Physical Intervention Policy

A. PURPOSE

Instituto Thomas Jefferson Guadalajara expects all staff at our school, as well as parents, visitors and vendors, to recognize that when a student is at risk of being hurt or is in a dangerous situation, actions will be taken focused on reducing the risk of harm. We recognize that the protection of our students is very important at our school. They may be able to identify risk situations and ask for help for themselves or for other students.

In this document, the following terms will be used:

Student: any student of Instituto Thomas Jefferson is considered a student, regardless of age, as well as visitors who are minors.

Staff member: any member hired by Instituto Thomas Jefferson Guadalajara, regardless of their position or role.

To prevent risk situations from escalating, Instituto Thomas Jefferson Guadalajara adheres to the following principles:

- A student's well-being is the priority, and every student has the right to be protected from harm and exploitation. A student's well-being is the same regardless of their race, religion, ability, disability, gender, or culture.
- All students must be and feel safe at their school.
- Every student has the right to receive strategies and skills that help them keep themselves safe.
- All adults at the school must demonstrate a commitment to protecting the students they work with.
- At Instituto Thomas Jefferson Guadalajara, we work together with parents, guardians, and other professionals to ensure the protection of our students.
- All students have equal rights to protection, but we recognize that, in some cases, greater support will be needed. Some of these cases may fall under situations of special educational needs, disability, gender, religion, and sexual orientation.

1. Scope and Objectives

Instituto Thomas Jefferson Guadalajara aims to:

- Provide a safe and happy environment that fosters growth and learning in our students.
- Outline the system and procedures we have in place to ensure students are safe within the school.
- Raise awareness among all staff and parents about issues related to physical intervention.
- Ensure effective communication between staff and parents regarding physical intervention situations within the school.
- Establish effective procedures for staff who find themselves in any situation related to physical intervention.
- Be clear with everyone involved, including students, parents, or guardians, about the physical intervention policy within the school.

B. SCOPE

Physical intervention policies will be endorsed by ISP, signed by the General Director, and adopted at all levels of the organization.

C. PROCEDURES

There may be occasions in which adults within the school, as part of their responsibilities, must physically intervene to prevent students from hurting themselves or others. This intervention must be reasonable and proportionate to the circumstances under which it applies, with the goal of it being the last possible option.

Examples of situations where physical intervention is required:

- If a disagreement between two students has escalated to the point where they begin to physically attack each other and must be separated.
- If a student attempts to physically hurt a classmate or a staff member of the school.
- If a student attempts to physically hurt themselves.
- If a student is being disruptive (emotionally and physically agitated, damaging others' property) and refuses to follow instructions to leave the classroom or any other location within the school campus (e.g., sports areas, playgrounds, laboratories, etc.).
- If a student is experiencing an acute emotional crisis that requires physical contact to contain and/or comfort them, e.g., touching or hugging a person who is very distressed, looking directly into their eyes, holding their hands, reassuring them that they are no longer alone, that they are accompanied, and that we are in this together. Slaikeu, K. (1996). *Crisis Intervention*. (2nd ed.) Mexico: Manual Moderno.

To physically intervene with students, it is important to keep the following clearly in mind:

a. Physical containment is a therapeutic resource used in extreme situations to keep under control behaviors that pose an elevated danger to the student themselves, to others, or to professionals working in the area. Likewise, we must be very clear that containment is carried out only after all other techniques and alternative measures that have been taken have failed.

b. If the perceived risk is low, basic safety measures will be carried out, such as preventing objects near the student that could be used as "weapons." If the risk is perceived as medium, we will begin to use verbal containment measures, showing a calm and friendly attitude, secure and firm, without being defiant or authoritarian. Finally, if the perceived risk is high, we will attempt to simply hold the student or isolate them from the context that has caused the crisis. Thus, physical containment will be used when the student's behavior endangers their own safety or that of another person.

c. There will be situations in which contact involves minimal physical intervention, for example, preventing a student from passing by blocking their exit through a doorway. On certain occasions, this may involve low-level physical contact, such as guiding a student by the arm to remove them from a particular situation.

The corresponding Section Director will require that any adult involved in an incident of this nature report the situation as soon as possible. The staff member must document the incident in writing, giving a complete description of the events and of the intervention carried out. Witnesses should be included in the report whenever possible.

After a physical intervention, a member of the Leadership Team of the corresponding section, and/or of Human Development, will be asked to speak with the student involved to hear their explanation and account of the events. Written notes of this conversation will be taken and kept in the student's file. A review by the school's Medical Service team must always be requested to confirm the student's physical well-being.

Parents and/or caregivers must be notified of a physical intervention situation by email and by a phone call made the same day the event occurred.

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