

FAQ's about the Transition to Grade 5 and 6

The Grade 4, 5 and 6 teams recognize that parents and students have many questions regarding the journey “up the hill” as our students progress to the middle school. Below, please find answers to frequently asked questions.

If you have any further questions please send an email to transitions@westmountcharter.com. We anticipate a successful transition for our students!

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

Students will visit the Mid-High campus with their homeroom teachers. Parent volunteers will be needed to accompany the classes. These tours will be arranged with the grades 4 and 5 teaching teams. During the first week of school teachers will tour students to familiarize them with the MH Campus. Tours will include location of washrooms, the cafeteria and other important places.

Grade 5 students will have an opportunity to discuss with grade 6 students what they might expect at this new grade level.

2. What is grade 5 and 6 going to be like?

Both programs will promote a collaborative learning environment. Highlights of such an environment include: encouraging exploration of unique ideas, developing creative thinking, and collaborating to enhance the numeracy and literacy skills through meaningful, real-world contexts. The year will be organized to address themes and/or big questions. All curriculum objectives will be met using an integrated approach facilitated through flexible and structured design to increase student engagement, choice and pace.

The theme for grade 5 is: Inspired P.L.A.E. (Participating in Life through Authentic Experiences)

The theme for grade 6 is: Connections

As an added note: The grade 5 teaching team will be looping with their students into grade 6.

3. Will my child be grouped according to their math ability?

Grade 4 practice	Grade 5/6 practice
In Grade 4, students were placed into Builders, Investigators and Explorers groupings based on input from their Grade 3 Math teachers and the results of their Grade 4 pre-test. This information was given to you with their report card at the end of Grade 3.	Yes, pre-assessment of math ability will be done in May 2015 and based on those results along with grade 4 or grade 5 teacher recommendations and additional affective factors, students will receive programming at their identified level of ability.

4. Will my child have a locker?

Students will be asked to purchase a good quality combination lock and will have a main locker located on the second floor. This locker will be shared with another student in their homeroom which means they will have to share a lock as well. Although students should learn how a combination lock works over the summer, they may be using their partner's lock. Students will also have a gym locker, and will need a separate lock.

5. Where will my child go in the morning on the first day of school?

Grade 4 practice	Grade 5 practice	Grade 6 practice
On the first day of school at the Elementary campus, students were met on the field by their teachers holding large signs, and anyone who was unsure of their homeroom teacher could ask a designated staff member. Parents were requested to leave their children in the care of their teacher rather than enter the school with them.	On the first day of school students will meet in the cafeteria on the second floor where they will be introduced to their teaching team.	On the first day of school students will head to their first block classes.

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

Grade 4 practice	Grade 5/6 practice
In Grade 4, students had a homeroom teacher, specialists for Music and Physical Education, and depending on their math grouping, may have had a different teacher from the Grade 4 team for Math classes. Names of teachers were given to the students on the last day of school, on their report cards.	The teaching team will be posted in HomeLogic by the end of June 2015. Students will have two main core teachers as well as other specialists.

7. When will I know my child’s class schedule?

Grade 4 practice	Grade 5/6 practice
Students were given a schedule by their homeroom teacher, during the first week of school.	Class schedules will be posted in HomeLogic by the end of June 2015.

8. My child needs a special Westmount shirt for gym classes. When and where do I purchase that? How much will it cost?

Starting May 4, 2015, P.E. shirts can be purchased online through the Westmount website. <http://reg1.westmountcharter.com/>. The cost is \$15 per shirt. **A Westmount P.E. purple shirt is mandatory for all grade 5 – 8 students.** T-Shirts will be available to pick up by end of June, 2015 or at the beginning of the school year in September, 2015. *All shirts have a place on the outside back for student’s first name and last initial to be printed in permanent marker.*

9. What is a day like in Grade 5/6?

Grade 4 practice	Grade 5/6 practice
In Grade 4, students’ days were broken into nine 35-minute blocks.	The day will be divided into four blocks with a 40-minute lunch (which includes a recess). Currently students also engage in a daily P.E. class.

10. Will my child have time for snack?

Grade 4 practice	Grade 5/6 practice
In Grade 4, students were generally given five to fifteen minutes for a morning snack.	In Grade 5/6 there is no designated snack time; however students are allowed to eat healthy foods in class when needed.

11. Will my child have recess?

Grade 4 practice	Grade 5/6 practice
In Grade 4, students had 3 recess periods each day – 15 minutes in the morning, 20 minutes after lunch and 15 minutes in the afternoon.	In Grade 5 and 6, physical activity will be an integrated part of our program.

