Privacy Notice for pupils: The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) 2026

Who we are

The PIRLS 2026 study is managed by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), and Pearson UK is carrying out the project under a contract from the Scottish Government.

For data protection purposes, the Scottish Government and IEA are the joint data controllers for your personal information. This means they are both responsible for making sure your data (which includes information like your name, age, and school details) is kept safe. Pearson UK and their partners handle the data and must follow strict rules to protect it. They have to make sure your information is collected and used according to the Data Protection Act 2018.

How we will use your information

Pearson UK and their partners collect your personal information (like your name, age, and school details) and use it for the Scottish Government and IEA to help with the PIRLS 2026 study. This study helps us see how schools in Scotland are doing compared to schools in other countries, showing us what we are good at and where we can improve.

By asking pupils about their homes, schools, and what they think about their lessons, we learn more about how pupils learn and how we can make schools better for everyone.

You can find more information about the PIRLS study at https://www.pearson.com/uk/web/pirls26-scotland/about-pirls.html

The nature of the personal data we will be using

We used your name and birthday to randomly choose pupils from your school to join the PIRLS study.

We will ask you questions about what you have learned in reading, and also about your home and school. This helps us understand how different things affect how people learn. We never share your answers or tell anyone which answers belong to you or your school.

We will put your answers and test results together with other information we have. Some of the information we ask for, like your name and birthday, is called sensitive personal data. We promise to be very careful with this information and keep it safe.

Why our use of your personal data is lawful

To use your personal information properly, we need to follow certain rules. For this project, we are allowed to collect and use your information because of a rule called Article 6(1)(e) of the General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR) 2018. This rule says:

"To collect and process the information is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest while exercising a function of a Minister of the Crown or a government department."

This means we can collect and use your information because it helps us do something important for everyone, like making better decisions or improving services. The law allows us to do this as part of our job to help the public.

Who we will make your personal data available to

Sometimes, we need to share your personal information with other organisations. This could include companies like Pearson UK, who help us with the project, and other groups that Pearson UK work with. We might also need to share it if it's needed to keep you or someone else safe from harm.

When we share your information, we make sure it's protected. For this project, Pearson UK and their partners will use your information to help with the PIRLS study. After you take part, they will change your name and other details into a code so no one knows who you are. They will then send this coded information to IEA and other countries that are also doing the PIRLS study, mixing it with information from about 60 other countries.

Transfer to Countries Outside EEA

Pearson UK will send your answers from the PIRLS 2026 study to IEA and their partners. Your answers will be combined with answers from pupils in other countries. First, they will go to a data centre in Hamburg, Germany, and then to a study centre at Boston College in the United States, where experts will study them. Pearson won't share your personal details like your name or your school. Instead, they will change this information into a code so no one can tell who you are, before they send it.

How long we will keep your personal data

We will keep your personal information only for as long as we need it for this study. After that, we will safely get rid of it. Sometimes, we might keep the data for a longer time if it's used for important research or to help with future projects that are good for everyone.

Your data protection rights

You have some important rights about your personal information:

- Ask to see what information we have about you.
- Correct any information that is wrong or missing.
- Ask us to delete your information if we don't need it anymore.
- Ask us to limit how we use your information (for example, we can keep it but not use it for new purposes).
- Say no to getting ads or marketing, and to using your data for research.
- Not be affected by decisions made only by computers that could be very important for you.

Contact information

For general inquiries:

- **Telephone**:
  - From the UK: 0300 244 4000
  - International callers: +44 131 244 4000
  - Text relay service: 18001 + 0300 244 4000 (for the hard of hearing)
- **Email**: ceu@gov.scot
- **Post**: Scottish Government
  St. Andrew's House
  Regent Road
  Edinburgh
  EH1 3DG

For data protection matters, contact our Data Protection Officer:

- **Email**: DataProtectionOfficer@gov.scot
- **Post**: If you, or your parent or carer, want to send a letter, write "Data Protection Officer" on the envelope and send it to the address above.

Complaints

If you're worried about how we're handling your personal information, you can ask your parent or carer to contact our Data Protection Officer by emailing DataProtectionOfficer@gov.scot. If you're still not happy with the answer you get, you can also make a complaint to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

The Information Commissioner
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Tel: 08456 30 60 60

For more information, visit ICO's complaints webpage.

Last updated

We might change this notice from time to time, so it’s a good idea to check it now and then at https://www.pearson.com/uk/web/pirls26-scotland/data-protection.html

This version was last updated November 2024