

Information for Parents

PISA 2018 Field Trial – March 2017

OECD Programme for International Student Assessment

What is PISA?

- The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is a project of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).
- *Over 70 countries take part*, making PISA the largest study of its kind.
- PISA assesses the skills and knowledge of 15- and 16-year-olds in three areas – *reading, science, and mathematics* – every three years since 2000. In the 2018 cycle, reading will be the main focus.
- In Ireland, PISA is carried out by the Educational Research Centre (ERC) in Dublin on behalf of the Department of Education and Skills.
- A Field Trial takes place in Ireland in March 2017, and the Main Study will take place in March 2018.

How was my child chosen for the study?

In Ireland, 40 post-primary schools have been randomly selected to take part. In each school, 60 students have been picked at random from all students in the school who were born in 2001.

What will my child be asked to do?

Students will be asked to take a test and a questionnaire. Each student will carry out the *PISA computer-based test of reading, science and mathematics* (2 hours), and a computer-based questionnaire (about 70 minutes).

*Students don't need to prepare in advance for PISA.
There is a practice session before the test begins.*

*However, if students want to look at the kinds of questions that PISA includes, please visit
<http://www.oecd.org/pisa/test>*

What will I be asked to do?

You will be asked to fill in a parent questionnaire. This should take about half an hour, and it can be returned to the school using the envelope provided.

The results of the parent questionnaire will help to develop policy to improve our education system. It is important that as many parents as possible return a questionnaire, so that the results are reliable.

What do the tests and questionnaires ask about?

The *PISA tests* consist of 'real-life' tasks in reading, science and mathematics. They are not connected to the Junior or Leaving Cert. About one-third of questions are multiple choice and the remainder are in other formats, such as a typed response or drag-and-drop.

The *student questionnaire* asks students about their family and home backgrounds, learning environments, attitudes and interests in reading, health and well-being, educational and occupational aspirations, and use of computers.

The *parent questionnaire* asks for information on parents' work and family backgrounds, pre-school education and childhood activities of the PISA student, attitudes and interests in reading, and student well-being and attendance at school.

How are results used?

PISA is important. It helps us to find ways to improve our education system. We use the information to find out how students in Ireland compare with students in other countries. We also use the results to find out how well our education system is preparing students for life after school.

We will send each school a report on its average achievement in reading, science and mathematics compared with the national averages later in 2017. The school report will also include some information based on students' and parents' views from the questionnaires. We cannot, unfortunately, provide information on the results of individual students.

The OECD will publish *international results in December 2019*. The ERC will publish *national results* online in December 2019. Findings from the most recent cycle of PISA, PISA 2015, are available on our website www.erc.ie/pisa.

All information collected in the survey is confidential and it is not possible to identify individual students, parents or schools in the database constructed following the study, since numbers, and never names, are used.

Where can I find out more on PISA?

More information, including results from previous rounds of PISA, is at the PISA national website at www.erc.ie/pisa. International results and reports are at the international PISA website at www.pisa.oecd.org.

If you have any additional queries or concerns, do not hesitate to get in touch with us.

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Many thanks for your support for PISA.