, and cultural heritage.

Reading Programme

The Tutor Reading Programme is delivered three times per week across Years 7 to 11 and has been carefully sequenced to promote values education, cultural literacy, empathy, and critical thinking. Each year group follows a structured reading journey aligned to the overarching PD themes of Health and Wellbeing, RSE, and Living in the Wider World.

Books have been chosen to represent a wide range of lived experiences and social issues. In Year 7, students explore texts like 'The Goldfish Boy' and 'Boy at the Back of the Class' to understand themes of empathy, inclusion, and mental health. Year 8 reads titles such as 'Wonder' and 'The Island' which explore body image, acceptance, and the impact of social exclusion. In Year 9, the focus shifts to more complex issues such as prejudice, discrimination, and justice, with books like 'The Hate U Give' and 'Ghost Boys'.

The programme continues through KS4 with thematically rich texts such as 'Punching the Air' and 'The Dark Lady' in Year 10 and 'Poet X' in Year 11, chosen for their ability to foster reflection on race, gender, power, voice, and belonging.

Each reading session is accompanied by teacher-guided discussion, vocabulary development, and reflection prompts. This consistent, structured approach to reading ensures that all students engage regularly with challenging themes and develop their literacy in a values-led context.

The KS3 Tutor Programme includes units such as 'Emotional Literacy' in Year 7, 'Body Image and Online Safety' in Year 8, and 'Identity and Discrimination' in Year 9. These are mapped to both statutory and suggested PSHE content. The programme is sequenced to reflect increasing levels of complexity and maturity. In Year 7, students begin with foundational topics such as forming positive friendships, recognising and managing emotions, understanding puberty and changes, and developing resilience. They also explore themes like sleep hygiene, healthy routines, and kindness in communication.

'Emotional Literacy' in Year 7, 'Body Image and Online Safety' in Year 8, and 'Identity and Discrimination' in Year 9. These are mapped to both statutory and suggested PSHE content. The programme is sequenced to reflect increasing levels of complexity and maturity. In Year 7, students begin with foundational topics such as forming positive friendships, recognising and managing emotions, understanding puberty and changes, and developing resilience. They also explore themes like sleep hygiene, healthy routines, and kindness in communication.

In Year 8, the curriculum progresses to more advanced wellbeing and relationship topics, including self-esteem and social media influence, recognising unhealthy relationships, managing online interactions safely, and understanding the impact of digital footprints. Students also begin to examine mental health awareness and stigma, gender stereotypes, and the role of the media.

Year 9 deepens their learning with lessons on prejudice and discrimination, identity (including LGBTQ+ awareness), racism and faith-based hate, and group behaviour. Social issues such as extremism, coercion, and youth crime are introduced to support safeguarding awareness. Financial literacy, global citizenship, and understanding political structures are also introduced in Year 9 to prepare students for KS4 themes.

Learning across all year groups is explicitly spiral, ensuring that concepts are not taught in isolation but revisited at greater depth. Safeguarding content is carefully sequenced—for example, digital safety progresses from basic rules in Year 7 to cyberbullying in Year 8 and digital legacy/deepfake content in Year 9. Lessons use active methods such as role-play, scenario analysis, and structured discussion to build skills as well as knowledge.

The tutor sessions incorporate RAG-rated reflection tasks, scenario-based discussion activities, and regular retrieval practice to reinforce understanding. Lessons are designed to be inclusive, discussion-led, and values-driven, encouraging students to consider multiple perspectives while developing their own voice and confidence in expressing their beliefs.

The KS4 Tutor Programme complements the weekly timetabled PD lessons by offering structured, discussion-based sessions that reinforce core themes and give students additional space for reflection, application, and personal development. Tutor sessions rotate through the PSHE strands across the year, ensuring that statutory Health, RSE, and Living in the Wider World content is consistently revisited.

Year 10 tutor sessions focus on consolidating topics such as emotional wellbeing, digital safety, equality in the workplace, and relationships. These sessions provide opportunities to revisit sensitive areas such as peer-on-peer abuse, healthy boundaries, and conflict resolution. They are timed to align with lesson content to allow for deeper personal reflection and exploration of case studies.

Year 11 sessions are structured to support readiness for life beyond Thornden. Themes include managing stress during exams, understanding post-16 choices (including T Levels, apprenticeships, and college pathways), critical media literacy, and sexual health and

consent. They also address emerging concerns relevant to the cohort, such as cost-of-living pressures, independent living, and current affairs impacting young people (e.g. political engagement, online radicalisation).

