



Specific Speech & Language Disorder Class

Scoil Chroí Íosa, Blarney

Admission & Discharge Procedure

Definitions used in this document

AAC: Advisory Admissions Committee

ADC: Advisory Discharge Committee

BOM: Board of Management of Scoil Chroí Íosa, Blarney

DE: Department of Education

DLD: Developmental Language Disorder

HSE: Health Service Executive

IASLT: Irish Association of Speech & Language Therapists

Parents: Should be taken to include guardians

SENO: Special Education Needs Organiser

SLT: Speech & Language Therapist

SSLD Class: Specific Speech and Language Disorder Class

SSLI: Specific Speech & Language Impairment which also means a Specific Speech & Language Disorder

The SSLD Class: Scoil Chroí Íosa's SSLD Class

INTRODUCTION

What is an SSLD Class?

A Language Class (SSLD Class) is a class for children with Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) previously known as SLI (Specific Language Impairment). There are a maximum of 7 children in the class, with a full time teacher and input from a HSE Speech and Language Therapist (SLT). There is also input from a NEPS Psychologist where available.

There are currently 2 SSLD Classes in the North Lee Area:

1 in Scoil Chroí Íosa, Blarney

1 in Glounthane National School

The classes serve the geographical area currently defined by the HSE as “North Lee Local Health Office”

What Happens in an SSLD Class?

The children follow the mainstream curriculum of their equivalent class as appropriate. The 7 children in the SSLD Class are part of the school and can be integrated for some subjects. They are involved in typical school activities along with the other pupils of the school.

The Speech & Language Therapist works closely with the teacher to provide therapy that can be integrated into the child’s school day. The teacher can modify his/her teaching to suit each child’s unique speech, language and learning needs.

What is Developmental Language Disorder?

Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) describes *‘children likely to have language problems enduring into middle childhood and beyond, with a significant impact on everyday social interactions or educational progress’* (Bishop et al., 2016b). The primary diagnosis of DLD is not associated with a known differentiating condition e.g. Autism, Down Syndrome, Hearing Impairment or Intellectual Disability.

Up to recent times SLI (Specific Language Impairment) or SSLD (Specific Speech and Language Disorder) were the terms used. The new name, Developmental Language Disorder, is now being used in Ireland and worldwide since May 2017.

What do we know about DLD?

- It is very common, more common than Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and Autism Spectrum Disorder (Bishop, 2010).
- It may be life-long for many individuals with effects on their academic, social and emotional development.
- Children with DLD can have co-occurring challenges with motor, sensory and cognitive skills.

Eligibility Criteria for enrolment in an SSLD Class.

The Department of Education & Skills (DES) has established the criteria for enrolment eligibility for SSLD Classes. They are as follows:

1. Assessment by a psychologist on a standardised test of intelligence which places nonverbal ability within the average range or above (i.e. Performance IQ of 90 or more).
2. Assessment on a standardised test of language which places performance on one or more of the main areas of language at 2 standard deviations or more below the mean.
3. The child’s difficulties are not attributable to hearing impairment.
4. Emotional or behavioural disorders or a physical disability are not considered to be primary causes. (see DES Circulars 02/05 (Special Education Section DES, 2005) and 0038/07 (DES, 2007a) for details at www.education.gov.ie)

Is an SSLD Class suitable for my child?

Not all children with a clinical diagnosis of DLD will meet the Department of Education and Skill's eligibility criteria for an SSLD Class placement.

Not all children with a clinical diagnosis of DLD will require placement in an SSLD class. Other models of educational and SLT provision may be more appropriate. It is recommended that you discuss this with your child's Speech & Language Therapist.

The study of Irish

Pupils enrolled in an SSLD Class are entitled to an exemption from the study of Irish under the DES Circular 0052/2019. *"Pupils in special schools and in special classes in mainstream schools will therefore be exempt without holding a Certificate of Exemption."*

What is the Application Process?

Applications are made directly to the school. Please download the application pack from the school website www.scins.ie and if you need any help please contact principal@scins.ie or phone the school on 0214385865.

