

FAQs Grade 4 to 5 Transition

The grade 4 and 5 teams recognize parents and students have many questions regarding the journey “up the hill” as students progress to middle school. Below, you will find answers to some of the most frequently asked questions. If, after reading this document, you have further questions, please email the school administrators.

Please note, for the most part the responses are based on a typical year.

1. Will there be an opportunity to tour the Mid-High campus?

This year, incoming grade 5 students will visit the Mid-High campus digitally. This video will be shared with incoming families on June 8, 2020. As we learn more about school re-entry for the fall, we will determine if we are able to meet with incoming grade 5 students prior to school start up, to introduce them to our campus. Once we return to school, teachers will tour students around to familiarize them with their new building.

2. What is grade 5 going to be like?

For the daily schedule, please see the information slides. Beyond that, the grade 5 program promotes a collaborative learning environment. Highlights of such an environment include: encouraging exploration of unique ideas, developing creative thinking and collaboration to enhance numeracy and literacy skills, through meaningful real-world contexts. Throughout the year, all the grade 5’s work to build a strong community in a variety of ways. Of note, the Grade 5 Teaching Team loops with their students into grade 6!

3. What is Humanities?

Humanities includes Language Arts and Social Studies. It is an opportunity to integrate the two programs of study to enhance learning for both.

4. How are grade 5 homeroom groupings decided?

Grade 5 homeroom classes are based upon the recommendations made by the Grade 4 Teaching Team and Students Services. The Grade 4 Teaching Team has each student identify several friends, for potential class placement. The social-emotional needs of our students play a significant role in guiding the formation of classes.

5. What is SOURCE and who teaches it?

SOURCE is a Westmount-created class focusing on the development of the whole gifted child. It is taught by your child’s homeroom teacher. SOURCE focuses on development in the following areas: Sense of Self, Organization, Understanding Relationships, and Career Education.

6. When will I know the name of my child’s homeroom/SOURCE teacher and their schedule? How many other teachers might my child have, other than a homeroom/SOURCE teacher?

We plan for the Teaching Team to be posted in PowerSchool by the end of June. Students will have two core teachers (one for math/science, one for Humanities), as well as other specialists for physical education, second languages and band. The Grade 5 class schedules will be posted in PowerSchool in August.

7. How does math ability affect student groupings?

Students' homeroom classes are not based upon academic ability. We will determine where students are at in the fall, in math and their other subjects, and focus on appropriate programming to support individual learning and growth. Our teachers have the knowledge and skills to teach a variety of levels, within their discipline.

8. Will my child have a locker?

All students are assigned a locker. Due to limited space, students are required to share a locker with a student from their homeroom. Partners will be determined in class, usually after discussion about choosing a partner. Lockers are a full size with 2 shelves and multiple hooks. Lockers are located near students' classrooms. Students are asked to purchase a good quality numeric combination lock for their locker. It is recommended students practice opening their lock over the summer, so they are familiar with how to use a combination lock. Please note, your child may be using their partner's lock in September since they are sharing. The second lock is a back up for what we have found to be needed during the year.

Please note, the Grade 5 Teaching Team requests parents to purchase one of the reliable, traditional rotational numeric combination locks, not a letter or directional lock. Thank you!

9. Will my child have recess?

The school day is divided into five class blocks, including a 40-minute morning mini block, and a 40-minute lunch, which includes a lunch recess. Teachers flex the time to include a morning recess. Students also engage in a daily P.E. class in the afternoon.

10. Will my child have time to eat a snack?

There is no designated "snack time", as students are allowed to eat healthy foods in class as needed.

11. How much time will my child have to eat lunch? Where will they eat?

After a 20-minute lunch recess, grade 5 and 6 students will have approximately 20 minutes to eat lunch together in the cafeteria. Students need to bring their own lunch, ready to eat, as there is no food service, nor microwaves available.

12. Does the Mid-High campus have short Friday's?

At the Mid-high, Friday's begin at the normal time and end at 2:00 p.m. Please ensure your child has a way home at that time, if they do not take the bus.

13. Where will my child go the morning of the first day of school?

Grade 5 students will enter the building through the main doors, go upstairs to the second floor and on to the cafeteria. People and signs will direct students to the cafeteria.

SOURCE/Homeroom teachers' names will be posted on a sign and students will sit with their homeroom class until instructions are given. The Grade 5 Teaching Team and TLAs will be present to help students identify who their SOURCE teacher is.

14. When will I be given the list of supplies that I need to purchase for my child?

Supply lists will be posted on the school website prior to the end of the school year under the appropriate grade.

15. Will I need to send all of the supplies with my child on the first day of school?

On the first day, please send your child with a pencil kit, lunch and their communal class supplies. The communal class supplies are noted on the supply list.

16. Will students use agendas?

Students are given an agenda on the first day of school and are required to use it to write down important events, reminders and due dates. The expectation is students complete agendas daily and parents check and sign agendas each evening to support their child.

