

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

Who we are

The PIRLS 2026 study is organised by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) and is being carried out by Pearson UK who have been contracted by the Department for Education (DfE) to deliver the project in England. For the purpose of data protection legislation, DfE and IEA are the joint data controllers for the personal data processed in England as part of PIRLS 2026 and Pearson UK, and their subcontractors Oxford University Centre for Educational Assessment (OUCEA) and Page Bros Group, are our data processors.

This means that we (DfE) are responsible for making sure that the way your child's data is collected and used meets the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018).

How we use your child's information

Pearson UK and their subcontractors receive your child's personal data and are processing it on behalf of DfE and IEA so that England can participate in the PIRLS 2026 study. Studies such as PIRLS show us how education in England compares to that in other countries around the world; what we are good at, and where we can do better. By asking pupils about their home, school and what they think about the subjects they study and their lessons, we can understand different things about the ways that people learn and find ways to make schools better for everyone.

More information about the PIRLS study is available from pearson.com/pirls26england.

The nature of the personal data we are using

We use the names and date of birth of pupils in your child's school to randomly select pupils to take part in PIRLS.

We collect information on what your child has learnt about reading from their answers to the PIRLS assessment questions. We also ask questions about their home and school. The answers to these questions help us to understand how the things they tell us about affect the ways that people learn. We do not publish the answers to any question, and your child and their school cannot be identified from any report or publication. We put the information we collect from your child, including their test results and their answers to questions about home and school with other information which we already have. This includes information in the national pupil database provided to us by your child's school such as their marks in tests. Some of the information we ask for, or which we already have and will use in PIRLS is called

sensitive personal data. This includes name, date of birth, and whether your child was born in England. To use this data we have to tell you that we are using it, and to take extra care to protect the information.

Why our use of your child's personal data is lawful

For our use of your child's personal data to be lawful, we need to meet one (or more) conditions in the data protection legislation. For this project, the relevant condition that we are meeting is:

- **Article 6(1) (e)** of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018: 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.
- **Article 9(2)(j)** of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018 - processing is necessary for archiving purposes in the public interest, scientific or historical research purposes or statistical purposes based on law which shall be proportionate to the aim pursued, respect the essence of the right to data protection and provide for suitable and specific measures to safeguard the fundamental rights and the interests of the data subject

This means that the law allows us to collect and use your child's data because the government have decided that England should take part in the PIRLS study.

Who we make your child's personal data available to

We sometimes need to make personal data available to other organisations. These might include contracted partners, such as Pearson UK and others who we have employed to process your child's personal data on our behalf, and/or other organisations with whom we need to share your personal data for specific purposes.

Where we need to share your child's personal data with others, we ensure that this data sharing complies with DPA 2018. For this project:

- We are employing Pearson UK and their subcontractors to process your child's personal data on our behalf. After your child has taken the PIRLS study, Pearson UK will pseudonymise their personal data (i.e. they will remove their name and anything else which could be used to identify them or their school and replace it with a code) and they will send it to organisations in other countries. They will put the pseudonymised data with that from the other (approximately 60 countries) taking part in PIRLS.
- We may share your child's data including the information we collect in PIRLS, and the information from the national pupil database with other people and organisations who want to use it for research. The data will be shared in pseudonymised format. This data sharing is lawful because the law allows us to collect, and to share personal information for the purposes of research and statistical analysis that is in the public interest pursuant to Regulation 3(6) of the Education (Individual Pupil Information) (Prescribed Persons) (England) Regulations 2009.

Transfer to Countries Outside EEA

Pearson UK (on our behalf) will send the data from your child's responses to the PIRLS 2026 study to IEA and their contractors. They will not share their personal data with them; they will pseudonymise it by removing names and anything else which could be used to identify them or their school and replace this with a code prior to release.

How long we keep your child's personal data

We only keep your child's personal data for as long as we need it for the purpose(s) of this piece of work, after which point it will be securely destroyed. Under Data Protection legislation, and in compliance with the relevant data processing conditions, personal data can be kept for longer periods of time when processed purely for archiving purposes in the public interest, scientific or historical research, and statistical purposes.

Your data protection rights

Under certain circumstances, you have the right:

- to ask us for access to information about your child that we hold
- to have your child's personal data rectified if it is inaccurate or incomplete
- to request the deletion or removal of personal data where there is no compelling reason for its continued processing
- to restrict our processing of your child's personal data (i.e. permitting its storage but no further processing)
- to object to direct marketing (including profiling) and processing for the purposes of scientific/historical research and statistics
- not to be subject to decisions based purely on automated processing where it produces a legal or similarly significant effect on your child

Contact information

If you need to contact us regarding any of the above, please do so via the DfE site at: <https://www.gov.uk/contact-dfe>. For the Data Protection Officer (DPO), please mark it 'for the attention of the 'DPO'.

Further information about your data protection rights appears on the Information Commissioner's website at:

[A guide to the data protection principles | ICO](#)

Last updated

We may need to update this privacy notice periodically, so we recommend that you revisit this information from time to time at [pearson.com/pirls26england](https://www.pearson.com/pirls26england).

This version was last updated on 23 September 2024.