Both year groups engage with values-based discussions and are encouraged to voice their opinions, listen respectfully to others, and apply critical thinking skills to contemporary ethical and social dilemmas. Sessions include real-world stimulus (e.g. news clips, testimonies), structured debate, and reflection journals to support metacognitive development and tracking of personal growth.

The KS4 PD lessons are delivered as a dedicated, timetabled lesson once per week, providing the opportunity for in-depth exploration of complex topics that reflect both statutory requirements and the lived experience of students at Thornden. Each rotation lasts half a term, and students receive targeted, sequenced content across the strands of Health and Wellbeing, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE), and Living in the Wider World. These lessons are distinct from the KS4 tutor programme and are taught using high-quality PowerPoint resources, supported by videos, case studies, discussion tasks, and real-world stimuli.

The content of these lessons is regularly reviewed and refined in response to Thornden's contextual safeguarding data, emerging local issues, and student and parent voice. For example, following feedback from students and concerns about pornography and its impact on expectations and self-image, a full unit was introduced on consent, healthy relationships, and the influence of pornography, supported by resources from CEOP and the PSHE Association. Similarly, parent feedback regarding cancer awareness and mental health led to the development of a "Positive Mental Health Toolkit" and a "Cancer Awareness" rotation in Year 10.

Each year group follows a thematic structure:

- In Year 10, students explore relationships and consent, mental health strategies, managing pressure, contraception and STIs, abortion and pregnancy, racism and prejudice, equality in the workplace, and preparation for work experience.
- In Year 11, the curriculum builds upon prior learning to focus on managing exam stress, readiness for post-16 options, sexual health and boundaries, understanding coercive behaviours, professionalism, independence and budgeting, and protected characteristics in employment.

Student and parent voice activities are embedded into the development and evaluation process for KS4 PD. Regular surveys, small group interviews, and feedback from the safeguarding team inform curriculum changes, ensuring that topics remain relevant, age-

appropriate, and meaningful. Where applicable, topics are mapped to the Equality Act 2010 and KCSIE safeguarding themes.

At KS4, the PD lessons include: • RSE: Relationships, Consent, Contraception, Pornography, Sexual Harassment, Pregnancy Choices • Health: Mental Health Toolkit, Cancer Awareness, Drugs and Addiction, Positive Mindsets • Living in the Wider World: Careers, Protected Characteristics in the Workplace, Financial Literacy, Digital Safety • Ethics and Citizenship: God on Trial, Medical Ethics, Philosophy & Belonging

Assemblies follow a termly theme: Care (Autumn), Belong (Spring), Aspire (Summer), and include key events such as Black History Month, Holocaust Memorial Day, LGBTQ+ History Month, and Anti-Bullying Week.

Cross-referencing with our SMSC, British Values, and D&I audits confirms: • Statutory and suggested PSHE content is interwoven with a strong moral and spiritual dimension. For example, discussions around justice, equality, and belief systems in 'God on Trial' and 'Believing and Belonging' explicitly support SMSC goals. • British Values are explicitly covered across all five areas. Democracy is modelled in debates and student council structures; the Rule of Law is reinforced in lessons on consent, online behaviour, and criminal responsibility; Individual Liberty is fostered through lessons on self-identity, autonomy in relationships, and personal wellbeing; Mutual Respect and Tolerance are embedded through exploration of protected characteristics, global belief systems, and relationship diversity. • SMSC is evidenced in multiple strands—Spiritual through reflective sessions and ethical dilemmas (e.g. medical ethics, fertility treatment); Moral through case studies and student debate (e.g. pornography, abortion); Social through teamwork, empathy-building and digital responsibility; Cultural through exposure to worldviews, festivals, and traditions. • Diversity and Inclusion are not standalone topics but integrated throughout the curriculum. Every scheme of work makes explicit reference to at least one protected characteristic. For instance:

- Race and religion are explored through prejudice awareness and global conflict studies
- Sexual orientation and gender identity are addressed through inclusive RSE and anti-discrimination lessons
- Disability is sensitively explored through lessons on mental health, cancer, and neurodiversity
- Socioeconomic background and family structure are examined through financial education and community values • Assembly content and tutor reading materials reinforce diversity of thought, voice, and experience. Books such as 'The Bone

Sparrow', 'Ghost Boys', and 'The Dark Lady' promote empathy, representation, and reflection. • Equality legislation (e.g. Equality Act 2010, Abortion Act 1967) is discussed directly within KS4 PD lessons, enabling students to understand the legal frameworks underpinning inclusive values.

Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG)

Our careers programme is structured around a clear thematic learning journey that begins in Year 7 and builds each year in complexity and relevance. Students follow a "Discover – Explore – Apply" model as they progress through the school, focusing on themes such as identity, respect, empowerment, and transition. Throughout this journey, students develop self-awareness, decision-making skills, and an understanding of pathways and possibilities.

The Kudos platform is used consistently from Year 8 onwards to support careers exploration, with students engaging in interactive tasks to identify interests, research roles, and set aspirational goals. In addition to the KS4 lessons and external events already outlined, careers-related activities are integrated into the tutor programme. These include reflection on aspirations, values in the workplace, and preparation for work experience. Sessions like "Making the Most of Work Experience" and "Exploring Pathways to Success" support transition readiness.

Thornden School also recognises that a key part of students' personal development occurs beyond the classroom. Our wide-ranging extra-curricular provision plays a vital role in developing students' confidence, sense of identity, teamwork, leadership, creativity, and emotional wellbeing.

The school offers an extensive programme of clubs and activities across all year groups. These include: • Competitive sports teams in football, rugby, netball, athletics, hockey, and cricket, with fixtures against local schools and district competitions • A thriving performing arts programme, including whole-school musicals, instrumental ensembles, choirs, drama clubs, and dance companies • Academic and interest-based clubs such as chess, debating, creative writing, science, coding, and eco committee • Targeted support and enrichment opportunities for vulnerable groups, including Young Carers, Wellbeing Mentors, and Anti-Bullying Ambassadors

Residential and day trips further support cultural capital and personal growth. These include: • Visits to theatres, museums, and universities • Language and cultural

exchanges abroad • Outdoor adventure and leadership development at activity centres • Curriculum-linked trips, including science discovery days and history battlefield tours

Students are actively encouraged to participate in these experiences, which are celebrated through tutor time, assemblies, newsletters, and awards evenings. Participation data is monitored to ensure inclusion and access across all student groups.

Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG)

Thornden School is committed to ensuring all students have access to high-quality, meaningful careers education throughout their time with us. Careers education is interwoven across the Personal Development curriculum and supported through bespoke activities, events and partnerships.

Year 10 students participate in a one-week work experience placement, giving them practical insight into a workplace environment. These placements are tailored to reflect student interests and supported with preparation lessons in PD time that cover professionalism, communication skills, workplace rights, and health and safety. Students are also supported to reflect on their experience post-placement to identify key skills gained.

College taster days are provided to all Year 10 or 11 students in partnership with local further education providers. These allow students to sample courses, meet tutors, and explore facilities—supporting informed decision-making as they consider post-16 pathways.

All Year 11 students receive a 1:1 careers interview with an impartial external adviser. These are scheduled to align with key points in the academic year and support students in planning their next steps, whether this is A Levels, T Levels, apprenticeships, or employment.

Careers is also visible in the school's wider life through employer engagement. Assemblies regularly feature visiting speakers from industries such as healthcare, STEM, the armed forces, finance, and media, who share their career journeys and take student questions. Colleges and training providers are invited into school to deliver sessions and engage with students as part of assemblies, parents evenings, and careers fairs.

Dedicated KS4 PD lessons also cover protected characteristics in the workplace, financial capability, interview preparation, and labour market awareness. These lessons are

mapped to the Gatsby Benchmarks and the PSHE Association's career education standards.

Thornden's careers programme ensures that all students leave with the knowledge, confidence and ambition to pursue a future aligned to their strengths, interests and values.

Student Leadership and Community Involvement

At Thornden School, we believe in empowering students to become confident, compassionate, and responsible leaders. Our Student Leadership programme is a valued part of school life, offering a wide range of opportunities for students to contribute meaningfully to their community, develop key life skills, and inspire others.

Thornden Student Leaders are selected through a rigorous application and interview process and are expected to uphold the highest standards in behaviour, conduct, and commitment. These students are ambassadors for our school values and serve as role models to their peers.

Student Leadership roles include:

- Senior Student Leaders – Represent the whole student body, assist the Senior Leadership Team at key school events, meet termly with the Headteacher, and contribute to Student Council meetings.
- Year Group Leaders – Work closely with Heads of Year to support year group assemblies, student events, and provide pastoral support to younger pupils.
- Department Leaders – Represent curriculum areas such as English, Science, PE, and the Arts. They support events, clubs, and extracurricular activities, and help showcase departmental strengths across the school.

