



Westmount Elementary Campus Intake Procedures 2019 – 2020

General Questions

1. How do we define giftedness at Westmount Charter School?

- “Students are gifted when they perform, or show potential for performing, remarkably high levels of accomplishment in learning rate, depth of knowledge, and reasoning and problem-solving abilities when compared to others of their age, experience, and environment.” (Alberta Education)
- Giftedness is asynchronous development in which advanced cognitive abilities and heightened intensity combine to create inner experiences and awareness that are qualitatively different from the norm. This asynchrony increases with higher intellectual capacity. The uniqueness of the gifted renders them particularly vulnerable and requires modifications in parenting, teaching and counseling in order for them to develop optimally (Columbus Group, 1991).

2. Why does Westmount Charter School use an intelligence test (IQ Test) as part of its multiple criteria in the intake procedure?

To apply to Westmount Charter School, ONLY an intelligence test (WPPSI, WISC or STANFORD – BINET) is required. (See number 6 for definition of these acronyms)

- Individual IQ tests provide the best information when making important programming decisions for gifted students – much better than group tests (Silverman, 2013).
- An appropriate IQ test for the gifted students should be an excellent measure of abstract reasoning (Silverman, 2013). Individually administered intelligence tests such as the WISC-IV, WISC-V, WAIS-IV and SB-5 provide a student’s profile of verbal and performance problem-solving abilities. They also provide the opportunity for skilled observation, by a qualified psychologist, in a controlled situation with exposure to stimulating materials.
- IQ (intelligence quotient) tests are important tools for recognizing the special education needs of intellectually gifted students. Using a standardized intelligence test as a valid instrument, and one of several broad range criteria,

ensures Westmount Charter School's identification procedure is compatible with its definition of giftedness and programming services offered.

- The intelligence test provides a more objective picture of a child's intellectual abilities than teacher judgment, parent recommendations, grades, achievement tests, and other measures (Silverman, 2013).

3. What is the cost of a psychological assessment?

- The Psychologists' Association of Alberta's (PAA) published fee schedule currently recommends \$200 per hour for assessment services.
- The intelligence test will provide the FSIQ and/or the GAI required by Westmount as one of its criteria in the application process. The approximate cost is \$1000.00.
- The cost of a cognitive and academic assessment (not required by Westmount Charter School, but may be recommended by your psychologist if there is a concern about a learning disability) or a full assessment will vary according to hours billed.
- It is most important to discuss cost with the psychologist who may be testing your son or daughter. Psychologists may have different payment plans, and this should also be discussed.
- *To apply to Westmount Charter School, ONLY an intelligence test (WPPSI, WISC or STANFORD – BINET) is required.*

4. Could the cost of the psychological assessment be covered by a family's health insurance provider?

- Yes, often this cost is covered by health insurance providers. Please check your family's personal health insurance plan or ask your carrier's advisor. Some plans cover part or all of a psychological assessment.

5. Does Westmount recommend specific psychologists for its intake procedure?

No. Westmount Charter School recommends that you consult your physician or go to the following website for a list of Calgary psychologists:

- <https://www.yellowpages.ca/search/si/1/Psychologists/Calgary+AB>

- https://www.psychologistsassociation.ab.ca/site/doctor_search_agreement

6. What do acronyms such as the WPPSI-IV, WISC-IV, WAIS-IV, SB-5, and CCAT mean?

- Wechsler Pre-School and Primary Test of Intelligence (WPPSI): an intelligence test administered by, or under the supervision of, a psychologist to an individual child from the age of 2 years, 6 months to the age of 7 years, 7 months. It is currently in its fourth edition (W PPSI-IV).
- Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC): an intelligence test administered by, or under the supervision of, a psychologist to an individual student from the age of 6 years to the age of 16 years. It is currently in its fourth edition (WISC-IV).
- Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (WAIS): an intelligence test administered by, or under the supervision of, a psychologist to older adolescents and adults, from the ages of 16 years to 90 years. It is currently in its fourth edition (WAIS-IV).
- Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale (SB-5): an intelligence test administered by, or under the supervision of, a psychologist to individuals from the age of 2 years to 85 years. It measures cognitive abilities as well as the overall level of an individual's cognitive development. It is currently in its fifth edition (SB-5).
- Canadian Cognitive Abilities Test (CCAT): an ability test administered by, or under the supervision of, a qualified person, not necessarily a psychologist, to a group. It assesses the development of cognitive abilities in the verbal, quantitative and nonverbal reasoning areas.

