

## Information for Schools

**PISA 2018 Autumn Study – October / November 2018**

**OECD Programme for International Student Assessment**

### *Programme for International Student Assessment*

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

- PISA 2018 Main Study is currently taking place (March and April 2018) in 157 schools; students across Second to Fifth Year were randomly selected in each school.
- The PISA 2018 Autumn Study, which your school has been selected to participate in, will take place in October and November 2018 with 57 schools selected to participate; 44 students will be randomly selected in each school, drawn from 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.
- Fully vetted **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) ( $\frac{1}{2}$  day for preparation prior to testing and  $\frac{1}{2}$  day to cover School Contact availability throughout the morning of testing).
- Each school will be sent a summary report on the PISA 2018 Autumn Study, containing aggregated outcomes across all participating schools
- A short booklet will also be sent to you outlining your school's results.

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.

NOTE: Alongside the selection of students to participate in PISA, we will be inviting School Principals (or their nominees) to complete a questionnaire online, and a selection of Mathematics, English and Science Teachers to complete a short paper questionnaire.

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 is 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.

## **Why do a PISA Autumn Study?**

PISA is normally conducted during the spring time (March/April); however, the Department of Education and Skills is concerned about the burden placed on schools at that time of the year when there are mocks/orals for Third year students, Transition Year students out on work experience and many sporting finals are taking place. This study is to assess the feasibility of carrying out PISA during the autumn instead of spring, a practice that currently occurs in the UK and the USA.

Please note that all data collected for PISA 2018 Autumn Study will be stored securely and kept confidential by the ERC in line with current data protection and forthcoming GDPR requirements. No personal or identifying information provided by Schools (from principals, teachers or pupils) 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, 57 schools have been selected to take part in the Autumn Study in October and November, 2018. In total, approximately 2,500 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.

Currently 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. 55-65 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 May** to confirm the PISA test date for October/November 2018 and this will be reconfirmed in September 2018.

**After the test date is confirmed with each School Principal in May, 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 (we enclose two copies of this sheet, one for the School Contact and one to keep as a record).

<b>Tasks that the School Contact will be asked to carry out:</b>	
<b>September 2018</b>	<b>Update the list of students eligible for PISA</b> provided by the ERC based on the 2017/2018 academic year.
<b>September 2018</b>	<p><b>Notify staff and students about the assessment.</b> The ERC will provide a pack to be distributed to each participating student, which will include an information sheet for students and an information sheet for their parents.</p> <p><b>Assign two classrooms</b> suitable for student testing (plug sockets and space for 22 students)</p> <p><b>Liaise with the ERC and PISA Test Administrators</b> in advance of the test date.</p>
<b>October/November 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 (late September/early October 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.

*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:* Mathematics, Science and English Teachers within each school are asked to complete a short questionnaire that seeks information on Summer Learning Loss, Student Engagement and curriculum coverage.

## How are results used?

The results of the PISA 2018 Autumn Study will be used to compare performance on PISA for Spring and Autumn 2018 cohorts, and to contribute to deciding the best time of the year to administer PISA in future cycles.

***Each school will receive a report on its results, along with a report on the PISA 2018 Autumn Study.***

## **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.**