



**Headteacher - Caroline Lowing**

Dear Parents and Carers,

At Thornden School, our Personal Development (PD) curriculum forms a core part of our safeguarding and wellbeing provision, supporting students to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence needed to stay safe, healthy and informed as they progress through secondary school.

Each half term, students explore a different theme. Following the Easter break, the Year 8 Summer 1 focus is Relationships and Sex Education (RSE). This unit builds on learning from Year 7 and develops students' understanding of sexual health, contraception, and responsible decision-making within relationships.

### **Statutory PSHE and RSHE Content**

The content taught within this unit forms part of the statutory PSHE and Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) framework. All lessons are carefully planned in line with statutory guidance and are already aligned with the updated guidance due to come into effect from September 2026.

The unit supports safeguarding by ensuring that students develop accurate knowledge about sexual health and understand how to recognise risks, make informed decisions, and access appropriate support when needed.

### **Why This Matters in Year 8**

As students grow older, they begin to encounter more complex information and conversations about relationships and sexual health. It is important that young people develop a clear and factual understanding of these topics in a safe and supportive environment.

Teaching this content helps students understand responsibility, consent, risk and consequences, while also addressing common misconceptions that young people may encounter through peers, media or online sources.

### **This Half-Term's Topics**

During Summer 1, Year 8 students will explore the following key areas:

- 1) **Contraception and Preventing Pregnancy**  
Students will learn about different forms of contraception, including condoms, the pill, injections, implants and intrauterine devices (IUDs). Lessons will focus on how contraception works, the importance of responsible decision-making, and the role of contraception in preventing unintended pregnancy.
- 2) **Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)**  
Students will develop an understanding of common sexually transmitted infections, how they are transmitted, how they can affect health, and how individuals can reduce risk.

### 3) Sexual Health and Medical Support

Students will learn about sexual health clinics, testing, and why accessing medical advice and support is important for maintaining health and wellbeing.

Through discussion scenarios, students will consider the role of trust, commitment and communication within relationships, helping them understand how responsible choices support both physical and emotional wellbeing.

#### **By the end of the Summer 1 unit, Year 8 students will:**

1. Develop an age-appropriate understanding of contraception and sexual health
2. Understand how sexually transmitted infections can be passed on and how risk can be reduced
3. Recognise the importance of responsibility, consent and trust within relationships
4. Know where to access reliable information and medical support if needed
5. Feel confident speaking to trusted adults if they have concerns or questions

All lessons are delivered in a supportive and respectful environment, with opportunities for students to ask questions and receive accurate information. Students are also reminded of the wide range of support available within school, including tutors, Heads of Year, the Wellbeing Team and safeguarding staff.

Thank you for your continued support in helping students develop the knowledge and confidence to navigate relationships safely and responsibly.

Warm regards,

Adam Thomas  
Deputy Headteacher  
Thornden School