

## Information for Schools

PISA 2018 Main Study – March / April 2018

OECD Programme for International Student Assessment

### *Programme for International Student Assessment*

#### *(PISA) 2018 - Key Points*

- PISA 2018 Main Study will take place in March and April 2018.
- 157 schools have been selected to participate; 44 students will be randomly selected in each school (across Second to Fifth Year).
- Testing will take place in two classrooms, on a date convenient for your school. Principals may select their preferred dates using the Participation Form.
- Each school will nominate a **School Contact person to liaise** with the Educational Research Centre (ERC) and PISA Test Administrators.
- The test will be **facilitated by PISA Test Administrators** using **laptops hired** for PISA.
- **Technical Support personnel** will bring the laptops to the school and set them up on the morning of the test.
- **One day of supervision and substitution pay** is redeemable from the Department of Education and Skills (DES) (½ day for preparation prior to testing and ½ day to cover School Contact availability throughout the morning of testing).
- Certificates of participation will be sent out to each school after testing.
- Each school will be sent a summary report of Ireland's performance in PISA 2018 after the results are released (PISA 2018 results are embargoed until December 2019).
- A short booklet will also be sent to you outlining your school's results. This will allow you to compare your school's performance with the national average.

NOTE: The ERC will liaise with each school in order to plan the assessment efficiently, and to ensure **minimal disruption** for students, teachers and school staff. We are aware that March and early April are busy periods for schools, yet it is currently the only time of the year in which we can administer the assessments to fit with the international PISA timeline and allow for international comparability.

NOTE: Alongside the selection of students to participate in PISA, we will be inviting students' parents, School Principals (or their nominees), and English Teachers (as reading is the main domain in PISA 2018) to **complete questionnaires** of approximately 40 minutes in duration.

This information sheet on PISA provides answers to some frequently asked questions. If you have any additional queries or concerns, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us by phone or email, using the contact details on the back of the information sheet.

## What is PISA?

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is a project of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). *About 80 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 literacy, science, and mathematics* – every three years. The first cycle of PISA took place in 2000, and in 2018, reading literacy will be the main focus.

PISA also collects other data related to student achievement such as well-being, home environment, ICT use, and occupational aspirations. In addition, parents of participating students, School Principals and English teachers are invited to fill in a questionnaire.

Please note that all data collected for PISA 2018 will be stored securely and kept confidential by the ERC. No personal or identifying information provided by Schools (from principals, teachers, pupils or parents) is available or is accessed by the Department of Education and Skills.

## How is PISA carried out?

Internationally, PISA is implemented on behalf of the OECD by an international consortium of institutions. The lead institution is the Educational Testing Service (ETS) in the USA. Key decisions are made by the PISA Governing Board. Each OECD country has a voting representative on this Board.

PISA is managed on a day-to-day basis by the PISA National Project Manager and other staff from the National Centre in each country. In Ireland, the Educational Research Centre (ERC) is the National Centre. The ERC is a statutory body under Section 54 of the Education Act (1998) which carries out independent research on all levels of the Irish education system and implements PISA on behalf of the Department of Education and Skills (DES).

A National Advisory Committee oversees the implementation of PISA in Ireland, and advises on aspects of the assessment, survey administration, and reporting of results.

## What is involved?

In Ireland, 157 schools have been selected to take part in the Main Study in March and April, 2018. In total, approximately 6,000 students will be assessed. Test Administrators, working with Technical Support personnel, will administer PISA in schools. All PISA personnel are trained by the ERC and all personnel visiting schools for the purpose of PISA test administration will be Garda vetted.

About 60% of PISA-eligible students are in junior cycle (mostly Third Years), while the remainder are in Transition Year and Fifth Year. In each school, ***the 44 students who have been selected to take part will be assigned to one of two sessions (22 in each session)*** and asked to complete the following tasks:

- PISA computer-based test of reading literacy, science and mathematics (2 hours);
- PISA computer-based questionnaires, including sections on family background, learning environment, well-being, educational and occupational aspirations, and interest in and engagement with ICT (approx. 60-70 minutes).

## What is involved for your school?

### Nominating a person as School Contact:

The ERC will need to liaise with schools to gather information on eligible students and to prepare for the testing date. Therefore a contact person for the study, known as the *School Contact*, will need to be identified in each selected school. The School Contact can be a member of staff such as a School Principal, Deputy-Principal, subject teacher, resource teacher or career guidance teacher.