Children applying for a place in an SSLD Class need to have the following reports available by the assigned closing date for applications:

- (1) Speech & Language Therapy Report
- (2) Psychology Report
- (3) SSLD Class School or Pre-school Report
- (4) SSLD Class Rating Scale

A group called the Advisory Admissions Committee (AAC) meets to discuss all referrals and to make recommendations to the different Boards of Management (BOM) regarding the possible offer of available places in the SSLD Classes to appropriate candidates i.e. the AAC may recommend placement but the BOM retains ultimate responsibility for offering/refusing enrolment places.

The AAC comprises of the following:

- School Principals of Scoil Chroí Íosa, Blarney and Glounthane National School.
- SSLD Class Teachers from both schools.
- HSE Speech & Language Therapists from the SSLD Classes.
- HSE Speech & Language Therapy Manager/Designated Officer.
- NEPS Psychologists (National Educational Psychological Service)

Following the AAC meeting and in accordance with the decisions of the BOM, the parents of successful applicants are notified in writing by the relevant school principal with an offer of an SSLD class placement for their child for the following academic year.

The parents are invited to bring their child to visit the SSLD class to meet with the staff.

Applicants may not be offered a place in an SSLD class if:

- a) they do not meet the Department of Education and Skills Eligibility Criteria, or
- b) there are insufficient places available to meet the demand. In this situation a prioritization process is applied.

How long does a child spend in an SSLD Class?

In accordance with DES Circular 0038/2007, eligible pupils may spend up to 2 years in an SSLD class. During the school year each child's progress is reviewed. In the second term, recommendations are made to the BOM by the Advisory Discharge Committee (ADC) as to whether

or not a child should be offered a second year in the class. The BOM takes cognisance of such recommendations but retains ultimate responsibility for deciding on the child's continuing enrolment or otherwise in the SSLD Class.

The membership of the ADC comprises some or all of the following professionals:

- School Principal
- SSLD Class Teacher
- SSLD Class Speech & Language Therapist
- SENO
- NEPS Psychologist
- SLT Manger/Designated Officer.

Is Transport provided?

Transport for pupils attending an SSLD class may be provided through the Dept. of Education and Skills' Transport Section. Applications for transport to and from the SSLD Class are submitted by the school to the SENO. Bus Éireann School Transport Dept. implements the decisions at a local level. Apart from making the initial application, schools have no further role with regard to arranging school transport.

What happens when a child leaves the SSLD Class?

Most children go to their local mainstream primary school, with additional educational supports provided if deemed necessary.

Further Speech & Language Therapy, if deemed necessary may be provided by an appropriate service.

Further reading:

More information about DLD can be found in IASLT's Position Paper and Guidance Document called '*Supporting Children with Developmental Language Disorder in Ireland*' which is available at <Y:\DLD Developmental Language Disorder\DLD Position Paper FINAL 23MAY2017.pdf>

Application for a place in the SSLD Class

How do I know if my child is eligible to apply?

The DES has established criteria to identify children who are eligible for admission to a SSLD Class as outlined in **DES Circular 0038/2007**

An applicant who wishes to be enrolled in Scoil Chroí Íosa's SSLD Class must satisfy each of the following criteria:

- a) The applicant has been assessed by a psychologist on a standardised test of intellectual ability that places non-verbal ability within the average range or above (i.e. non-verbal IQ of 90, or above).
- b) The applicant has been assessed by a SLT on a standardised test of language development that places performance in one or more of the main areas of speech and language development at two standard deviations or more below the mean, or at a generally equivalent level.
- c) The applicant's difficulties are not attributable to hearing impairment; where the pupil is affected to some degree by hearing impairment, the hearing threshold for the speech-related frequencies should be 40Db.
- d) Emotional and behavioural disorders or a physical disability are not considered to be primary causes.

Please note:

- Children must reside in the geographical area defined by the HSE as "North Lee Local Health Office"
- Typically the SSLD Class comprises children in the Junior Infants to 2nd Class age range
- The SSLD Class is suitable for children with a *primary* diagnosis of DLD

Where do I get an application form?

Please download the application pack from the school website www.scins.ie and if you need any help please contact principal@scins.ie or phone the school on 0214385865.

