

# Intimate Care Policy

## A. PURPOSE

Thomas Jefferson Institute, Guadalajara campus, expects all staff members to acknowledge and follow the procedures required when a student presents an intimate care need.

We recognize that student safeguarding is a priority; the school is a space designed to support early identification of risk indicators and to ensure that students feel safe to request help for themselves or for others.

### 1. Scope and Objectives

The Intimate Care Policy will be endorsed and signed by the Head of School. This policy will be adopted by all divisions across the organization.

Thomas Jefferson Institute, Guadalajara campus aims to:

- Provide a safe and caring environment that promotes student growth and learning.
- Outline systems and procedures that ensure students remain safe on campus.
- Raise awareness among staff members and parents regarding matters related to intimate care.
- Ensure effective communication between staff members and parents in relation to intimate care situations.
- Inform parents of how intimate care is provided at school.
- Protect adults/staff members who are required to support students with intimate care needs.
- Establish procedural clarity for any staff member involved in intimate care.
- Provide clear expectations for all parties involved, including students, parents, and guardians, regarding the Intimate Care Policy.
- Ensure clear and consistent guidelines when it becomes necessary to support a student with intimate care needs.

**Student:** Any enrolled student at Thomas Jefferson Institute, Guadalajara campus, regardless of age, including visiting minors.

**Staff Member:** Any individual employed by Thomas Jefferson Institute, Guadalajara campus, regardless of role or position.

## **B. DEFINITIONS**

### **Intimate care refers to:**

Any personal care activity necessary for a child's hygiene, personal wellbeing, or physical examination, including but not limited to:

- Washing and cleaning, e.g., diaper changing.
- Dressing or undressing.
- Supervising a child during washing or cleaning.
- Supervising a child who reports discomfort or pain in an intimate or private area of the body and/or requiring partial undressing (e.g., examination of legs, back, stomach), or where medical personnel must conduct a physical inspection.

## **C. RESPONSIBILITIES**

All staff members at Thomas Jefferson Institute must:

- Safeguard the rights of the student.
- Ensure that all students requiring intimate care are treated respectfully and sensitively, always promoting their overall wellbeing.
- Protect the student's personal privacy.
- Report any concerns regarding intimate care practices to the Designated Safeguarding Team.

Division Directors must:

- Ensure that staff members responsible for intimate care tasks are adequately trained and competent in their duties.

## **D. PROCEDURES**

All staff members involved in intimate care must be aware of the potential risk of misinterpretation and must therefore take all necessary precautions. Safeguarding measures include:

- Intimate care procedures will vary depending on the developmental stage and needs of the student.
- Staff must verbally notify another team member present in the area when they are about to provide intimate care to a student.

- A second staff member must always be in close proximity when intimate care is provided.
- If a student is capable of changing and washing independently, the door may be closed but **not locked**. If a staff member needs to assist, the door must remain open.
- Mobile phones or personal recording devices are strictly prohibited during intimate care procedures.
- If the student is fully dependent, staff should speak calmly and clearly about what will be done and offer options when possible.
- Whenever possible, obtain the student's verbal consent before assisting.
- Allow the student, when appropriate, to choose the sequence of the care process.
- Staff must observe the students' reactions and inform the corresponding team member following the chain of command, or if a safeguarding concern arises, immediately notify the Designated Safeguarding Team.
- When a student requires changing, washing, or cleaning due to toileting accidents, vomiting, spillage, or incontinence:
  - The staff member should encourage the student to undress and dress independently if developmentally appropriate, ensuring privacy and supervision.
  - If the student requires assistance and the door cannot remain open, a second staff member must be present.
  - Upon completion, soiled clothing must be placed in a sealed bag and sent home, with an explanation to parents regarding the reason for the change.
- In the event of an extraordinary situation requiring washing and/or changing, the homeroom teacher or the school nurse (depending on who assisted) will notify parents via email.
- If a physical examination of intimate areas is required, **only medical personnel** may perform it, and **written parental authorization is mandatory**. The procedure must occur in the presence of:
  - School Doctor
  - School Nurse
  - A witness (homeroom teacher or teaching assistant)
- Staff must understand their limits and only perform intimate care tasks they are trained and comfortable handling. Staff should seek assistance when unsure.

- If during intimate care, accidental harm or a situation with potential for misinterpretation occurs, staff must reassure the student, ensure safety, and report the incident in writing to the Designated Safeguarding Team.
- Staff must notify both the Designated Safeguarding Team and parents of any concern arising during intimate care provision.

**At all times, regardless of age:**

- Treat the student with dignity and respect while ensuring privacy.
- Safeguard the student's self-esteem and sense of bodily autonomy. Positive body image and self-awareness are protective factors against abuse.
- No comments should be made regarding the student's physical appearance or any odor.

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**Updated: September 2025**