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

Grade 4 practice	Grade 5/6 practice
In Grade 4, students had 20 minutes to eat, prior to recess. Lunch was eaten in the gym.	After a 20-minute recess, grade 5/6 students eat in the cafeteria and have approximately 20 minutes to eat.

13. How do grade 5 and 6 students choose and receive an instrument for band next year?

Grade 5 practice	Grade 6 practice
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Grade 7 Band does a concert and instrument demonstration for grade 4 homeroom classes. Homeroom teachers are given band information to send to households, that evening. 2. In the information booklet is a "New Band Student" form, where the child and the parents choose their first, second and third choice of instrument. This form gets returned to their homeroom teacher and is time sensitive. 3. Elementary sends the completed form to the Mid-High in June for sorting. 4. Band packages are sent to elementary homeroom teachers in mid-June. These packages will have all the relevant information for all new Band students. 	Students will continue with the same instrument they had in grade 5 and will be invited for various opportunities to try different instruments, through auditioning. The timeline of these auditions will be communicated to your child.

14. How do options work?

Grade 5:

Grade 5 students do not choose course options; they are automatically selected and included on student timetables. The options include two second languages; French (1 term) and Spanish (1 term), as well as one music class (full year), which will consist of *Band or General Music* – this is still to be determined. Stay tuned for more information.

Grade 6:

All grade 6 students will be enrolled in Art 6 and either Band or General Music. The students will also choose a second language: French or Spanish. Two option classes will run for each semester, with the exception of Band (full year).

Term 1: September - January. **Term 2:** February – June.

15. Will my child need a computer?

All students will be required to bring their own technology device next year. Recommendations for the most effective technology to purchase will be provided at the May 13 meeting.

16. 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 travelling throughout the building there will be some interaction with older students.

Peer Support: A group of student who promote general well-being of our students.

Student Council: A group of elected students who create activities to build a community within our school.

17. How will student progress be reported?

Grade 4 practice	Grade 5/6 practice
Report cards were available on HomeLogic 3 times per year. Grades were reported as a letter: N, M, C, E	Assessment is on-going and available at any time through HomeLogic. Specific assessment procedures will be communicated through your child's teaching team via curriculum letter.

18. Will students use agendas?

Grade 4 practice	Grade 5/6 practice
Students were all given an agenda on the first day of school and used it to write down due dates and important notes regularly.	Yes, students will be given an agenda on the first day of school and will use it to write down important events, notes and due dates. The expectation is that students are accountable for ensuring agendas are completed and parents will check and sign agendas each evening.

19. How will teachers communicate to parents?

Grade 4 practice	Grade 5/6 practice
Teachers had a variety of methods of communication depending on the class. Regular email messages, blogs or Edmodo were used, depending on the class.	All grade 5/6 teachers will use Edmodo and agendas for communication. A letter will be sent home at the beginning of the school year for Edmodo set-up. If parents need to contact teachers, the preferred method is through personal email.

20. What kinds of clubs are available for my child to join?

There are a variety of opportunities for students to engage in lunch hour clubs and activities that will be communicated to your child in October.

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

Wendy Cole is the contact person in Student Services.

22. Is my child allowed to leave campus unattended?

This opportunity is only available to students beginning in grade 7.

23. Is there before or after school care available at the Mid High?

Unfortunately we do not have this program at our campus. Students may not be dropped off before 8 am and must be picked up by 4:00 pm for security reasons.

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

Supply lists will be posted on the website by the end of year.

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

Please bring communal supplies on the first day (specified on supply list). All other supplies can be kept at home until needed. Students will be helped during the first week of school to organize supplies, personal pencil kits and binders.

26. Is there daily homework?

Grade 4 practice	Grade 5/6 practice
Students generally would not be assigned homework in Grade 4, with the exception of long running projects (where some extra work might be done at home) or if work was not completed in an appropriate amount of class time.	Students generally will not be assigned homework in Grade 5, with the exception of long running projects (where some extra work might be done at home) or if work was not completed in an appropriate amount of class time. Students will have some math practice and depending on their options might require extra practice time. (Total approximate time is 60 minutes/week).

27. I have more questions that weren't answered here. What should I do?

Please attend the information night on **Wednesday, May 13, 2015 at 7:00pm** at the Mid-High Campus gymnasium. If, after that, you still have questions, please contact transitions@westmountcharter.com.