All Student Leaders are expected to:

- Lead by example and demonstrate Thornden's core values.
- Be positive and enthusiastic about their role.
- Show initiative, confidence, and respect.
- Support peers and younger students.
- Carry out specific duties and represent the school at key events.

Our Anti-Bullying Ambassadors play a vital role in fostering a safe and inclusive environment. Trained through the Diana Award programme, these students lead initiatives to educate peers, raise awareness, and provide peer support for those experiencing or witnessing bullying behaviour.

Our trained Wellbeing Mentors offer peer-to-peer support, promoting mental health awareness and emotional resilience among students. They work closely with pastoral staff and help deliver wellbeing activities, signpost support, and create a culture where every student feels seen, heard, and valued.

The Student Council is the voice of our student body. Made up of elected representatives from each year group and supported by Senior Student Leaders, the council meets regularly to discuss school-wide issues, share feedback, and work with staff to bring about positive change.

We also offer the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award to students in Year 9 and Year 10. This provides students with opportunities to develop independence, teamwork, physical activity, volunteering, and outdoor expedition skills. Participation in DofE is a cornerstone of our wider personal development offer and is actively promoted across year groups.

Restorative Behaviour Day (RBD) is another unique part of Thornden's offer. Held weekly, this programme supports students in acknowledging and repairing the impact of poor behavioural choices through structured reflection, restorative conversations, and targeted interventions. Sessions include:

- Physical and mental wellbeing activities led by a personal trainer
- Community engagement at Brendoncare Residential Home
- Restorative discussions and strategy planning with staff

This model ensures that students are re-integrated into school life with clear strategies and a strengthened sense of responsibility.

Our partnership with Brendoncare also extends to outreach and intergenerational work. Students take part in the 'Inside Out Garden Project' through the Memory Box Foundation—an initiative that combines sensory garden design, reminiscence, and community connection. Pupils collaborate with residents living with dementia or social isolation, using upcycled materials to co-create a therapeutic garden space. This promotes empathy, communication, environmental awareness, and civic contribution.

Impact

Our PD programme ensures that students are not only prepared for real-life challenges, but that they feel safe and are safe throughout their school experience. Through the explicit teaching of safeguarding themes, legal frameworks, and life skills, we prepare students to confidently and competently navigate the complexities of adult life.

In Relationships and Sex Education (RSE), students learn how to establish and maintain healthy relationships, understand the importance of consent, and recognise coercive control and abusive behaviours. For example, Year 10 explore pornography, sexual harassment, and boundary-setting, while Year 11 discuss pregnancy options, online safety, and power dynamics in relationships. These lessons are designed to empower students with the knowledge to protect themselves and others, and to know how and where to access support.

In Health and Wellbeing, students build resilience, learn stress management strategies, and explore physical and mental health in depth. The "Positive Mental Health Toolkit" in Year 10 and the "Cancer Awareness" unit address both preventative health and signposting to support, ensuring students are aware of warning signs, help-seeking behaviours, and how to support peers sensitively.

In Living in the Wider World, students gain the tools needed to thrive beyond school. Topics such as financial literacy, protected characteristics in employment, professionalism, and post-16 pathways equip students to understand their rights, navigate transitions, and set informed aspirations. Year 11, for example, explore budgeting, job readiness, independent living, and professionalism through practical case studies and scenario-based tasks.

Throughout all strands, safeguarding is threaded explicitly and implicitly. Lessons are trauma-informed, contextualised to local issues, and responsive to student voice and wellbeing data. Students are given opportunities to rehearse real-world decisions, reflect on their values, and apply their knowledge in safe, discussion-based environments.

By the time students leave Thornden, they are equipped not only with the knowledge, but with the confidence, skills, and support networks to make safe, responsible, and informed choices about their relationships, health, future, and identity.

Impact is measured through:

- Entry and exit confidence-based surveys across all KS4 units
- Tutor observations and student voice panels
- RAG-rated lesson reflections and review tasks
- SLT and safeguarding monitoring of curriculum and student engagement

Examples of measurable impact include:

- Improved student confidence when discussing mental health and accessing support (e.g. Year 10 Positive Mental Health unit)
- Greater understanding of legal rights and consent, evidenced in student responses to the Year 11 RSE Pornography & Consent lessons
- Empathy and critical thinking in Year 10's 'God on Trial' debate on evil and suffering
- Increased knowledge of careers pathways in Year 11, with students able to differentiate between T Levels, A Levels and Apprenticeships

Student outcomes reflect enhanced emotional resilience, ethical reasoning, and respect for the law and diversity. The programme equips students to thrive socially, emotionally, and morally.