

Privacy notice for PISA 2025

1. Why are we collecting this data?

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is an international study which aims to evaluate education systems worldwide by testing the skills and knowledge of students aged 15 or 16. PISA is a worldwide study that has taken place every three or four years since 2000.

The purpose of the study is to produce statistics on students' learning and skills, to gain insights into how best to improve teaching and learning and provide the most effective opportunities for all young people. This is a test of the education system as a whole rather than a test of individual students. The study is split into two sections: a Field Trial that was conducted in spring 2024 and the Main Study that takes place in autumn 2025.

We take privacy and confidentiality very seriously and no individual student, teacher, school or parent will be identified or identifiable in any reporting.

This privacy notice tells you what the Scottish Government (the data controller) and their approved contractor (NFER, the data processor) will do with the information we collect from students and headteachers as part of the PISA study and how we will ensure privacy of personal information. It explains:

- the personal information to be collected for the study
- the organisations that information will be shared with
- how we will use the personal data
- what makes it lawful to collect and share the information
- how participation affects you
- security and confidentiality
- contact details and further information.

Participation in the study is voluntary. If there are any questions anyone does not wish to answer they may leave them blank. Alternatively, please contact NFER on 01753 637096 or pisascotland@nfer.ac.uk if you would prefer to withdraw from participation in the study.

2. Who is this study sponsored and funded by?

The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) conducts all parts of PISA 2025 (the Field Study in spring 2024 and Main Study in autumn 2025) on behalf of the Scottish Government.

For the purpose of data protection legislation, NFER is the data processor and the Scottish Government is the data controller.

3. What is the legal basis for processing activities?

The legal basis for processing personal data is covered by:

- GDPR Article 6 (1) (e)

***Public task:** the processing is necessary for you to perform a task in the public interest or for official functions, and the task or function has a clear basis in law.*

Further information about the Scottish Government's public tasks and related legislation is set out in the Education analytical services privacy notice: [Learning research: privacy notice - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/learning-research-privacy-notice)

4. How will personal data be obtained?

Prior to both the Field Trial and the Main Study, schools selected to participate will supply data for all students in that school who are in the eligible age range. This is from 15 years and 3 months to 16 years and 2 months at the time of the study. From this data, a sample of students will be selected to participate in the test. This data collection is necessary for the performance of a public task.

For students that participate in the test, further data will be obtained directly through their responses to the student assessments and questionnaire surveys.

NFER will also collect personal information from identified staff in order to facilitate the administration of the study. This data will be collected directly from schools (including their websites) and in rare instances will be provided by the Scottish Government.

5. What personal data is being collected by this study?

As the approved contractors for this study NFER will collect the following personal information about students in the eligible age range from the local authorities or participating schools in order to administer both the Field Trial and Main Study:

- Name
- Date of Birth
- Gender

- A broad indication of identified additional needs or limited experience of English language (to ascertain whether they may be excused from participation).

For students **sampled** to participate in the study, assessment data on their skills in reading, maths, science and learning in a digital world is collected. Data collection also includes a questionnaire covering students' attitudes to school and learning, and some background characteristics. These include questions about the student's home, parents' education, reading habits, satisfaction with life, feelings and emotions, languages spoken and learned cultural awareness and the school experience.

In addition to the student data, NFER will also collect personal information from identified staff in order to facilitate the administration of the study. This information will be collected for the Headteacher, nominated ICT contact and nominated staff contact:

- Name
- Job Title
- Email
- Direct telephone number

6. Who will the personal data be shared with?

The list of sampled schools is shared with Scottish Government. We may share staff data with the Scottish Government in order that they can also contact nominated staff to support the administration of PISA 2025. For the Main Survey only, the postcode and region of schools is shared with the consortium contractors ACER <https://www.acer.org/au/> and Westat <https://www.westat.com/> so they can quality assure the geographical distribution of sampled schools.

Assessment and questionnaire data is shared with the international consortium contractors following both the Field Trial and Main Survey phases, for the production of the aggregated statistics. However, this will be an anonymised dataset and any information that could identify individual children, teachers or schools will be removed before transfer. The Scottish Government will be provided with a file of participating student candidate numbers and their PISA ID. This will enable them to match this to the anonymised data set in order to enable their analysis.

Further information about how the Scottish Government will use student data in its wider work is provided in the Educational Analytical Services privacy notice [Learning research: privacy notice - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/learning-research-privacy-notice-2024-01/pages/1-1-introduction.aspx).

7. Is personal data being transferred outside of the United Kingdom?

No personal data is stored or transferred outside of the UK. Although the OECD contractors are based outside the UK, only anonymised data is shared with them.

8. How long will personal data be retained?

Personal data is securely deleted by NFER 12 months after submission to the international consortium. This allows for any anomalies or queries to be resolved. This will be the end of May 2025 for the Field Trial and December 2027 for the Main Study. The data of students who are eligible but not selected in the sample of participants will be deleted once that study period (Field Trial or Main Study) has been completed as the data will no longer be required.

9. Can I stop my personal data being used?

In certain circumstances, data subjects have the right to restrict or object to processing. They also have the right to make a subject access request to see all the information held about them. NFER will cooperate fully when a subject access request (SAR) is made of a data controller. To exercise these rights, please contact the Scottish Government's DPO or NFER's [Compliance Officer](#).

NFER handles personal data in accordance with the rights given to individuals under data protection legislation. [Requests can be made to withdraw from the study itself or erase data collected from the study](#). If at any time you wish us to withdraw your data or correct errors in it, please contact pisascotland@nfer.ac.uk

10. Who can I contact about this study?

NFER is responsible for the day-to-day management of this study in Scotland. Please contact pisascotland@nfer.ac.uk with any queries.

If you have a concern about the way this study processes personal data, we request that you raise your concern with us or the Scottish Government in the first instance. You can contact their Data Protection Officer at DataProtectionOfficer@gov.scot or by writing to: Data Protection Officer, Victoria Quay, Commercial Street, Edinburgh EH6 6QQ.

If you remain dissatisfied, you can contact the Information Commissioner's Office, the body responsible for enforcing data protection legislation in the UK, at <https://ico.org.uk/concerns/>.

11. Updates

This privacy notice was updated in January 2024 to clarify arrangements for the processing of personal data for eligible and sampled students.

This privacy notice was updated in December 2024 to align the privacy notice to the main study 2025.