17. How will teachers communicate to parents?

The Grade 5 Teaching Team uses PowerLearn to communicate. This, along with agendas, is the primary mode of communication for class events, updates and reminders. Should teachers require one-on-one communication, they will email or call parents directly. If parents would like to contact teachers, the preferred method is through teacher email:

teacherfirstname.teacherlastname@westmountcharter.com

Please note, during the school day, your child's teachers are busy interacting with students and are not on their computers. Emails will be responded to within 48 hours. If you need to contact your child with an important/ urgent message during the school day, please phone the main office and they will pass the message along.

18. Will students have their own PowerLearn account?

All students at the mid-high campus have their own PowerLearn account. The Grade 5 Teaching Team will support students learning on how to use this tool independently.

19. Is there daily homework?

As a general rule, teachers do not assign homework for the sake of homework. Many students have busy lives outside of school and require time to relax, play and interact with their families. Having said that, students may have work to complete at home for longer-running projects or if they were unable to complete their work in the class time provided. Students are expected to do some weekly review at home, due to the nature of the course, such as math, band, second language, or for larger tests or quizzes.

20. How is student progress reported?

Assessment is an on-going practice within classrooms. Your child's teachers will provide information regarding our reporting system (E, A, U, D, N) in September.

PowerSchool is a "live" system, meaning student assignment marks will be visible at any time in the system. Both parents and students are encouraged to check on a regular basis. End of term grades will be posted on specified "Reporting Period" dates, which will be communicated by the school once they are determined.

21. How many parent teacher meetings are there a year?

Formal scheduled interviews occur in November and March. Parents are welcome to set up a meeting with their child's teacher whenever needed outside of those times.

22. Does my child need a special Westmount shirt for P.E. classes?

A Westmount P.E. shirt is not mandatory for grade 5 and 6 students. If students would like to purchase a Westmount shirt, they will be available at the beginning of the school year. All P.E. shirts have a place on the back for the student's first name and last initial, to be printed in permanent marker, to decrease the number of lost shirts. **Please note, all students are required to wear indoor shoes for P.E.**

23. How do options/complementary courses work?

All grade 5 students are enrolled in Band (full-year), French (half-year), Spanish (half-year), and Art (full-year).

24. How do grade 5 students choose and receive an instrument for band?

The Band Director will reach out by email, detailing the instrument selection process. This is a collaborative process between teacher and student, recognizing many instruments are required to form a band.

25. Will my child need a computer?

Students will use computers at school. In grade 5, students are not required to have their own device, though families may prefer this and send a device with their child. In grade 6, students will be required to have their own device to use at school daily.

26. What kinds of clubs are available to my child?

There are a wide variety of clubs and activities for students to engage in during the lunch break. These will be communicated to your child early in the Fall.

27. Is there a library?

Our campus has a beautiful new library/Learning Commons. It is an atrium-like setting with many different kinds of resources for students and staff. Typically, it is used to hold larger gatherings as well.

28. How much interaction will my child have with the students in the upper grades?

The second floor of our campus is predominantly designated for our grade 5 and 6 students. Naturally, with students moving throughout the building, there will be some interaction with older students, such as Peer Support, a group of high school students who promote well-being for all students and Student Council, a group of elected students from all grades, who create activities to support a sense of community within our school.

29. Who is responsible for Student Services? How do I contact someone if my child needs extra assistance?

Wendy Cole is our Student Services Coordinator. You can email her at wendy.cole@westmountcharter.com or phone her as needed. Having said that, your child's homeroom teacher is a good starting person should you require more information or support for your child.

30. Is my child allowed to leave campus unattended?

Grade 5 and 6 students are required to stay on campus all day, unless accompanied by a staff member. The opportunity to leave campus unattended is permitted in grade 7.

31. Is there before or after-school care available at the Mid-High campus?

We do not have after-school care at our campus.

32. How many students are in one class?

Year to year, we have four grade 5 classes of 27-28 students.

33. What have we learned about online learning that we will include in September?

Staff will be reflecting on students' experiences and learning online, since the COVID-19 pandemic began. We will look to identify what has been of benefit to student learning and what we might want to continue.

34. What will learning/classes look like in the fall?

At this time we are not sure. We take direction from the Chief Medical Officer regarding the health protocols we need to follow. Alberta Education will direct us in what will be taken up for teaching and learning. At this time, we are planning for different scenarios, for both health and learning, while awaiting more information.

35. How many new to Westmount students will there be in grade 5 in Sept 2020?

We are looking forward to 18, new to Westmount, grade 5 students joining us this coming year.

36. How is bullying handled?

Westmount's Charter and Student Code of Conduct direct our work with students, including in the area of bullying. We respond to all reported incidences and ask that students tell an adult about any incidences. Our goal for students, both the victim and the bully, is to learn and grow in positive ways from the experience.

37. Are Gr 5s allowed cell phones?

Parents determine if their child is allowed a cell phone. We ask parents not to call or text their child during class times. Teachers will determine if cell phones may be present/used in their class.

If you have any other questions, please email: mhadmin@westmountcharter.com