

# Information Brochure For Parents

PISA 2012

## OECD Programme for International Student Assessment

MONITORING KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM



AN ROINN | DEPARTMENT  
OIDEACHAIS | OF EDUCATION  
AGUS SCILEANNA | AND SKILLS

*Educational Research Centre  
Foras Taighde ar Oideachas*

## WHAT IS PISA?

PISA (which stands for **P**rogramme for **I**nternational **S**tudent **A**ssessment) is a test of the skills and knowledge of students aged 15 and 16. It is a project of the **O**rganisation for **E**conomic **C**o-operation and **D**evelopment (OECD) and takes place every three years in countries all around the world. In Ireland, PISA is implemented by the Department of Education and Skills and the Educational Research Centre in Dublin.

The countries involved work together to produce an assessment for students that is relevant and interesting to them and which can be used to compare different countries. PISA tests real-life knowledge rather than knowledge of school subjects.

Each time PISA is carried out, reading, mathematics and science are tested. In 2012, the main focus is on mathematics. Some students will also be asked to take part in a new computer-based test of mathematics, problem solving and reading.

## WHICH COUNTRIES ARE PARTICIPATING IN PISA?

The following 67 countries will participate in PISA 2012:

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Albania	Hungary	Poland
Argentina	Iceland	Portugal
Australia	Indonesia	Qatar
Austria	Ireland	Romania
Belgium	Israel	Russian Federation
Brazil	Italy	Serbia
Bulgaria	Japan	Singapore
Canada	Jordan	Slovak Republic
Chile	Kazakhstan	Slovenia
China (Shanghai)	Republic of Korea	Spain
Chinese Taipei	Latvia	Sweden
Colombia	Liechtenstein	Switzerland
Costa Rica	Lithuania	Thailand
Croatia	Luxembourg	Trinidad and Tobago
Czech Republic	Macao-China	Tunisia
Denmark	Malaysia	Turkey
Estonia	Mauritius	United Arab Emirates
Finland	Mexico	United Kingdom
France	Montenegro	United States
Georgia	Netherlands	Uruguay
Germany	New Zealand	Vietnam
Greece	Norway	
Hong Kong-China	Peru	

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## HOW WERE STUDENTS SELECTED TO PARTICIPATE IN PISA?

In Ireland, 188 post-primary schools have been randomly selected to take part in PISA in March 2012. Within each selected school, up to 35 students have been picked at random from all those in the school who were born in 1996.

## WHAT ARE STUDENTS ASKED TO DO?

Students will be assessed in their schools in March 2012. Students who participate will be asked to complete the following:

- A written test that includes questions on mathematics, reading and science.
- A questionnaire that asks about the students' background, attitudes to mathematics, approaches to learning mathematics, future plans, and familiarity with computers.
- A short computer-based test of mathematics, problem solving and reading (to be completed by some students).

Some students will be randomly selected to complete the written test and questionnaire only, while others will be randomly selected to also take part in the computer-based test. Students do not need to be skilled computer users in order to do this assessment

PISA is not a test of what students learn in school. Instead, it looks at how well students can apply the knowledge and skills they have learned at school to real-life situations. Therefore, it is not necessary for selected students to study for PISA.

## HOW IS THE INFORMATION IN PISA TREATED?

All information collected in PISA will be dealt with confidentially. It will not be possible to identify either schools or students, as numbers will be used instead of names. The results will be used to report the characteristics of large groups of schools and students (for example, girls compared to boys), but nothing will be reported on individual schools or students.

## WHY SHOULD STUDENTS TAKE PART IN PISA?

PISA provides important information on the strengths and weaknesses of the Irish education system, and allows us to compare our system to those of other countries. PISA is useful because it helps us to identify ways in which our education system can be improved. PISA is also used by some organisations to help bring jobs into Ireland. It is important that as many students as possible take part so that we can be sure that the results are really representative of students in Ireland, and that reliable conclusions can be drawn from them.

## WHERE CAN I FIND OUT MORE?

For more **information**, you can visit:

- The Irish PISA Website: <http://www.erc.ie/pisa>
- The International PISA Website: <http://www.pisa.oecd.org>

Your school will be able to provide you with information on arrangements that have been made for the administration of PISA in the school.

If you have **questions about PISA**, please contact:

**Rachel Perkins** or **Jude Cosgrove** at the Educational Research Centre

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