



Privacy Notice – The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) 2027.

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Should you wish to contact someone in relation to this research please see details below.

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Being transparent and providing accessible information to individuals about how we may use personal data is a key element of the [Data Protection Act \(DPA\)](#) and the [UK General Data Protection Regulation \(UKGDPR\)](#).

The Department of Education (the Department) is committed to building trust and confidence in our ability to process your personal information and protect your privacy.

This privacy notice explains how the Department uses personal information in the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) 2027. This includes information you give to us, or information that we may collect about you.

Why are you processing my personal data?

The Department has commissioned Pearson in partnership with the University College London Institute of Education (UCL IOE) to deliver TIMSS in Northern Ireland. Pearson are the Department's data processor for TIMSS and UCL IOE are providing the analytical and reporting element of the study.

The study is coordinated by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). TIMSS collects information on the mathematics and science attainment of primary school pupils (Year 6) in Northern Ireland and enables



comparisons to be made across over 60 countries that are taking part. TIMSS also asks pupils about their home, school and what they think about learning mathematics and science. Their mathematics and science teachers along with their school principals will also be asked to complete an online questionnaire

The field trial for TIMSS 2027 will take place in Northern Ireland between Monday 9 March and Friday 27 March 2026 and the main study in May / June 2027.

The personal data we require are listed within this privacy notice under 'what personal data are you processing?'

In addition to the personal data being sought we will also require special category personal data. Details regarding the types of special category data are listed below under 'What categories of personal data are you processing?'

Lawful basis for processing personal data

The lawful basis for processing personal data for TIMSS 2027 is:

- UKGDPR **Article 6(1)(e)** public task, underpinned by [The Education Reform \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1989](#)

The lawful basis for processing personal data categorised as special category data for TIMSS 2027 is:

- UKGDPR **Article 9(2)(j)** - Archiving, Research and statistics
This condition is met if the processing
 - a) is necessary for archiving purposes, scientific or historical research purposes or statistical purposes,
 - b) is carried out in accordance with Article 89(1) of the GDPR (as supplemented by section 18) and is in the public interest.



What categories of personal data are you processing?

Information for pupils and their parents / guardians

The personal data processed about your child includes name, date of birth and gender which will be provided by your school. Your child will be asked their personal opinions about and experiences of being taught and learning mathematics and science in their school. They will also be asked how satisfied they are with different aspects of their life, their belief about their academic ability and feelings about school in general. The answers to these questions in the pupil questionnaire will help us to understand how the things your child tells us about affect the ways in which they learn.

Your child's school will provide information about your child that is categorised as special category personal data specifically whether they have Special Educational Needs (SEN). They will also be asked whether they were born in Northern Ireland and if English is the language spoken most in your home. These data might be seen as more sensitive and personal than the other data processed for TIMSS and we must tell you that we are using it and take extra care to protect these types of special category personal data.

Information for school principals

We use principals' names to personalise your school study materials. We will use your name and your nominated school co-ordinator's name and email addresses to correspond throughout the study. We may also correspond by email with other school staff e.g., IT support if needed.

We will collect contextual information on your school from your answers to the TIMSS school questionnaire. We will ask about your qualifications and time spent in teaching. You will also be asked for your personal opinions about aspects of delivering education in your school such as your opinion about factors that hinder



pupils' learning. The answers to these questions help us to understand how the things you tell us about affect the ways that pupils learn.

Information for mathematics and science teachers

We will use your names to administer the study. We will ask your gender and age and about your qualifications and time spent teaching. We will ask your personal opinions about your job teaching mathematics / science.

Where do you get personal data from?

Personal data, including special category personal data, will be collected from participating schools from the administrative data they hold about their Year 6 pupils and their staff in order to administer TIMSS. Pupils will be asked in the pupil questionnaire for personal data, including special category personal data and school principals and teachers will be asked for their personal opinions about aspects of delivering teaching and learning. We may also match the data from TIMSS to data from the Northern Ireland School Census.

How will my information be used and shared?

The personal information collected during TIMSS 2027 will be processed for the above stated purpose of Northern Ireland's participation in TIMSS only. The has a contract in place with Pearson which means Pearson cannot do anything with your personal information unless instructed to do so.

After the study has taken place in your school, Pearson will pseudonymise the test and questionnaire data (i.e., they will remove names and anything else which could be used to identify a pupil or school and replace it with a code) and they will send it to the IEA and their contractors who will append it to the data for the other countries that are taking and anonymise the resultant dataset before publishing it on their website for further research.



The pseudonymised dataset produced by Pearson and shared with the IEA, will be anonymised by the Department and made available, on request to suitably qualified researchers / organisations under a [Data Sharing Agreement](#)

Pearson will also provide a TIMSS 2027 pseudonymised dataset to the Department's Statistics and Research Team (SRT). This dataset will include pupils' Unique Pupil Numbers, provided by schools, which will be used to match pupils' TIMSS data with their data provided for the Northern Ireland School Census to allow further analysis.

The Department will publish on its website in December 2028 the TIMSS 2027 Northern Ireland National Report authored by UCL IOE. At the same time the IEA will publish International Results of TIMSS 2027.

No individual or school will be identified or identifiable in any published reports.

Do you transfer my personal data to other countries?

The pseudonymised dataset produced by Pearson will be transferred to the IEA in both the Netherlands and the USA.

How long will you keep my personal data?

Pearson will securely store the personal data collected including names and contact details where applicable used to administer the study for as long as they need it for the purpose of this piece of research and delete these data before the contract ends.

The Department under data protection legislation and in compliance with the relevant data processing conditions for research and statistics may hold the assessment and questionnaire data in a de-identified format indefinitely.



What are my rights?

Not all rights will be applicable as these are based on the legal justification for processing.

- You have the right to obtain confirmation that your data is being [processed](#), [and access to your personal data](#)
- You are entitled to have personal data [rectified if it is inaccurate or incomplete](#)
- You have a right to have personal data [erased and to prevent processing](#), in specific circumstances
- You have the right to [‘block’ or suppress processing](#) of personal data, in specific circumstances
- You have the right to [data portability](#), in specific circumstances
- You have the right to [object to the processing](#), in specific circumstances

If you wish to exercise these rights, please email

Dataprotectionofficer@education-ni.gov.uk

How to complain if you are not happy with how we process your personal information

If you are unhappy with how any aspect of this privacy notice, or how your personal information is being processed, please contact the Department’s Data Protection Officer at dataprotectionofficer@education-ni.gov.uk

If you are still not happy, you have the right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO).

Contact details of the ICO are available at <https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/>