

Our Ref: TM/MT/LR

**Education, Communities & Organisational Development  
Corporate Director: Ruth Binks**

Your Ref: UN/AS

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Dear Parent/Carer

Inverclyde Council applies the guidance on the management of attendance and absence in Scottish schools detailed in the Scottish Government publication 'Included, Engaged and Involved 'Part 1: Attendance in Scottish Schools'. This document clarifies the definition of attendance and provides guidance on how different kinds of non-attendance is classified and reported on by the Scottish Government. The full guidance can be accessed on the Scottish Government website at [www.scotland.gov.uk](http://www.scotland.gov.uk) or is available from your child's school.

Attendance is defined as participation in a programme of educational activities arranged by the school. Activities arranged by the school such as work experience, educational visits, visits to university and college and study leave during national examinations are classified as attendance. Absence from school is divided into 'authorised' and 'unauthorised absence'. Authorised absences occur for reasons including sickness, medical or dental treatment, bereavement or weddings of immediate family where the school is informed by the parent of the reasons for absence. Unauthorised absences include unexplained absence, truancy and most family holidays during term time.

The classification of the majority of family holidays taken during term time as unauthorised absence is part of the commitment to secure educational improvement and is recognition of the relationship between attendance and achievement. Unnecessary absence is disruptive to the continuity of education and can easily result in young people missing the teaching of key ideas and finding themselves struggling to cope on their return. It also sends a negative message to young people about the importance of education.

Schools may only authorise absence for a pupil taking a family holiday during term time under the following very exceptional circumstances, if it follows serious or terminal illness, bereavement or other traumatic events within a family.

Inverclyde council is committed to working in partnership with parents to raise the achievements of all young people. Reducing absence is a key priority and we seek the co-operation of parents to meet this objective. The council endorses the view that holidays during term time are detrimental to young people's learning and strongly advocates that parents arrange holidays during official holiday periods. Head Teachers have been advised of the guidelines within the circular and have been asked to record the majority of family holidays as 'unauthorised absences'.

If you have any enquiries on this issue please discuss them with your child's head teacher in the first instance. Many thanks for your co-operation in this matter.

Kind regards



**Tony McEwan**  
**Head of Culture, Communities and Educational Resources**

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