7. What are the subtests included in an intelligence test?

- WPPSI-IV is comprised of subtests in the following areas:
 - Verbal Comprehension Index (VCI)
 - Visual Spatial Index (VSI)
 - Working Memory Index (WMI)
 - Fluid Reasoning Index (FRI)
 - Processing Speed Index (PSI)

- WISC-IV & WAIS-IV are comprised of subtests in the following areas:
 - Verbal Comprehension (VCI)
 - Perceptual Reasoning (PRI)
 - Working Memory (W MI)
 - Processing Speed (PSI)
- The subtests are scored on how accurately and, for timed subtests, how quickly questions are answered. Sometimes students who are thoughtful and perfectionistic or who have learning disabilities, Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or mood disorders may take longer to complete the answers to test questions.
- Scores can be lowered because it takes gifted students longer to answer on the timed subtests than other students. As a result, gifted children may obtain a Full Scale Intelligence Score (FSIQ) that doesn't truly reflect their actual ability. This may prevent these children from qualifying for gifted programs.

8. What is a Full Scale Intelligence Quotient (FSIQ)?

- Full Scale Intelligence Quotient (FSIQ) describes a person's complete cognitive capacity. The WISC-IV, which generates a Full Scale IQ (FSIQ) score, is the most commonly used test to measure a student's cognitive capacity for our mid-high age group (grades 5 – 12).
- Intelligence testing is further described on websites such as the following:
<http://www.school-psychology.com.au/blog/wechsler-intelligence-scale-for-children-wisc-iv/>

9. What is a General Ability Index (GAI)?

- The General Ability Index (GAI) is an excellent indicator of abstract reasoning ability. It is derived from the 6 core subtests of the WISC-IV comprising the VCI (Verbal Comprehension Index) and the PRI (Perceptual Reasoning Index). Timed subtests, such as the working memory and processing speed are eliminated in the calculation. The GAI and the VCI serve as the most reliable measures of giftedness (Silverman, 2013, p. 178).

10. What are the differences between a GAI and FSIQ?

- The GAI does not replace the FSIQ. It should, however, be reported and interpreted along with the FSIQ and all other index scores including the Working Memory Index (WMI) and Processing Speed Index (PSI).
- FSIQ includes measures of working memory and processing speed. Neither the working memory nor the processing speed is highly indicative of general intelligence (general intelligence is often referred to as “g”).
- GAI includes only reasoning ability measures, which is the best measure of “g” and more indicative of giftedness than the FSIQ.

11. How can we best identify twice-exceptional students in our intake procedures?

- Gifted children are asynchronous in their development. This means that their cognitive, physical and emotional development happens at different rates, i.e. a child may be 4 years old physically, 7 years old cognitively and 5 years old emotionally.
- How much asynchrony is to be expected for the gifted population, and when is the degree of asynchrony sufficient to suggest that a psychologist should look at the possibility of a learning disability?

The most frequent and pronounced pattern of difference is between the Verbal Comprehension Index (VCI) and the Processing Speed Index (PSI). In recent studies, the VCI has emerged as the best indicator of giftedness and the PSI as the weakest indicator of giftedness. (Silverman, 2013). The condition of twice exceptionality occurs when giftedness is combined with a learning disability. When giftedness is combined with a learning disability, the disability may mask the giftedness and the giftedness may mask the learning disability. This can make the gifted student appear both less able and less disabled. Because of this, individual assessment of twice exceptional children is strongly recommended (Silverman, 2013, p.13).

12. What is the Intake Process at Westmount Charter School’s Elementary Campus?

- For complete information on the intake process at the Elementary Campus, go to:
 - a) <https://www.westmountcharter.com/admissions/k-4-admissions/>
 - b) Click on **Admissions** from the top menu bar
 - c) Review the page carefully.



