



Department for Education: privacy notice for Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2025

Last updated: October 2023

Date of next review: October 2024

We might make changes before the review date. Check regularly for updates.

This privacy notice explains how the Department for Education (DfE) uses personal information in the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2025 study. This includes information you give to us, or information that we may collect about you.

PISA is the world's biggest international education study involving schools and pupils in over 80 countries. The study is run by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). It tests 15-year-old pupils from all over the world in mathematics, reading and science. Pupils and participating schools also complete a background questionnaire.

Why we get your personal data

When we collect and use this information, we need to follow the law. The main laws are the Data Protection Act (DPA) and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

DfE is the data controller for your personal data. We must have a reason to collect your personal data. This is called a 'lawful basis'. For this project, we are using the following lawful basis to process your personal data:

- **public task** – this is when we need your personal data to do our work, to provide or fund education.

When we use your sensitive information, this is 'special category' data. We use the following lawful basis to process special category data:

- Necessary for archiving, scientific, historical research, or statistical purposes

What we need

We will collect the following types of personal information, some of which may be special category data. This data will be collected from schools in preparation for the study or directly from pupils and school staff from responses to the PISA assessment and questionnaires. Some information may be collected from other information that we hold.



Pupils

- We use the names and date of birth of pupils provided by your school to randomly select pupils to take part in PISA.
- We will collect information on what you have learnt about science, maths and reading from your answers to the PISA assessment questions. We will also ask questions about your home and school. The answers to these questions help us to understand how the things you tell us about affect the ways that people learn.
- Some of the information we ask for, or which we already have and will use in PISA is called sensitive personal data. This includes name, date of birth, and whether you were born in England. To use this data, we must tell you that we are using it, and take extra care to protect the information.

Schools

- We use headteachers' names to personalise your school study materials and will use the headteacher and nominated school co-ordinator's email address to correspond with you throughout the project.
- We will collect contextual information on your school from your answers to the PISA school questionnaire. The answers to these questions help us to understand how the things you tell us about affect the ways that people learn.

Why we need it and what we do with it

We collect and process your personal information so that we can participate in the PISA 2025 study. Studies such as PISA show us how education in England compares to that in other countries around the world; what we are good at, and where we can improve.

After the study has taken place in your school, Pearson will pseudonymise the test and questionnaire data (i.e. they will remove your name and anything else which could be used to identify you or your school and replace it with a code) and they will send it to the OECD and their contractors who will put the pseudonymised data with that from the other countries taking part in PISA.

To allow further analysis of the data, we may put the information we collect with other information which we already have, e.g. information in the national pupil database, such as marks in tests.

We do not publish your answers to any question, and you and your school cannot be identified from any report or publication.



How long we keep it

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.

We will only keep your 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.

Do we use any data processors?

A data processor is an organisation that processes your information on DfE's behalf.

Yes, PISA 2025 study delivery in England is contracted by DfE to Pearson, who are the Department's data processor for PISA 2025. Pearson are working in partnership with Oxford University and University College London who are providing the analytical and reporting element of the project.

Do we transfer your personal information overseas?

When DfE stores personal information outside the UK, we will make sure we keep your personal data safe. We follow the data protection law. We also use extra security measures, contracts and data sharing agreements.

Pearson (on our behalf) will send the data from your responses to the PISA 2025 tests and questionnaires to OECD and their contractors. They will not share your raw personal data with them; they will pseudonymise it by removing names and anything else which could be used to identify you or your school and replace this with a code.

Do we share your personal information?

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

We may share your data including the information we collect in PISA, and the information from the national pupil database or other information that we hold with other people and organisations who want to use it for research. 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.



If the law allows it, we might also share your personal information with other parts of DfE including the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), and with other government departments.

The [DfE Personal Information Charter](#) gives you more information on how we use your personal information.

What are your rights

You have rights about how and why your information is collected and used.

Under certain circumstances, these include:

- The right to see the personal information we have about you – this is called 'right of access'
- The right to ask us to change any information you think is not accurate or complete – this is called 'right to rectification'
- The right to ask us to delete your personal information – this is called 'right to erasure'
- The right to ask us to stop using your information – this is called 'right to restriction of processing', and
- Your 'right to object to processing' of your information

For more information on your rights, please see the [ICO website](#).

Finding out what information we have

You have the right to ask for access to your personal information. This is known as a subject access request (SAR).

To make a SAR, you can use the [DfE contact form](#).

Or you can post your request to the Data Protection Office at the above address.

Include as much information as you can about the information you need. Include the years you need the information for. If possible, tell us which part of the department holds the information. You'll also need to tell us your telephone number and address.

We may need to check your identity and your right to access the information you're requesting. To check your identity, we may ask for a copy of your passport, photo driving licence or proof of your address.



Department
for Education

We'll try to respond to your request within one month. But, if your request is complex, this could take a further two months, but we'll tell you if this is the case.

If you would like to see a copy of the personal information we hold about you, this is called a Subject Access Request, or SAR.

How to contact us or make a complaint

If you have a question, or feel your data has been mishandled, you can contact us by:

using our secure [DfE contact form](#)

or writing to:

Emma Wharram
Data Protection Officer
Department for Education (B2.28)
7 & 8 Wellington Place
Wellington Street
Leeds
LS1 4AW

You can also complain to the ICO by writing to:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Helpline number: 0303 123 1113. Or use the online [ICO contact form](#)