

The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) 2023 in Northern Ireland

Privacy Notice for Parents

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1. What is TIMSS?

The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) is a research study that collects information on the mathematics and science attainment of primary school pupils in Northern Ireland and enables comparisons to be made across 60 countries that are taking part. TIMSS also asks pupils about their home, school and what they think about learning mathematics and science. We also invite parents to complete a short questionnaire about your child's early learning experiences, what you do together at home and your views about things related to your child's school.

By collecting this information, we hope to find ways to make schools better for everyone.

This privacy notice covers how both you and your child's personal data¹ will be processed as part of the research study.

We will not use your child's or your personal data for any other purpose than TIMSS and we will not publish your or your child's answers to any question and neither you, your child or their school will be identified or identifiable from any TIMSS report or publication.

The Department of Education (DE) has retained the services of Pearson Education Ltd (Pearson), to deliver TIMSS 2023 in Northern Ireland.

DE is the data controller for TIMSS 2023 and Pearson acting on our behalf is the data processor. This means that we are responsible for making sure that the way your data are collected and used meets the requirements of data protection legislation.

TIMSS is sponsored by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) and this privacy notice also details how they process data.

More information about TIMSS 2023 is available on the IEA website <https://www.iea.nl/studies/iea/timss/timss2023>

¹ Personal data collected in TIMSS may include data that could be used to make inferences or guesses about Special Category personal data. This privacy notice highlights any instances where this may be the case. For more information on Special Category Data and the UK GDPR please visit the website of the Information Commissioner's Office <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/lawful-basis-for-processing/special-category-data/>. For more information on DE's processing of personal and Special Category data please see the DE Privacy Notice <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/department-education-privacy-notice>

2. How we will use your child's data

Pearson will collect your child's personal data from their school and processes these data so Northern Ireland may take part in TIMSS. The information collected in TIMSS shows us how education in Northern Ireland compares to that in other countries. TIMSS tells us what we are good at regarding mathematics and science, and where we can do better.

If your child is absent on the day of the study and the absence is related to Covid-19 e.g. your child is self-isolating this will be recorded. This is only so we can monitor the impact of Covid-19 related absences on the number of children participating in the study.

3. Your child's data that we will use

Classes from around 150 different schools across Northern Ireland are randomly selected to be part of the TIMSS main study and 37 in the field trial. Your child's class is one of these.

Pupil names are collected only to make sure each pupil receives the correct assessment items for the study. The data is later de-identified and **no school, pupil or parent can be identified in the final data set, nor will they ever be named in any report.**

Pearson collects the following personal data from participating schools in order to administer the study:

- Name
- Date of birth
- Gender
- Unique Pupil Number (UPN)
- A broad indication of identified additional needs or limited experience of English language to, in consultation with their school, ascertain whether they may be excused from participation. This data is for administration of the tests only and will not be reported
- If your child's absence on the day of the study is related to Covid-19

Pearson will collect whether or not pupils taking part are non-English speaking. These data are only used to assist pupils who may have difficulties accessing the assessments and / or the questionnaire. DE recognise the potential for this data to be used to make inferences or guesses about Special Category Data² as defined in the UK GDPR specifically, racial or ethnic origin. However DE has a lawful basis for processing Special Category Data, outlined below.

In addition to the assessments in mathematics and science, your child will be asked about themselves, their home and school and we will combine this information with other information which DE already has about your child. This includes information from the Northern Ireland School Census² provided to us by your child's school. Doing this helps us to understand different things about the ways pupils learn.

4. How we will use your data

The parent questionnaire collects background information, for example, pupils' early learning experiences and their home learning environment.

Pearson will also collect the following from parents/guardians through their completion of the parent questionnaire:

Your own characteristics:

- Level of education
- Job category (e.g. trade or craft worker, clerical worker etc.)
- Language spoken at home

Your child's characteristics:

- Language spoken at home
- Whether born in Northern Ireland

DE recognises the potential for "Language spoken at home" and / or "Whether born in Northern Ireland" to be used to make inferences about racial or ethnic origin which are Special Category Data as defined in the UK GDPR. However DE has a lawful basis for processing Special Category Data, outlined below.

Your questionnaire responses will be linked to your child's data. **No names of parents or children are ever recorded in the final data set and you can choose whether or not you wish to respond to any question.** If you choose to complete the Parent Questionnaire online, your engagement with it is monitored so Pearson can track completion of the questionnaires. It is not used for any other purpose and is deleted once the deadline for completion has passed.

5. Our lawful basis for processing your child's and your personal data

For our use of your child's and your personal data to be lawful, we need to meet one or more of the conditions in data protection legislation. For TIMSS 2023, the relevant condition that we are meeting is Article 6(1) (e) of the UK General Data Protection

² The Northern Ireland School Census is DE's main data collection taking place in October each year. The Census gathers demographic and socioeconomic data for pupils in Northern Ireland.

