



Volunteer Handbook

2023-2024

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Contents

Welcome Westmount Volunteers	2
Who can be a School Volunteer and how are Volunteers screened?.....	2
Volunteer Categories Determine Whether a PIC is Required.....	2
Overview of Police Information Check (PIC) Process.....	3
Steps to Become a Volunteer at Westmount.....	4
VOLUNTEER DRIVERS	5
EXPECTATIONS OF VOLUNTEERS AND CODE OF ETHICS.....	6
Important Processes to Note	7
Appendix A – Westmount Volunteer Categories.....	8

Welcome Westmount Volunteers

Your contribution to our school is greatly valued and appreciated. We hope that you find your volunteer experience at Westmount Charter School both enjoyable and rewarding. Thank you for your support.

Who can be a School Volunteer and how are Volunteers screened?

At Westmount Charter School (WCS), a volunteer is defined as a person who assists our school and/ or students in either curricular or extra-curricular activities. All volunteer positions must have a specified purpose and must be sponsored by the teacher, school Principal, or School Council executive.

As a WCS volunteer, you are placed in a position of trust with students, staff and property of WCS. Therefore, **dependent on the type of volunteer activity in which you are participating**, reasonable background checks must be completed prior to confirming your eligibility and inviting you to volunteer. The basic background check you are required to complete is called a **PIC** (Police Information Check), including a vulnerable sector check (VSC). **A PIC is valid for 3 years; there are no exceptions.** [Click here to visit the Calgary Police Service PIC website.](#)

Note that guest speakers or presenters, visitors to the school, and parents assisting only their own child in the school are not considered to be volunteers, and therefore do not require a security clearance.

In addition to the requirement for a Police Information Check (PIC), the school Principal may also choose to interview you and/ or check references.

Volunteer Categories Determine Whether a PIC is Required

At WCS we have **two categories** of volunteer activities:

1. Category A and
2. Category B.

Volunteers performing activities which fall under **Category A** must complete a Police Information Check (PIC) including a **Vulnerable Sector Check (VSC)**. **Category B** Volunteers are not required to complete a PIC.

See [Appendix A – Volunteer Categories](#) in this document. If you are unsure whether your volunteer activity falls under Category A or B, please contact the Elementary or Mid-High Office at ecadmin@westmountcharter.com (K-Gr 4) or mhadmin@westmountcharter.com (Gr 5-12).

Overview of Police Information Check (PIC) Process

Category “A” volunteers are responsible for providing WCS with a current **Police Information Check (PIC) with a Vulnerable Sector Check (VSC)** or *certified criminal record check* from the RCMP before they can volunteer at Westmount.

1. Contact the Elementary or Mid-High office by email or phone to let them know you wish to volunteer.
2. If you wish to apply for a PIC with VSC **online**, we will send you an email and an invitation link to initiate your application.
3. **If you wish to apply in-person**, we will provide you with a VSPN letter to take to a police office (*Only the Westwinds location accepts in-person PIC with VSC applications*).
4. Your PIC/VSC will expire in **3 years** and you will be responsible for reapplying for a new PIC/VSC before it expires. (You may reapply within 3 months of expiration.) If this is not done, you will have to wait for the new PIC/VSC to arrive before you can resume volunteering.
5. There is no cost to apply for an online or in-person Police Information Check if you follow the directions in this document or on the WCS website.

Further instructions may be found on the [Westmount Volunteering page](#) or on [page 4](#) of this document.

All information regarding security clearances is strictly confidential and may not be used or disclosed in accordance with this regulation and the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

Steps to Become a Volunteer at Westmount

To be a volunteer at WCS you must follow the steps listed below. You may also review the [Westmount Parent Volunteering page](#) for a full description of the Volunteer Process.

