



Westmount Charter School Application/Admission FAQs

General Questions

Information to know prior to submitting an application to Westmount Charter. Please review FAQ #8 regarding a new research initiative.

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

- Westmount Charter School is the only K-12 congregated setting in Alberta for students who are intellectually gifted. To be identified as gifted, students at Westmount have been assessed with a Full Scale IQ (FSIQ) and/or General Ability Index (GAI) at or above the 98th percentile (standard score 130 +/- 5), as measured on an individually administered intelligence test.
- 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 #6 for definitions of these acronyms).*

- Individual IQ tests, such as the WISC-V and the SB-5, 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 WPPSI, WISC, and SB 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 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.

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- 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?** *To apply to Westmount Charter School, ONLY an intelligence test (WPPSI, WISC or STANFORD – BINET) is required.*
- The Psychologists Association of Alberta's (PAA) published fee schedule currently recommends \$220 per hour for assessment services as of January 1, 2024. Costs vary amongst psychologists.
 - The intelligence test will provide the FSIQ and the GAI required by Westmount as one of its criteria in the application process.
 - 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.
- 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. Bursary Information**
- We understand the fees associated with obtaining a psychological assessment may be prohibitive. For more information regarding bursaries please contact admissions@westmountcharter.com (Elementary) or registrar-midhigh@westmountcharter.com (MidHigh)
- 6. Does Westmount recommend specific psychologists for its intake procedure?**
- Westmount Charter School does not recommend any specific psychologist. Your child's physician may have information regarding psychological referrals.
- 7. What do the acronyms WPPSI, WISC, and SB, 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 fifth edition (WPPSI-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 fifth edition (WISC-V).
 - **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).

8. **What are the subtests included in an intelligence test?**
- o **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)
 - o **WISC-V** are comprised of subtests in the following areas:
 - Verbal Comprehension (VCI)
 - Perceptual Reasoning (PRI)
 - Working Memory (WMI)
 - Processing Speed (PSI)

As part of a current quality improvement project, Westmount is also requesting the voluntary addition of 3 complementary subtests (**comprehension, information, arithmetic**) on the WISC-V so that the Verbal Expanded Crystallized Index (VECI) and Expanded General Ability Index (EGAI) can be reported. The EGAI and VECI are two of the composite scores that the National Association of Gifted Children (NAGC) recommends for use in the selection process for gifted programs. These scales would require three more subtests to be administered during the initial WISC-V administration in conjunction with the 10 primary scale subtests. This is voluntary for families as it may add more cost to the assessment. If your child has a valid assessment that was completed within the last 3-5 years, a new assessment is not required. There is no disadvantage to not having the additional information added.

- o **Stanford-Binet 5** provides scores in the following areas:
 - Full Scale IQ
 - Nonverbal IQ
 - Verbal IQ
 - Fluid Reasoning
 - Knowledge
 - Qualitative Reasoning
 - Visual-Spatial Processing
9. **What is a Full Scale Intelligence Quotient (FSIQ)?**
- The Full Scale Intelligence Quotient (FSIQ) describes a person's complete cognitive capacity.
10. **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-V 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.

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- 11. What is the Verbal Expanded Crystallized Index (VECI)?**
- The Verbal Expanded Crystallized Index (VECI) provides a broad measure of the child's ability to access and apply acquired work knowledge and general knowledge.
 - The VECI is derived from all 4 subtests (2 primary and 2 complementary) in the verbal comprehension domain
- 12. What is the Expanded General Ability Index (EGAI)?**
- The Expanded General Ability Index (EGAI) provides a broader measure of higher-order reasoning abilities relative to the GAI.
 - The EGAI is derived using the sum of 8 subtests scaled scores from the Verbal Comprehension, Visual Spatial and Fluid Reasoning scales.
- 13. 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.
 - The most frequent and pronounced pattern of difference is between the Verbal Comprehension Index (VCI) and the Processing Speed Index (PSI). 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).
- 14. Are we able to support students who are twice exceptional?**
- At Westmount, a twice exceptional learner is a student who is identified as gifted combined with another diagnosis or diagnoses provided by a qualified professional.
 - Like other gifted learners, 2e students are highly knowledgeable and talented in at least one particular domain. However, their giftedness is often overshadowed by their disabilities, or these students may be able to mask or hide their learning deficits by using their talents to compensate (NAGC).
 - When considering a twice exceptional applicant, we review our available resources to support the student's needs.
- 15. What is the Intake Process at Westmount Charter School?**
- For complete information on the intake process at Westmount, go to: <https://www.westmountcharter.com/admissions/>
 - The elementary campus and mid high campus application processes and application dates differ. Click on the appropriate campus for detailed information.



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16. What is the Admission Criteria at Westmount Charter School? *Please refer to [AP-300](#) regarding Student Selection for further information.*

- Completed application submission through School Engage.
- Intelligence test minimum requirement: Full Scale IQ (FSIQ) and/or General Ability Index (GAI) at or above the 98th percentile (standard score 130 +/- 5 or above), as measured on an individually administered intelligence test.
- If you choose to participate in the research study, the VECI and/or EGAI at or above the 98th percentile (Standard Score 130 or above) will also be accepted. At this time, these additional scores are voluntary.
- Parents are encouraged to include all assessment information of their child to ensure a complete student profile.
- The cognitive assessment should be no older than three to five years for students applying to the mid-high campus.
- **Overexcitability Questionnaires (OEQ):** New this year are 1 inventory and 2 questionnaires that will need to be completed related to the overexcitabilities of gifted children. These scales were designed to assess the intensity and sensitivity with which some people respond to stimuli.
- **The Overexcitability Inventory for Parents-Two (OIP-II)** measures parents' perception of their child's overexcitability (OE). All parents of children who are applying to WCS for the 2025-2026 school year are required to complete the OIP-II.
- **The Overexcitability Questionnaire II (OEQ-II) and the Overexcitability Questionnaire II for Children (OEQ-IIC)** are objective questionnaires to assess 5 types of overexcitability (OE): psychomotor, sensual, imaginal, intellectual, and emotional. The OEQ-II was developed for individuals 12 and older, and the OEQ-IIC was designed for children ages 5 – 12. **Applicants under the age of 5 do not need to complete this student questionnaire.**

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

- Our approximate population at the Elementary Campus is 420 students; 900 students at the Mid-High Campus.
- The Elementary Campus has four classes per grade from Kindergarten through Grade 4. 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.
- The MidHigh Campus has four classes per grade from Grade 5 through Grade 8. Classes have one or 2 core teachers, complementary teachers and a PE teacher. Classes may have a Teaching Learning Assistant for part of or all of the day; class size

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can vary minimally, based on student needs and complexity. Grade 9 through 12 students have unique schedules for their learning needs.

- Approximate class size:
Kindergarten – 19, Grade 1 – 20, Grade 2 – 21, Grade 3 – 22, Grade 4 – 23, Grade 5 & 6 - 27, and Grade 7 & 8 - 28. High School classes are capped at 30 students.

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

- Children can start Kindergarten if they turn 5 years old by December 31 of the school year.

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

- Unfortunately, we are not able to accommodate the high demand for school tours.

20. 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 multiple school bus routes that provide transportation to Westmount at an additional cost to the family.

21. English is not my child's first language; will that affect my child's chances?

- 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.

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

- No, there is no fee to apply.

23. Do you keep waitlists from year to year?

- No, we do not maintain waitlists from one year to the next. If we are unable to offer your child a spot and you wish to reapply, you may submit an application package the following year.

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

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



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

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



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