



Test-Free Policy

Lick-Wilmerding High School seeks to foster a community of lifelong learners from all walks of life with the capacity, confidence, compassion, and commitment to change the world. This ongoing endeavor necessitates the entire community to look critically at its policies and practices with the intent to create an environment that empowers its students to thrive.

The LWHS Admissions Team critically looked at one such practice, standardized testing. This admissions season and beyond, LWHS will be test-free in its admissions process, meaning LWHS will no longer accept or evaluate standardized testing as a part of a student's application.

After a year of being test-optional, the consensus was that standardized testing impedes LWHS from fulfilling its mission of serving students from all walks of life. Data and research show that students from historically marginalized and neuro-diverse communities do not perform as well on these tests. The LWHS Admissions Team hopes that this small change will close the equity gap and allow the admissions team to see each student for who they are and not their test score.

In lieu of testing, are you asking for any new/additional materials as part of the application?

No. We feel confident that the other aspects of our application will give us sufficient information to make well-informed decisions.

If my student decides to take a standardized test, will you accept them?

No, we will not accept any standardized tests submitted by families.

Since testing is not required, how do you differentiate between students?

While test scores have been a part of our holistic application review in the past, they are ultimately limited in what they can tell us about a student. Though they presented some insight into a student's academic potential, this potential can be, and most likely is, represented in other parts of a student application. Standardized test scores have never been a significant part of the LWHS application evaluation process; the application as a whole is what differentiates one applicant from another: student application responses, letters of recommendations, etc. On the other hand, we have found that standardized test scores impeded us from fulfilling our mission, as they have acted as a barrier to entry for historically underrepresented groups to independent schools. Thus, removing this small factor proved to be in the best interest of our Admissions Team and prospective students.

Is the test-free policy only for the current application cycle?

No, we will be test-free for the foreseeable future.