Parents fill in the form and gather all the reports that are required. The completed application form and accompanying reports must be received by Scoil Chroí Íosa on or before the closing date. **The closing date for applications can be found on the school's Annual Admissions Notice which is published on the school website www.scins.ie each September.**

What paperwork will I need to submit with the application?

In order to apply for a place in the SSLD Class and to verify that an applicant meets the DES criteria, an application form **must** be submitted with the following **5 documents** by the Closing Date. These reports are:

1. **Speech & Language Therapy ('SLT') Report**, which includes results of standardised assessment/s of speech and language skills, which must be dated within six months of the closing date. **This report must state that the child has a clinical diagnosis of DLD.**
2. **A Psychological Assessment Report** that clearly identifies performance/nonverbal IQ as required by the DES, which must be dated within 24 months of the closing date. This should include results of a comprehensive assessment of both non-verbal and verbal ability including subtest results.
3. An SSLD Class Application School or Preschool report completed by the child's teacher
4. An SSLD Class Application Social, Emotional and Behavioural Rating Form completed by the child's teacher.
5. An SSLD Class Application Social, Emotional and Behavioural Rating Form completed by the child's parent in close liaison with the Speech and Language Therapist.

Parents should request all relevant reports from the therapist/school/pre-school in sufficient time to ensure that they can send the reports to Scoil Chroí Íosa on or before the closing date.

Procedures following the Submission of an Application

Once the Closing Date for applications has passed, the Advisory Committee (AC) meets to discuss all applications and to offer advice to Scoil Chroí Íosa's Board of Management (BOM) regarding the applicants who may be offered the available places in their SSLD Class.

The AC comprises of the following:

- School Principals of Scoil Chroí Íosa, Blarney and Glounthane National School.
- SSLD Class Teachers from both schools.
- HSE Speech & Language Therapists from the SSLD Classes.
- HSE Speech & Language Therapy Manager/Designated Officer.
- NEPS Psychologists (National Educational Psychological Service)

The maximum number of places available in the SSLD Class at any one time is seven per class. The profile of each applicant is discussed in detail with respect to the applicant's eligibility and suitability and any other issues that might be relevant for a SSLD Class placement.

A Priority Rating Scale is completed for each applicant.

Oversubscription

In the event of there being more applications than available spaces, the Priority Rating Scale determines the ranking of the applicants and the order in which the AAC recommends to the BOM that the available spaces should be allocated.

In turn, the BOM, when allocating places gives due recognition to the following factors:

- Severity of need as per the Priority Rating Scale
- Other factors that may be significant to the child's needs, e.g. the availability of an age appropriate peer group for the child, the availability of alternative educational placements etc.

In the event of there being more eligible applicants than available spaces, a waiting list is established based on the ranked order of the applicants. The BOM will inform the parents of applicants who are not initially offered a place in the SSLD Class that a waiting list has been established and that places will be offered in ranked order should spaces become available in the SSLD Class. The waiting list expires at the end of May each year.

The BOM will inform parents when all the places have been filled and unsuccessful applications may consider reapplying the following year.

Undersubscription

It may happen that the SSLD Class has unfilled places because there are fewer applicants than places or because applicants decline the offer of a place.

In this event, the available places will be offered by the BOM in the following priority order (subject to the BOM's satisfaction that the applicants meet the criteria for enrolment):

1. To suitable and eligible applicants on the waiting list for Scoil Chroí Íosa's SSLD Class.
2. To suitable and eligible applicants on the waiting list for the other SSLD Class in the North Lee Local Health Office Area, i.e. Glounthane N.S. Places are offered to candidates according to the ranked order established by the AAC and approved by the school Board of Management.
3. To suitable and eligible applicants on the waiting list for the SSLD Class in the Cork North Local Health Office Area i.e. Scoil Ghobnatain, Mallow.
4. To applicants deemed suitable and eligible for a SSLD Class placement in the South Lee Local Health Office Area but who failed to secure a place due to lack of an available place.
5. To children who are eligible under the DES 'spare capacity' criteria in accordance with DES Circular 0038/2007 which provides:

"In instances where there is spare capacity in a SSLD class because of insufficient eligible children, the board of management may offer a place to a maximum of two pupils who do not meet the eligibility criteria but who could benefit from enrolment in the class for one year on a concessionary basis. Such placements must be supported by the recommendation of a speech and language therapist and/or psychologist. The question of the continued enrolment of these pupils for a second year can only be considered once all eligible pupils have been accommodated. The NCSE through the local SENO will monitor such situations."