13. What makes Westmount Charter School (WCS) different?

- WCS is a Charter school for gifted learners. We are publicly funded, have an elected School Board and have a specific educational mandate.

14. What is Westmount's definition of Giftedness?

- Students are gifted when they demonstrate outstanding levels of aptitude (exceptional ability to reason and learn) or competence (documented performance or achievement) when compared to others of their age, experience, and environment. Asynchronous development, a critical aspect of giftedness, combines advanced cognitive abilities and heightened intensity to create inner experiences and awareness that are qualitatively atypical and require modifications in teaching and counselling.

15. What is the population and class size at WCS?

- Our approximate population at the Elementary Campus is 420 students; 880 students at the Mid-High Campus. We typically have four classes per grade from Kindergarten through Grade 4. Our classes have one teacher and may have a Teaching Learning Assistant for part of or all of the day; class size can vary minimally, based on student needs and complexity. Approximate class size is: Kindergarten – 19, Grade 1 – 20, Grade 2 – 21, Grade 3 – 22 and Grade 4 – 23.

16. How old does my child need to be to start Kindergarten?

- Due to amendments in the School Act made by the provincial government, children can start kindergarten in the fall of 2020 if they turn 5 years old on or before **Dec. 31, 2020**.
- Please use our [Kindergarten Calculator](#) to see when your child is eligible to begin Kindergarten at Westmount.



17. Do you offer school tours or open house events?

Unfortunately, we are not able to accommodate the high demand for school tours. We will be holding two Open Houses in September 2019:

- Monday, September 9 @ 7:00 pm
- Monday, September 16 @ 7:00 pm
- *Both presentations take place at the Elementary Campus, 728 – 32 Street NW Calgary*

In addition, we will post photos of some of our classrooms, etc. on our website, to give prospective parents a sense of what our classrooms and hallways look like. In addition, we aim to provide you with as much information as possible through our website. If you still have unanswered questions, please email admissions@westmountcharter.com.

18. Do we need to live in the area to attend WCS?

- No. Our students come from all over Calgary and the surrounding areas; you do not need to live near the school to attend. We have [11 school bus routes](#) that provide transportation to Westmount at an additional cost to the family.

19. How do I find a psychologist to assess my child?

- To find a psychologist that can assess your child, please consult with your family physician or refer to the Yellow Pages or the Psychologists Association of Alberta.

20. English is not my child's first language; will that affect his/her chances?

- Not necessarily. As long as a child has the language skills to complete a psychological assessment, and participate in a meaningful way in our program, we will consider their application. A significant percentage of our students come from homes where English is not the first language.

21. Is there a fee to apply to Westmount Charter School?

- No. There is no fee to apply.

22. Do you keep waitlists from year to year?

- No, we do not maintain waitlists from one year to the next. If your child does not get accepted and you wish to reapply, you may submit an application package the following year.

23. If I apply early, does my child have a better chance of being accepted?

- No. Applications are not considered in the order that they are received. We start to review applications after our admissions deadline has closed.

24. I missed the application deadline. Can I still apply?

- Unfortunately, we do not accept applications after our deadline has closed. If you wish to, you may reapply for the next grade, the next year.

25. How much does it cost to attend WCS?

- Once accepted, we require a \$100 registration deposit, which is then applied as a credit to school fees. As a general guideline, WCS follows the fee guideline set out by Alberta Education. There is an additional fee to use the bus.

26. Is there an option for my child to bus to school?

- Under the School Act, charter schools are not obliged to provide transportation, however, Westmount does. A student must live 2.4 km or more from the school to register for the bus program. Our busing is partially paid for by parents through fees and partially by Alberta Education. We allow for full time and part time riders. Bus rides can average 60 – 75 minutes.

27. Is there before/after care offered at WCS?

- Yes. We have a privately owned company that offers onsite before care and after care. You can contact Janessa at 403-399-6653 or studentcare@westmountcharter.com with any inquires about our before and after school care program. Westmount leases space to the before/after school care, but we do not run it.