



Westmount Charter School

Application/Admission Information and FAQs

(updated September 2024)

General questions and information to know before applying to Westmount Charter School.

1. **How do we define giftedness at Westmount Charter School?**
 - Westmount Charter School is Alberta's only K-12 congregated setting for intellectually gifted students. 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 or above), as measured on an individually administered intelligence test.
 - Students are gifted when they perform or show potential for performing, and they have remarkably high levels of accomplishment in learning rate, depth of knowledge, reasoning, and problem-solving abilities 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 counselling 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, you must take an intelligence test (WPPSI and WISC are preferred). See #6 for the definitions of these acronyms.

 - Individual IQ tests, such as the WISC-V, provide the best information when making important programming decisions for gifted students – much better than group tests (Silverman, 2013).
 - An appropriate IQ test for gifted students should be an excellent measure of abstract reasoning (Silverman, 2013). Individually administered intelligence tests such as the WPPSI and WISC provide a student's profile of verbal and performance problem-solving abilities. They also offer the opportunity for skilled observation by a qualified psychologist in a controlled situation with exposure to stimulating materials.
 - IQ tests are essential 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) publishes a fee schedule. 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.

- 4. Could the cost of the psychological assessment be covered by a family's health insurance provider?**
 - Yes, often, health insurance providers cover this cost. 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. How current should the psychological assessment be?**
 - For the Wechsler Pre-School and Primary Test of Intelligence (WPPSI): within 1 year.
 - For the Wechsler Intelligence Scale of Children V (WISC-5): within 3 to 5 years.

- 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, and WISC, 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 (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, 11 months. It is currently in its fifth edition (WISC-V).

- 8. What are the cognitive domains included in an intelligence test?**
 - **WPPSI-IV** is comprised of subtests in the following domains:
 - Verbal Comprehension Index (VCI)
 - Visual Spatial Index (VSI)
 - Fluid Reasoning Index (FRI)
 - Working Memory Index (WMI)
 - Processing Speed Index (PSI)(for a child under age 4.0, only 3 indices can be calculated)
 - **WISC-V** is comprised of subtests in the following domains:
 - Verbal Comprehension (VCI)
 - Visual Spatial Index (VSI)



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- Fluid Reasoning Index (FRI)
- Working Memory (WMI)
- Processing Speed (PSI)

As part of the Westmount Charter School (WCS) admission improvement project, in conjunction with the research and development component of our charter, we request the 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 (U.S. norms). The EGAI and VECI are two of the composite scores 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 included during the initial WISC-V administration in conjunction with the 10 primary subtests. The Scaled Scores from the 3 complementary subtests (Information, Comprehension and Arithmetic) used in calculating the VECI and EGAI would also benefit our research and improvement focus.

This is a voluntary addition for families applying for the 2025-2026 school year. A new assessment is not required if your child already has a valid WISC-V assessment.

- 9. What is a Full Scale Intelligence Quotient (FSIQ)?**
 - The Full Scale Intelligence Quotient (FSIQ) describes a person's cognitive capacity.
 - The FSIQ is derived from 7 subtests in all domains on the WISC-V.
- 10. What is a General Ability Index (GAI)?**
 - The General Ability Index (GAI) is an excellent indicator of abstract reasoning ability.
 - The GAI is derived from 5 subtests on the WISC-V in the Verbal Comprehension, Fluid Reasoning and Visual Spatial Domains.
- 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 the 8 subtest scaled scores from the Verbal Comprehension, Visual Spatial, and Fluid Reasoning scales.



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- 13. Are we able to support twice exceptional students?**
- Yes, a twice-exceptional (2e) learner is a student identified as gifted combined with another diagnosis or diagnosis provided by a qualified professional.
 - Like other gifted learners, 2e students are highly knowledgeable and talented in at least one domain. However, their disabilities often overshadow their giftedness, or these students may be able to mask or hide their learning deficits by using their talents to compensate (NAGC).
- 14. What is the Admission Process at Westmount Charter School?**
- For complete information on the admission process at Westmount, go to: <https://www.westmountcharter.com/admissions/>
 - The elementary and mid-high campus application processes and dates differ. Click on the appropriate campus for detailed information.
- 15. 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.
 - 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, two questionnaires related to the overexcitability of gifted children must be completed. These scales assess the intensity and sensitivity with which some people respond to stimuli. The questionnaires are part of the on-line admission process and must be scanned and uploaded as part of the application.
 - a) **The Overexcitability Inventory for Parents-Two (OIP-II)** measures parents' perception of their child's overexcitability (OE). All parents of children applying to WCS for the 2025-2026 school year must complete the OIP-II. This questionnaire is part of the on-line admission process and must be scanned and uploaded as part of the application.

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- b) **The Overexcitability Questionnaire II (OEQ-II) or 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 – 11. This questionnaire is part of the on-line admission process and must be scanned and uploaded as part of the application. **Applicants under the age of 5 do not need to complete this student questionnaire.**

16. 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 or all of the day; class size 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.

17. 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.

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

- We are not able to accommodate the high demand for school tours.

19. 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.

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

- No, we will consider an application as long as the child has the language skills to complete a psychological assessment and participate meaningfully in our program. Many of our students come from homes where English is not the first language.



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- 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 we cannot offer your child a spot and you wish to reapply, you must submit an application package the following year.

- 23. I missed the application deadline. Can I still apply?**
 - We do not accept applications after our deadline. However, you may reapply for the next grade the following year.

- 24. How much does it cost to attend WCS?**
 - Once accepted, we require a \$100 registration deposit, which is applied as a credit to school fees. As a general guideline, WCS follows Alberta Education's fee guidelines. There is an additional fee for using the bus.

- 25. Is there before/after care offered at WCS?**
 - Yes. At the Elementary Campus, there is a privately owned company that offers onsite before- and after-school care. If you have any inquiries about our before- and after-school care program, you can contact Zak at 403-399-6653 or studentcare@westmountcharter.com. Westmount leases space for the before- and after-school care, but we do not run it.



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References

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