

Thornden School – Personal Development Tutor Programme

Intent, Implementation and Impact

Intent

The Personal Development (PD) Tutor Programme is at the heart of Thornden’s preventative safeguarding culture. It exists to ensure that every student not only feels safe but *is* safe — emotionally, socially, and physically — and that they leave Thornden equipped to lead confident, healthy and responsible lives.

Our curriculum is designed to be the universal foundation of our wider safeguarding provision. Through weekly tutor sessions and focused lessons, students build the knowledge, understanding and confidence to make informed choices, seek help when needed, and contribute positively to their communities.

The PD Tutor Programme aims to:

- Prevent harm before it occurs, through education that builds awareness, self-regulation and protective behaviours.
- Develop emotional literacy and resilience, enabling students to manage challenges, setbacks and change with maturity.
- Promote inclusion, empathy and equality, ensuring every student is represented and feels a sense of belonging.
- Strengthen relationships and community values, embedding respect, responsibility and kindness.
- Prepare students for life beyond school, through explicit teaching of health, relationships, finance, careers and law.

The programme aligns fully with statutory PSHE, RSE and Health Education guidance, the Equality Act (2010), and *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)*. It is a core element of Thornden’s values — *Belong, Care, Aspire, Succeed* — and central to our safeguarding intent.

A Spiral Curriculum

Our Personal Development curriculum is a coherent, age-appropriate spiral model, revisiting three core strands each year with increasing depth and maturity:

1. Health and Wellbeing – physical, mental and emotional health; substance awareness; managing change; and personal safety.

2. Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) – consent, respect, equality, inclusion, and managing influence both online and offline.
3. Living in the Wider World – finance, careers, law, digital life, community engagement and responsible citizenship.

Each strand is deliberately sequenced so knowledge is built and reinforced over time.

Phase	Core Focus	Progression Example
Key Stage 3 (Years 7–9)	Establishes foundational knowledge, language and confidence.	“What is mental health?” → “Managing anxiety and stigma” → “Understanding crisis and first aid.”
Key Stage 4 (Years 10–11)	Applies learning to real-world and adult contexts.	“Healthy friendships” → “Coercive control and gaslighting” → “Digital consent and personal safety.”

This structure ensures a consistent, developmental journey from basic awareness in Year 7 to complex decision-making in Year 11.

Context and Responsiveness

The curriculum is reviewed annually in consultation with students, parents and staff. This ensures it remains responsive to local and national safeguarding priorities.

- Autumn Term (Health and Wellbeing) focuses on emotional literacy and mental health, deliberately placed when wellbeing concerns are historically highest.
- Spring Term (RSE) develops respectful, inclusive relationships and awareness of consent and gender equality.
- Summer Term (Living in the Wider World) builds knowledge of finance, employment and citizenship, reflecting strong student and parent demand for practical life skills.

Safeguarding data, attendance trends, and pastoral intelligence are analysed each term by the DSL team to inform adaptations. This process ensures PD remains proactive, not reactive, and genuinely rooted in Thornden’s contextual safeguarding picture.

Implementation

Delivery and Structure

- Weekly 30-minute tutor sessions for all year groups, following centrally planned, sequenced lessons.

- One timetabled lesson per week in Year 10, enabling extended discussion and exploration.
- Cross-curricular reinforcement through Computing, Science, RE and Careers.
- Termly review meetings between PD leads, DSLs and Heads of Year to evaluate impact and identify next steps.

Pedagogical Approach

All PD lessons are designed and delivered in line with the Thornden DNA and the school's adaptive teaching principles, ensuring the same high-quality experience and expectations as any other subject area.

Lessons include:

- Clear learning intentions and success criteria.
- Retrieval tasks and “Do Now” starters to build continuity.
- Explicit vocabulary teaching and modelling.
- Adaptive strategies that meet diverse needs through scaffolding and challenge.
- Formative assessment, reflection and feedback.
- Scenario-based discussions and structured debate to build empathy and critical thinking.
- Creative outcomes such as campaigns, letters and journals to evidence understanding.
- Embedded safeguarding signposting — ensuring every student knows how and where to seek help.

This consistent approach promotes familiarity, confidence and progression across the five-year journey.

Staff Training and Consultation

The strength of the PD Tutor Programme relies on confident, informed delivery. Staff receive ongoing training and opportunities to shape the curriculum:

- Annual training on statutory RSE, mental health and inclusive delivery.
- Fortnightly safeguarding briefings connecting live safeguarding themes to upcoming PD content.

- Termly tutor consultation meetings to gather feedback and adapt resources.
- Targeted CPD for new tutors and early-career staff focused on facilitating sensitive discussions.
- Collaboration with external partners (Hampshire Safeguarding, NHS mental health teams, Police, local employers) to maintain accuracy and contextual relevance.

This training and consultation model ensures PD remains a *shared responsibility* across the whole staff body.

Student and Parent Voice

Student and parent feedback is central to curriculum planning and review.

- Entry and exit surveys measure changes in knowledge, confidence and attitudes across each theme.
- Student focus groups and parent questionnaires provide termly feedback on what feels most relevant and useful.
- Recent consultations have led to greater emphasis on:
 - Managing anxiety and emotional regulation (Autumn term)
 - Consent, identity and equality (Spring term)
 - Finance, careers and independence (Summer term)

This partnership ensures PD reflects both lived experience and parental priorities, reinforcing Thornden's safeguarding culture beyond the classroom.

Impact

The impact of the PD Tutor Programme is seen in the confidence, maturity and safety awareness of our students. By the end of Key Stage 4, Thornden students are able to:

- Recognise risk and make informed, safe decisions.
- Articulate their feelings and manage their wellbeing with resilience.
- Demonstrate empathy, respect and inclusion in relationships.
- Understand legal frameworks relating to health, online life and relationships.
- Manage money, careers and digital identity responsibly.

- Actively contribute to a positive, respectful school culture.

Measuring Impact

Evidence Source	Description	Example Indicators
Entry & Exit Surveys	Assess knowledge and confidence before and after topics.	Improved accuracy and understanding across all three PD strands.
Student Voice & Focus Groups	Evaluate relevance, enjoyment and perceived impact.	Increased student confidence discussing sensitive issues.
Parent Voice	Measures parental confidence in PD safeguarding role.	Growth in positive responses to “PD helps my child stay safe.”
Safeguarding Data	DSL and pastoral analysis of incidents and referrals.	Reduction in mental health and online-safety-related concerns.
Tutor Feedback	Monitors delivery confidence and student engagement.	Consistent positive feedback on student participation and openness.

Whole-School Outcomes

- Evident reduction in safeguarding referrals related to themes directly addressed in PD.
- Improved attendance and wellbeing for identified vulnerable cohorts.
- Positive student culture noted through behaviour data and student voice surveys.
- Clear articulation by students of *how PD keeps them safe* — a key Ofsted indicator of impact.