

DATA PROTECTION DECLARATION PIRLS 2026 ONLINE SCHOOL QUESTIONNAIRE

Ireland will participate in the National Comparison Study as part of the Main 2026 Data Collection.

Identity and Contact Details of Controllers

Educational Research Centre
DCU St Patrick's Campus
Drumcondra Road Upper
Dublin 9
Ireland
Telephone: +353 1 837 3789
Email: pirls.ireland@erc.ie

and

Stichting I.E.A. Secretariaat Nederland (hereinafter "IEA")
Keizersgracht 311
1016 EE Amsterdam
The Netherlands
Telephone: +31 20 625 3625
Email: secretariat@iea.nl

The Educational Research Centre (ERC) and IEA have concluded a joint controller agreement, which regulates their respective roles and responsibilities in the processing of personal data.

Data Protection Officer

ERC's Data Protection Officer can be reached at: data.protection@erc.ie
IEA's Data Protection Officer can be reached at: dataprotection@iea.nl

For which purpose are data collected and processed?

The data collected during the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) 2026 will be used exclusively for scientific research purposes. PIRLS is an educational research project sponsored by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA).

The National Comparison Study is offered as a national option for countries that wish to conduct an additional comparison study between the digital and paper formats. The study consists of administering a smaller, paper assessment, based on trend texts and items that were administered in PIRLS 2021, to a comparable sample of pupils from the same target population as the digital assessment.

The Educational Research Centre (ERC) is administering PIRLS in Ireland at the request of, and on behalf of, the Department of Education and Youth. This is in accordance with one of the functions ("carrying out national and international assessments of the attainment levels and academic achievement of pupils 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 "processing is necessary for compliance with a legal obligation and in line with the functions of the ERC".

Which information is requested?

The principals (if a principal is not available, other equally qualified personnel) of participating schools are invited to complete the PIRLS 2026 School Questionnaire in order to provide the study with information about the characteristics and resources of the school, instructional time, the principal's experience and education, and their opinion on related topics, as well as about the characteristics of the pupils (economic background, native language, etc.).

- 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 (Department of Education Circular 0040/2024).
- Principals 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 is consenting to the collection and processing of their data within the questionnaire.
- Withdrawal of consent 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 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 males are more likely than females to withdraw from participation in the study).
- Queries related to how personal information is protected can be directed to the ERC's Data Protection Officer (data.protection@erc.ie).

What kinds of data are collected?

Data from the answers to the questions from every completed PIRLS 2026 School Questionnaire are collected and stored. This is in the form of numbers representing selections (e.g., a multiple-choice question) or values (e.g., a figure for the number of pupils in the target grade).

As this survey is administered online, there is further logging information stored regarding the first and latest log-in time, the number of times a respondent has logged in in total, the number of the current question, and whether or not the questionnaire has been submitted. In addition, the following log data is captured: all navigation events; each click on a checkbox/radio button; each selection in a drop-down; focus (putting the cursor into the box) and blur (putting the cursor outside the box).

This information cannot, in and of itself, be used to identify individual respondents by name; however, an ID is recorded to uniquely identify each school. The relationship between this ID and the school's name, or school roll number, is known to the school coordinator, the ERC, but is not shared with any other third parties.

Where, how, and for how long are data from PIRLS 2026 stored?

PIRLS 2026 data are stored securely 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 and subject to technical and organisational measures to ensure that the personal data are not attributed to an identified or identifiable natural person). These data cannot be accessed by any external persons or systems.

Moreover, any IEA or ERC 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 individuals are stored until the international database is released (expected to be December 2027 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).

Questionnaire data (IEA) are collected and stored (including backups) on Microsoft Azure servers in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

The IEA SharePoint server where WinW3S data and data from paper instruments is uploaded by countries is hosted by Microsoft within the European Union.

All data are submitted without names—only the school ID numbers.

With whom and how are data from PIRLS 2026 shared?

PIRLS 2026 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 and are sent to the ISC, via a secure SharePoint server, in a pseudonymous form. ISC employees who access data for analyses have signed a confidentiality agreement and have received comprehensive training on data protection and privacy.

IEA has performed the required data transfer impact assessment for the transfer of personal data outside of the European Economic Area. IEA relies on European Commission Standard Contractual Clauses (Module II: controller-to-processor transfers) in transferring pseudonymised personal data to the USA. IEA has also concluded a data processing agreement with the ISC at Boston College.

The data are also reshared, again over a secure SharePoint server, with the ERC.

Related Data

Along with the principals, teachers and pupils are also asked to complete a questionnaire. Pupils' parents or legal guardians are also asked to complete a PIRLS 2026 Early Learning Survey. Information coming from these sources is linked, and this linked information is in the final version of the international research database (IDB).

Public accessibility

The final IDB will be accessible to the public from the following sites:

<https://www.iea.nl/data-tools/repository> (Hamburg, Germany)

<https://timssandpirls.bc.edu/index.html> (Boston, USA)

All data in the database are pseudonymous and, as such, cannot be linked to individuals without the use of additional information, which is kept separately, and its security is ensured by using appropriate technical and organisational measures.

Automated Decision-Making and Profiling

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

Rights of Data Subjects

The GDPR grants the following rights to you as a data subject:

- Right to withdraw consent, if processing is based on consent—Article 7 GDPR
- Right to Information—Articles 13 and 14 GDPR
- Right of Access—Article 15 GDPR
- Right to Rectification—Article 16 GDPR
- Right to Erasure—Article 17 GDPR
- Right to Restriction of Processing—Article 18 GDPR
- Right to Data Portability—Article 20 GDPR
- Right to Object—Article 21 GDPR
- The right not to be subjected to decisions only based on automated decision making of profiling—Article 22 GDPR
- Right to lodge a complaint with a supervisory authority—Article 77 GDPR

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

Data Protection Commission
6 Pembroke Row
Dublin 2
D02 X963
Website: www.dataprotection.ie