The School Contact person must be **available on the morning of the test date**, to assist with the set-up and **smooth-running of PISA in their school**. Each school is permitted to redeem one day's **supervision and substitution pay** from the DES to cover School Contact responsibilities

**A letter will be sent to both the School Principal and the School Contact in early December** to confirm the PISA test date for March/April 2018.

**After the test date is confirmed with each School Principal in early December, the School Contact will take over all communications with the ERC and PISA Test Administrators;** therefore, please inform them of the list of tasks below.

<b>Tasks that the School Contact will be asked to carry out:</b>	
<b>Jan 2018</b>	<b>Update the list of students eligible for PISA</b> (notify the ERC of students that have left the school or joined the school since autumn 2017).
<b>Feb 2018</b>	<b>Notify staff, students and parents about the assessment.</b> The ERC will provide a pack to be distributed to each participating student and their parents, which will include a letter to parents, a parent information sheet, an information sheet for students, and a parent questionnaire. NOTE: The Test Administrator will collect these packs on the testing date in March/April.  <b>Assign two classrooms</b> suitable for student testing (plug sockets and space for 22 students)  <b>Liaise with the ERC and PISA Test Administrators</b> in advance of the test date.
<b>March/April 2018</b>	<b>Assist the Test Administrator on the morning of the assessment.</b> It is expected that the School Contact will be available for the morning of the test date (until lunchtime) to direct the Test Administrators and Technical Support personnel to the assessment rooms, to assist with the assignment of students to the correct session, and to settle the students. The School Contact should be available during the assessment in case of any student-related issues, checking in at regular intervals (at least once per class period).
<b>Each school is permitted to redeem one day's supervision and substitution pay from the DES to cover School Contact responsibilities</b>	

## What does the assessment consist of?

PISA tests: Consist of 'real life' tasks in reading literacy, science and mathematics. About one-third of questions are multiple choice and the remainder are in other formats, such as typed response or drag-and-drop. *There is no need for students to prepare in advance of PISA.* Before the assessment, students take part in a practice session to familiarise themselves with the format of the PISA test.

**When notifying students that they have been selected to participate in PISA (February 2018) teachers may wish to direct students to look at sample items on [www.oecd.org/pisa](http://www.oecd.org/pisa) beforehand.**

Student questionnaire: As part of PISA test administration, and directly after the PISA tests are completed, students are asked about their family and home backgrounds, learning environments, attitudes towards reading literacy, well-being, educational and occupational aspirations, and interest in and engagement with ICTs.

Parent questionnaire: Parents of students participating in PISA are asked to complete a 30-minute parent questionnaire. The parent questionnaire seeks information on parental and home background, pre-school education and childhood activities of the PISA student, attitudes to reading literacy, student well-being and attendance at school.

School questionnaire: Principals of participating schools are asked to complete a 40-minute online school questionnaire about school resources, management, and policies in areas such as assessment and school organisation.

Teacher Questionnaire: English teachers of Third Year students within each school are asked to complete a questionnaire that seeks information on attitudes to reading literacy, classroom instruction of Third Year students, the Junior Cycle English Specification, the school library, and gives an insight into teachers' background, training, and teaching experiences.

## How are results used?

Following the Main Study in March and April 2018, the OECD will publish *international results in December 2019*. The ERC will publish national results in December 2019 also, with further thematic reporting planned for 2020.

***Each school will receive a report on its results, compared to the national average, along with a summary report of the national results for Ireland, after the official report is launched.***

## **Where can I find out more on PISA?**

More information, such as the list of countries participating in PISA, the individuals on the PISA National Advisory Committee, information materials and national reports, is available on our national PISA website [www.erc.ie/pisa](http://www.erc.ie/pisa).

The results for the latest cycle of the Main Study (2015) were released on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2016. Information on national and international results and reports is available on the international PISA website [www.oecd.org/pisa/](http://www.oecd.org/pisa/).

Key findings from the PISA 2015 Main Study for Ireland are available here - <http://www.oecd.org/ireland/pisa-2015-ireland.htm>. This OECD tool provides information on Ireland's performance relative to the OECD average and to other participating countries.

**If you have any additional queries or concerns please contact:**

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**Many thanks for your support for PISA.**