Regulation (UK GDPR) 2018 because *the collection and processing of the information is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest while exercising a function of a government department*. This means that the law allows us to collect and use your child's and your personal data because the Government has decided that Northern Ireland should take part in TIMSS.

6. Our lawful basis for processing your child's and your Special Category personal data

The lawful basis for the processing of Special Category personal data is Article 9, 2(j) of the UK GDPR 2018: processing is necessary for archiving purposes in the public interest, scientific or historical research purposes or statistical purposes. We will only process Special Category personal data, where it is necessary and for the original purpose for which it was obtained, in line with the requirements of the UK GDPR. DE meets a further required condition of the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA). Section 10(2) of the DPA sets out that the processing meets the requirement in point (j) only if it meets a condition (or purpose) in Part 1 of Schedule 1.

In pursuance of Part 1 of Schedule 1, the processing is necessary for 4(a) archiving, research and statistical purposes; is carried out in accordance with Article 89(1) of the UK GDPR (supplemented by section 19 of the DPA); and is in the public interest.

7. Who we will make your child's personal data available to?

We sometimes need to make personal data available to other organisations. These might include organisations we have employed to process your child's personal data on our behalf or others we need to share it with for a specific purpose. Where we need to share your child's personal data with others, we ensure that this data sharing complies with data protection legislation. For TIMSS 2023:

- We are employing Pearson to process your child's personal data on our behalf.
- After your child has taken the TIMSS assessment, Pearson will send the data to the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) via a secure File Transfer Protocol (FTP) site, who will combine your data with that from all 60 countries taking part in TIMSS. Before they do this, **Pearson will remove your child's name and anything else that could be used to identify your child or their school.**
- TIMSS is directed by the International Study Centre (ISC) based at Boston College, USA, and most of the data analysis occurs there. ISC employees who access the data for analysis have signed a confidentiality agreement. The transfer of the data to the USA, as a third country is safeguarded by appropriate and suitable technical and organisational measures.

- DE may share your child's data we collect in TIMSS, and data from the NI School Census with other people and organisations who want to use it for research. In doing so, DE will ensure that your and your child's confidentiality is maintained and no outputs from any research will refer to you or your child or their school.

8. How long we will keep your child's personal data?

We will only securely store your child's personal data, name and date of birth for as long as we need it for the purpose of this piece of research, after which point it will be securely destroyed. Please note that under data protection legislation and in compliance with the relevant data processing conditions for research and statistics, we can lawfully retain a de-identified dataset of the TIMSS 2023 data.

Pearson, our data processor, limits access to your personal information to their staff members who have a business need to see it. Data is not kept longer than is necessary and is deleted in accordance with Pearson's internal policy. For international surveys, data is retained for 12 months after the release of the International and National reports in December 2024.

9. Where, how and for how long are data from TIMSS stored with IEA?

TIMSS data may be stored securely and indefinitely in a de-identified form, that is: processed in such a way that the personal data can no longer be attributed to a person without the use of additional information (any such additional information is kept separately and is 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 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.

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)

10. Your data protection rights

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 your child's personal data where there is no compelling reason for its continued processing;
- to object to and / or restrict our processing of your child's personal data (e.g. permitting its storage but no further processing).

If you wish to contact the Department in relation to your rights under data protection legislation, you can contact the Department's Data Protection Officer:

Alan Macdonald
Data Protection Officer
Department of Education
Rathgael House
Balloo Road, Rathgill
Bangor
BT19 7PR

Telephone: (028) 9127 9788

Email: dataprotectionofficier@education-ni.gov.uk

Further information about your data protection rights appears on the Information Commissioner's [website](#).

11. Your rights to lodge a complaint

TIMSS is a voluntary study and even if you agree to take part you may still decide that you do not wish to do so at any time. If you are unhappy with our use of your personal data, please let DE's statistician responsible for the TIMSS study, Michael Woods, know by [email](#) or by telephoning 02891 279616 Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm.

If you remain dissatisfied, you have the right to raise any concerns with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) via their [website](#).

12. Last updated

We keep this privacy notice under review to make sure it is up to date and accurate. Any changes will be noted. The date when this privacy notice was last updated is shown in the footer at the bottom of this document.

13. Contact Information

If you have any questions about how your child's personal information will be processed and/or TIMSS in general, please contact:

RESPONSIBLE STATISTICIAN	TIMSS POLICY LEAD
Michael Woods	Lynne Hackworth
Department of Education	Department of Education
Analytical Services Unit	School Improvement Team
Rathgael House	Rathgael House
Balloo Road	Balloo Road
Bangor	Bangor
BT19 7PR	BT19 7PR
Email: Michael.Woods@education-ni.gov.uk	Email: Lynne.hackworth@education-ni.gov.uk
Tel: 02891 27 9616	Tel 02891 277626

And for the IEA:

IEA

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1016 EE Amsterdam

The Netherlands

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