

Transportation Overview For All Westmount Families 2011/2012

TRANSPORTATION AT WESTMOUNT

Westmount Charter School's transportation system was established to provide all parents with an alternative for transporting their child to and from the school. **Under the *School Act*, charter schools are not obliged to provide transportation.** This notwithstanding, Westmount is committed to the operation of a cost-effective, efficient and safe bus service for its students. Parents have a choice as to using this **optional** service for their children.

Provided there are no changes to government funding, Westmount will continue to give its **eligible** families the choice between two transportation options:

1. Register for busing and have government funding applied against your busing cost.

OR 2. Register for "Parent Provided" transportation which entitles Westmount to apply for government funding on your behalf. Your portion of the government funding is then payable to you at the end of the school year.

Parents must confirm registration for either option before September 30th. This is Alberta Education's funding deadline.

GOVERNMENT TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

Alberta Education provides Westmount with a transportation grant for eligible transported students registered at the school as of September 30. In order to be **eligible** for funding a student must live more than 2.4 km from the school. Distance is measured by the shortest route using roadways, pathways and walkways in accordance with the *School Act*, section 51 (4) (c), as follows: "the distance of a residence from a school or from a bus route is the shortest distance measured along a traveled road or public right of way between the school site or the bus route, as the case may be, and the nearest roadway access at the boundary of the quarter section or lot on which the student's parent resides".

In order to receive funding, an eligible student must be either riding the school bus **OR** the school and parent must have entered into a written agreement for the parent to provide transportation.

PARENT-PROVIDED (PP) TRANSPORTATION

GENERAL PROVISION

Parents can enter into an agreement with Westmount Charter School that entitles them to individual funding for Parent-Provided (PP) Transportation for arranging their child(ren)'s transportation to and from school each day.

CONDITIONS FOR FUNDING

1. Child(ren) must live greater than 2.4 km from the school
2. Parents must register their transportation choice thru the Online Registration system before September 30th
3. Applications for PP funding will not be available to parents after September 30th.

DISBURSEMENT

Alberta Education's transportation grant for 2011/2012 is \$538 per eligible parent transported student. Net payment from Westmount to our PP registered families will be \$488 which provides for a \$50 fee for program administration.

Disbursement of funding to PP registered families is made after the end of the school year, once final funding has been received by Alberta Education. We receive our funding in 1/12th's from Alberta Education therefore we do not receive our funding in its entirety until August each school year. The board office will notify you of payment details late in the school year. If our financial situation affords us the ability to pay this funding in June of the current school year we will do so. All PP Funding is paid by direct deposit to your bank account. Further information regarding this will be sent out later in the school year to all registered and eligible families.

CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTION

Parents who are applying for PP Transportation funding can subsequently make a charitable donation to Westmount Charter School of either ALL or a portion of the funding. A tax receipt will be provided for all donations over \$25. We are required by Alberta Education to pay out the PP funding in its entirety and so any donations made of this funding can be done after you have received the funding in your bank account. Further information will be sent out later in the school year advising you of the process to donate your funding back to the school.

BUSING

In broad terms:

- Busing is a voluntary, fee-based transportation alternative provided for students who reside more than 2.4 km from the school. Stops are located within Calgary city limits only.
- Busing operates as a separate stand-alone program, payable by grants from Alberta Education combined with user fees on a break-even basis. In 2011/2012, the school is operating 11 bus routes and full time bus fees are \$750 per student. Part time busing is available for \$400 per student.
- Decisions regarding routes and stops are made jointly by the school and the bus carrier with a focus on safety, efficiency and cost.
- The bus and any other vehicle used for student transportation is considered to be an extension of the school and the school's policies and administrative procedures respecting student conduct and student discipline accordingly apply.

BUS ROUTES

Bus Routes for the school year are designed based on the bus registration information received by April 30th during the registration process. Route planning begins on May 1st and is usually completed by the end of June. A non refundable deposit of \$100 is required with each bus registration.

Locations of routes and their stops are determined by Westmount in consultation with our carrier Southland Transportation Ltd. Bus stops serving students who attend Westmount Charter School are congregated stops to serve more than one family or community. The congregated stops will result in the need for some parents to drive their children to the bus stop. It is impossible to provide door-to-door, or end-of-block service due to the distance the buses must travel. Bus routes are to travel along major arterial routes. Requests to add or move congregated stops will not be considered.

Westmount has a "No Go" zone for our buses which includes but is not limited to the downtown core, Inglewood community, Industrial parks and many of the newer communities developing on the outskirts of Calgary. For a complete list of our current routes please refer to the Transportation section of the school's website.

It is also expected that students living closer to the school will have shorter ride times than students living further from the school. Students living in the outskirts of Calgary should expect minimum ride times of 60 – 75 minutes each way. This is a common driving time for Charter schools.

THE WESTMOUNT TRANSPORTATION HANDBOOK

The Westmount Transportation Handbook, which fully describes our Transportation policies and procedures is currently located on our school website.

We urge all parents to visit www.westmountcharter.com to review the Handbook and to be well acquainted with its many components prior to finalizing your Transportation arrangements with Westmount.

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

Please contact: Transportation Services
Monday-Friday, 9AM-12PM
Email: Karen Shaul
schoolbus@westmountcharter.com
Phone: 921-BUSS (2877)