1. Read [WCS Administrative Policy \(A.P.\) 555 - Volunteers](#).
2. Determine whether you are a Category “A” or Category “B” volunteer.
 - **If you are a Category “B” Volunteer** – you do not require a PIC with VSC. Complete the Westmount Charter School [Volunteer Registration Form](#) and email it to the Elementary or Mid-High Office: ecadmin@westmountcharter.com (K-Gr 4) or mhadmin@westmountcharter.com (Gr 5-12) Select the location where you will be doing most of your volunteering.
 - **If you are a Category “A” volunteer and you wish to apply online**
 - a) Email us at ecadmin@westmountcharter.com (K-Gr 4) or mhadmin@westmountcharter.com (Gr 5-12) and let us know you wish to become a volunteer using the online PIC system. We will send you a **PIC invitation email**.
 - b) Click the **link** in the email and proceed with the application. **This link provides an automatic fee waiver for the process, so you must click the link to begin the process and apply the voucher.**

***Note that if you apply online and this is the first time you are accessing the new PIC system (launched June 26, 2023), you will have to create a new account during the process, even if you had an account in the old PIC system.*

- c) Complete the Westmount Charter School [Volunteer Registration Form](#) and email it to the Elementary or Mid-High Office.
 - d) If you will be driving students when you volunteer, also complete a [Volunteer Driver Form and Declaration](#) and email it to the school along with photocopies of your Driver’s License, Insurance, Registration and Driver Abstract.
 - e) The Calgary Police Service will send you an email when the PIC with VSC is complete. Log into your online account to view your completed PIC/VSC.
 - f) Download your results letter in PDF format and email it to ecadmin@westmountcharter.com (K-Gr 4) or mhadmin@westmountcharter.com (Gr 5-12). *****The PDF is password protected. Please provide us with the password for the document.**
- **If you are a Category “A” Volunteer and you wish to apply in person**
 - a) Email us at ecadmin@westmountcharter.com (K-Gr 4) or mhadmin@westmountcharter.com (Gr 5-12) and let us know you wish to apply in person to become a volunteer.
 - b) We will provide you with a **VSPN letter** to take to the police office. **You may only apply in person at the Westwinds CPS Office: 5111 47 Street NE.** Once there, you will be asked to provide the VSPN letter from Westmount. They will require two pieces of identification (one must be photo ID).
 - c) Complete the Westmount Charter School [Volunteer Registration Form](#) and email it to the Elementary or Mid-High Office.
 - d) If you will be driving students when you volunteer, also complete a [Volunteer Driver Form and Declaration](#) and email it to the school along with photocopies

- of your Driver's License, Insurance, Registration and Driver Abstract.
- e) The Calgary Police Service will contact you when the PIC with VSC is complete.
 - f) Send us a copy of your results (you may scan a paper copy) and email it to: ecadmin@westmountcharter.com (K-Gr 4) or mhadmin@westmountcharter.com (Gr 5-12).

About the Volunteer Registration Form

The completion of a Westmount Charter School (WCS) Volunteer Registration Form is required when you begin volunteering **and every three years thereafter**. By completing the form, you agree to abide by the conditions that protect the safety, confidentiality and working environment of the school. You also make a signed declaration with regard to criminal charges.

VOLUNTEER DRIVERS

Every year, WCS Insurance and Risk Management require the following in order to assess the qualifications of drivers:

- valid Police Information Check (PIC) with Vulnerable Sector Check (VSC) (no older than 3 years),
- current and valid driver's license,
- current registration,
- driver Abstract* obtained from an Alberta Registry Office (the individual must have a safe driving record with less than six demerit points), and
- proof of a minimum \$2,000,000 public liability and property damage insurance coverage.

Volunteer Drivers must complete a [Volunteer Driver Application and Declaration form](#) and submit it to the school, along with photocopies of their Driver's License, Insurance, Registration and Driver Abstract.

All volunteer drivers are to advise administrators in writing immediately if there is a change to the above.

The vehicle must be in safe driving condition with working seatbelts and proper tires for the road conditions.

These are required by WCS Insurance and Risk Management in order to assess the qualifications of drivers.

**A Driver Abstract may be obtained for a small fee from any Alberta Registries office.*

EXPECTATIONS OF VOLUNTEERS AND CODE OF ETHICS

All volunteers are responsible to act in the best interests of students, parents, visitors, fellow volunteers and employees of the WCS. This includes treating all students, parents, visitors, fellow volunteers and employees of WCS with dignity and respect.

Volunteers will behave in a manner that respects the dignity and rights of all persons without prejudice as to race, age, ancestry, place of origin, colour, religious beliefs, gender, gender identity, gender expression, physical or mental disability, marital status, family status, socioeconomic status, and sexual orientation.