Spare capacity places are filled in the following order:

1. Children currently enrolled in Scoil Chroí Íosa mainstream school with a clinical diagnosis of DLD but who do not meet the DES eligibility criteria for entry to a SSLD Class.
2. Children currently enrolled in Scoil Chroí Íosa mainstream school who do not have a DLD diagnosis but who could benefit from enrolment in the class.

The Board of Management may seek the advice of the AAC members and relevant professionals to inform their decision.

Discharge Procedure for the SSLD Class

A Discharge Meeting is held in the second school term with respect to each pupil's placement in the SSLD Class. The purpose of the meeting is to consider if the SSLD Class remains the most appropriate placement for the pupil.

The members of the ADC generally comprise of some or all of the following professionals:

- School Principal
- Speech and Language Therapy Manager
- SSLD Class Speech & Language Therapist
- SSLD Class Teacher
- NEPS Psychologist
- SENO

Each pupil is discussed individually at the Discharge Meeting. The most up to date information available regarding each pupil is presented to the multidisciplinary team. The pupil's current presentation and needs are then discussed by the team. Arising from the discussion, a recommendation is made to the BOM as to whether or not the SSLD Class remains the most appropriate placement for each pupil.

The ADC advises the BOM of its recommendations. The BOM considers these recommendations and if it is no longer considered to be in the pupil's best interest and/or to be the most appropriate placement, then the pupil may be discharged from the SSLD Class by the BOM. Discharge may be made in line with the following discharge criteria:

1. The child has made sufficient progress and is able to return to mainstream; therefore a 2nd year is not required.
2. The child has completed his/her two year placement.
3. The child's parents/guardians request discharge from the SSLD class.
4. The SSLD class is no longer the appropriate placement.
5. An alternative placement has been agreed upon by relevant professionals, the parent/guardians and the new school setting, to better meet the child's needs.

The BOM writes a letter to the parents informing them of the decision to discharge the pupil from the SSLD Class.

The ADC will also make recommendations regarding each pupil's on-going unique educational needs and speech and language needs. These recommendations are included in the pupil's End of Year Report which is issued in June.

The SSLD Class Teacher and SSLD Class SLT visit/liaise with the new school for each pupil leaving the SSLD Class as part of the transition process.

School Policies

Scoil Chroí Íosa's BOM has a range of policies relevant to all pupils enrolled in the school, both in the mainstream and special classes, including, Child Protection Policy, Anti-bullying Policy, Health and Safety Statement, Code of Behaviour, etc. It is a parents responsibility to familiarise themselves with such policies (available from the school secretary/school website). Parental acceptance of their child's enrolment in the school is taken as acceptance of the procedures/details outlined in such policies.

Written acceptance by Parents of the school's Code of Behaviour is a requirement of this Enrolment Policy. The BOM reserves the right to refuse a child's enrolment in Greenmount N.S. if his/her Parents refuse to accept the Code of Behaviour.

Appeals

Under Section 29 of the Education Act (1998), parents who wish to appeal the decision of the Board of Management regarding the Admission or Discharge of their child to or from the SSLD Class may appeal to the Secretary General of the Dept. of Education and Skills and are entitled to the support of the Education Welfare Officer (TUSLA) in respect of this appeal.

Communication

This Admission and Discharge Procedure, as approved by the BOM, is available on the school's website www.scins.ie.

Ratification

This Admission and Discharge Procedure was reviewed, formally approved and ratified by the BOM at its meeting on the 26th April 2021

Review and Implementation

This Admission and Discharge Procedure is subject to review at the discretion of the BOM and will be reviewed during the 23/24 school year.

Signed on behalf of the BOM:

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Chairperson of the Board of Management.