

**DATA PROTECTION DECLARATION –  
PIRLS 2021 *LEARNING TO READ SURVEY AND PUPIL QUESTIONNAIRE*  
(Field test is administered in 2020 and the main data collection will take place in 2021)**

**Identity and contact details of controllers:**

Educational Research Centre  
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Ireland  
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and

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Keizersgracht 311  
1016 EE Amsterdam  
The Netherlands  
Telephone: +31 20 625 3625  
Email: [secretariat@iea.nl](mailto:secretariat@iea.nl)

**For which purpose are data collected and processed?**

The data collected during the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS 2021) will be used exclusively for scientific purposes. PIRLS is an educational research project sponsored by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). The Educational Research Centre (ERC) is administering PIRLS in Ireland at the request of, and on behalf of, the Department of Education and Skills (DES). This is in accordance with one of the functions (“carrying out national and international assessments of the attainment levels and academic achievement of students and reporting on such assessments to the Minister”) set out in the ERC’s Establishment Order as a statutory body (which can be viewed in full at: <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2015/si/392/made/en/print>). The ERC’s legal basis for processing personal data as per GDPR (Article 6) is “the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority vested in the controller”.

**Which information is requested?**

The parents or guardians of Fourth class pupils in the participating schools are invited to complete the PIRLS 2021 Learning to Read Survey in order to provide the study with information about early learning activities and language at home, occupation of the parents/guardians, country of birth of parents/guardians, educational background of the parents/guardians, home resources, and opinions regarding the child’s school.

The pupils in the participating schools are asked to complete the PIRLS 2021 Pupil Questionnaire (on computer) in order to provide the study with information about pupils’ gender, age, home resources, language(s) spoken at home, and opinions regarding the school environment, sense of belonging in school, literacy lessons, and use of technology.

- In order to ensure that PIRLS is based on scientifically selected samples of pupils and schools, schools are expected to cooperate with the administration of PIRLS in their school where requested to do so (DES Circular 0056/2011).

- Parents/guardians and pupils will not be disadvantaged in any way by non-completion of the questionnaire, and respondents are permitted to skip individual questions or to discontinue answering the questions at any time.
- By filling in and returning a completed questionnaire, a study participant agrees to the collection and processing of their data within the questionnaire.
- Withdrawal of agreement to the processing of data without stating any reason can be made by any participant up to 4 weeks after the tests have been administered.
- Any participant who wants to remove or amend their information can contact the Educational Research Centre (at 01 837 3789 or [pirls.ireland@erc.ie](mailto:pirls.ireland@erc.ie)). If an individual withdraws from the study, no additional data will be collected from that individual. Some information on withdrawals and exclusions is retained to validate the sample and to inform future administrations (e.g., to see if boys are more likely to withdraw from participation in the study). Any such retained data cannot be linked back to individuals.
- Queries related to how personal information is protected can be directed to the ERC's Data Protection Officer ([data.protection@erc.ie](mailto:data.protection@erc.ie)).

### **What kind of data are collected?**

Data from answers to the questions asked of pupils participating in PIRLS, and of their parents/guardians, are collected and stored. This is in the form of numbers representing selections (for example, a multiple choice question, or yes/no selection).

This information cannot, in and of itself, be used to identify individual respondents by name. However, a pupil ID is recorded to uniquely identify each pupil. The relationship between this ID and the pupil name is known to the school coordinator and to the Educational Research Centre, and may be known to the ERC's subcontractors (e.g. our technical support and data entry partners). It is not, however, shared with the IEA or any other third parties.

### **Where, how and for how long are data from PIRLS stored?**

PIRLS data are stored securely and cannot be accessed by any external persons or systems. Moreover, any ERC or IEA employees who access the data for processing have been suitably briefed on what constitutes an acceptable treatment of data and have signed a confidentiality agreement.

### **At the ERC, the data are stored as follows:**

Data linked to individual pupils are stored until the international database is released (expected to be December 2022 for this cycle of PIRLS). At that point (or earlier in the cycle where possible), all data are anonymised so that there is no possibility of an individual study participant being identifiable.

### **At the IEA, the data are stored as follows:**

Participant names are never sent to the IEA. Response data are stored indefinitely (without names) so that they remain available for analyses. These responses eventually result in a database that allows researchers to compare education systems worldwide (see Public accessibility below).

Data are processed centrally at the IEA in Hamburg, Germany. As above, all data arriving for data processing are submitted without names – only the pupil ID numbers are used.

### **With whom and how are data from PIRLS shared?**

As part of initial processing, the ERC shares some data from PIRLS with its subcontractors (e.g.

for data entry). All subcontractors have signed a Data Processing Agreement and confidentiality agreement with the ERC.

Response data are then sent from national research centres to the IEA, via a secure FTP server, in a pseudonymous form, that is: processed in such a manner that the personal data can no longer be attributed to a specific data subject without the use of additional information (any such additional information being kept separately by the ERC and subject to technical and organisational measures to ensure that the personal data are not attributed to an identified or identifiable natural person).

PIRLS is directed by the International Study Center (ISC) based at Boston College, USA, and most of the data analyses occur there. Response data are required for the analysis but are sent to the ISC, via a secure FTP server, in a pseudonymous form. ISC employees who access the data for analyses have signed a confidentiality agreement. The transfer of the data to the USA, as a third country, is safeguarded by appropriate and suitable measures like a specific Data Processing Agreement and European Standard Contractual Clauses.

The data are also shared back, again over secure FTP server, with the national research centre running PIRLS in your country.

### **Related data**

Along with the Learning to Read Survey for parents/guardians and the Pupil Questionnaire, principals and teachers are also asked to complete a questionnaire. Information coming from these sources is linked to that from pupils and parents/guardians in the final international research database (IDB).

### **Public accessibility**

The final international research database will be accessible to the public from the following sites:  
<https://www.iea.nl/data> (Hamburg, Germany)  
<https://timssandpirls.bc.edu/index.html> (Boston, USA)

All data from Ireland in the database are anonymous, and cannot be linked to individuals.

### **Automated decision-making and profiling**

No automated decision-making, including profiling, referred to in Article 22 GDPR is conducted.

### **Rights of Data Subjects**

Data Subjects are entitled to the rights set out in Articles 15-20 GDPR.

Data Subjects have the right to lodge a complaint with a supervisory authority. The relevant authority in Ireland is:

Office of the Data Protection Commissioner  
Canal House  
Station Road  
Portarlington  
Co. Laois R32 AP23  
Telephone: +353 57 868 4800 / +353 (0)761 104 800  
Lo Call Number: 1890 252 231  
Email: [info@dataprotection.ie](mailto:info@dataprotection.ie)