Early Bird Request Policy

The Early Bird Request form is used by staff to request time off. This form is distributed twice a year, in August and January, to provide all staff with an equal opportunity to request time off and to help the Program Coordinator to manage and approve time off fairly.

Submission Deadlines

Each Early Bird Request form has a specific due date. Submitting your request by this deadline is strongly encouraged. The order in which requests are submitted will **not** influence approval, and seniority is **not** a factor in approval decisions. Requests submitted after the deadline may be excluded from consideration as part of the Early Bird process.

High-Demand Periods

There are certain times of the year—such as summer months, public school vacations, and the days surrounding holidays—when demand for time off is particularly high. During these times, it is essential that Early Bird Requests are completed accurately and submitted on time. Staff are encouraged to request time off during peak periods (e.g., summer) even if they are unsure of their plans. Once plans become more concrete, staff may be able to swap time off with other team members.

Staff Absence Guidelines

The number of staff members who can take time off on any given day is based on the time of year:

- **May, June, July, and August:** Up to **six** staff members per day may be approved for time off.
- **All other months:** Up to **three** staff members per day may be approved for time off. The Program Director, in consultation with the scheduler, may approve more or fewer staff absences depending on the specific needs of the program.

Approval Prioritization

Time off approval follows two key guidelines:

1. **Past Time Off:** Staff who have already been approved for time off before, during, or after a specific holiday will be given lower priority for time off during that same holiday period in the following year.
2. **Reason for Request:** Priority will be given to requests with significant personal reasons, such as family reunions, weddings, or other important events. While travel plans (such as plane tickets or hotel reservations) are not a factor in time off approval, if staff need to make travel arrangements in advance of the Early Bird distribution, they should discuss the situation with the Program Director for special consideration of time off.

Post-Approval Process

Once Early Bird Requests have been processed and approved, the Administrator will post the approved requests on the IC3 website in the employee section. An email will be sent to all staff to notify them that Early Bird Requests have been processed. It is each staff member's responsibility to check the time-off calendar for their approved days off. For any questions or concerns, please consult the Program Coordinator.

This policy ensures fairness and transparency in the time-off approval process and helps maintain adequate staffing levels throughout the year.