Administrators and the Charter Board have the right to request a volunteer cease their activities and dismiss the volunteer where appropriate.

If a volunteer has a concern, it should first be brought to the attention of an administrator and if unresolved, subsequently to the Superintendent and ultimately to the Charter Board. If a conflict of interest exists between two members at the administrator and direct supervisory level, concerns arising under this policy are addressed at the next level beyond the supervisor.

WCS volunteers are required to:

- receive direction from and be accountable to the teacher in charge,
- maintain confidentiality in all matters relating to their role,
- be a positive role model for students,
- report poor student behavior to the teacher in charge,
- have appropriate qualifications for the activity,
- dress appropriately for their duties and present a positive image to the school community,
- refrain from smoking while on school property or on a field trip,
- refrain from bringing children with them who are not students of that class, and
- comply with all applicable WCS policies, regulations and school rules as outlined in WCS [Administrative Procedure AP555](#).

The following code of ethics shall apply to all volunteers at Westmount Charter School:

1. The volunteer must respect confidentiality. It is essential that volunteers never publicly discuss students, parents, or school staff. If there is a concern, the volunteer should contact the teacher first and then, if necessary, the Principal of the school.
For example, should a volunteer have access to information about a given child. (i.e., the child has serious difficulty reading compared to his or her classmates) this information should not be shared, even with the parents of the child. It is the duty of the teacher to report academic progress to parents.
2. The volunteer should respect the professional role, responsibilities and judgment of the teachers. All volunteers are to receive direction from and be accountable to the teacher in charge and/or the Principal of the school.
3. Any discipline problems should be referred to the teacher in charge.

4. Volunteers should ask the teacher and become familiar with the rules and routines of the school such as:
 - the fire drill/lockdown procedures,
 - library policy and procedures, and
 - classroom routines and expectations.
5. Volunteers should dress appropriately for their duties and present a positive image to the community at large.
6. Parents are expected not to use their volunteer time as an opportunity to discuss their own child's progress.
7. Once you have committed to volunteer time please make every effort to honour that commitment. Please inform the teacher if you are not able to come to the school as planned.

The last minute cancellation of a volunteer commitment may result in the activity/ field trip being cancelled.

Important Processes to Note

Emergency / Lockdown Procedure: Each location has a plan to deal with emergency situations. In the event of an emergency, the teacher in charge and/ or school administration will provide further direction. You are expected to participate in fire drills, lockdown drills or other safety related training conducted during the school day.

Field Trips: Teachers will ensure that at least one volunteer is familiar with the particulars of the field trip in the event that the teacher becomes incapacitated.

Parking: Please park in designated visitor parking. If there are any questions, please contact the office staff at the respective campus.

School Council / School Events: When handling money, volunteers are expected to follow procedures outlined by the supervisor in charge.

Sign In / Out: When arriving please report to the main office and sign the volunteer sign-in/out book. A volunteer identification card will be provided to you and we ask that you wear this at all times; this helps us to ensure that all adults in the building are here on official school business.

When you are finished volunteering, please sign out and return the volunteer identification card.

Valuables: For the safety and security of personal belongings, please avoid bringing valuables into the school unless absolutely necessary. WCS is not responsible for lost or stolen personal property.

Washroom: Please use only the washrooms designated for adults or staff.

Appendix A – Westmount Volunteer Categories

NOTE: The category lists are not exhaustive and represent examples only. If you are unsure about which category your volunteer activity falls within, please contact the main office at the Elementary or Mid-High Campuses.

Category “A” Volunteer Activities PIC with VSC is required	Category “B” Volunteer Activities PIC with VSC is not required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chaperones for field trips (local, provincial, national or international) • Classroom assistance under the direction and supervision of a teacher • Unsupervised work with students • Driving students to school-related events • Assist with assemblies or drama productions, working directly with students • Learning Commons (library) - work with students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bulletin board development and maintenance/Landscape maintenance • Science Fairs/Bottle drives/ Stampeder games parking/ Silent auctions • Building/take down of sets for drama productions without students • Grant writing • Parent information meetings or workshop set-up • Staff appreciation year-end breakfast • Organizing parents for special projects