



**Specific Speech
and
Language Disorder
Class**

Greenmount N.S.

SSLD Class Enrolment Policy

Definitions used in the document

AC:	Advisory Committee
ADC:	Advisory Discharge Committee
BOM:	Board of Management of Greenmount N.S.
DES:	Department of Education & Skills
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:	Greenmount N.S.'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 is 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 4 SSLD Classes in the South Lee Area:
Two in Greenmount National School (near The Lough, Cork)
One in Shanbally National School (near Carrigaline)
One in Scoil Barra National School in Ballincollig

These classes serve the geographical area defined by the HSE as South Lee Local Health Office (refer to <https://finder.healthatlasireland.ie/>)

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 language disorder 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 eligible to attend an SSLD Class may be entitled to apply for an exemption from the study of Irish under the DES Circular 12/96. Having regard to pupils' language difficulties, the pupils in the SSLD Class are exposed to a limited amount only of spoken, conversational based Irish. Formal reading and writing in Irish are not undertaken in the SSLD Class.

What is the Application Process?

Applications are made directly to the school.

For further information and to access the Application Forms please make direct contact with the school:

Greenmount N.S., Green Street, Cork

Tel: 021-4966242

Email: principal@greenmount.ie Website: www.greenmount.ie

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 Board (AAB)** 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 AAB may recommend placement but the BOM retains ultimate responsibility for offering/refusing enrolment places.

The AAB comprises of the following:

- School Principal of each school that has an SSLD Class.
- HSE Speech & Language Therapists from the SSLD Classes.
- HSE Speech & Language Therapy Manager/Designated Officer.
- NEPS Psychologists (National Educational Psychological Service)
- SSLD Class Teachers.

Following the Advisory Admissions Board 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 by the **Advisory Discharge Board** for the SSLD class to the BOM as to whether or not a child should be offered a second year in the class. The BOM takes cognisance of such recommendations but retain ultimate responsibility for deciding on the child's continuing enrolment or otherwise in the SSLD Class.

The membership of the **Advisory Discharge Board** comprises of some or all of the following professionals: School Principal, SSLD Class Teacher, SSLD Class Speech & Language Therapist, SENO, NEPS Psychologist and 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 primary school. Additional educational supports can be provided by the mainstream school if deemed necessary.

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

Please note:

It should be noted that enrolment in the SSLD Class confers no entitlement to enrolment in a mainstream class in Greenmount N.S. upon discharge from the SSLD Class. Any such application will be processed in accordance with an application for admission to a mainstream class.

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 Greenmount'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. (i.e. 2 standard deviations or below, at or below a standard score of 70).
- 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.

Where do I get an application form?

The first step is for parents to contact the school (**021-4966242**) to request an application pack.

Parents retain this form until all the reports that are required to be submitted to Greenmount N.S. with the completed application form are available. The completed application form and accompanying reports must be received by Greenmount N.S. on or before the closing date. **The closing date for applications will be 15:00 on Friday March 9th, 2018.**

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 eighteen months of the closing date. This should include results of a comprehensive assessment of both non-verbal and verbal ability including subtest results.

3. A completed SSLD Class Application school or preschool report (Blank report forms are provided to parents)
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 and Speech and Language Therapist.

Parents should request all relevant reports from the therapist/school/pre-school in sufficient time to ensure that the reports are forwarded to Greenmount N.S. on or before the closing date. It is suggested that parents liaise closely with the applicant's SLT in completing the Rating Forms.

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 Greenmount N.S.'s Board of Management ('BOM') regarding the applicants who may be offered the available places in their SSLD Class.

The AC comprises of:

- The Principals & SSLD Class teachers from Greenmount N.S., Scoil Barra, Ballincollig and Shanbally N.S., all of whom have been authorised by their respective Boards of Management to assist with the ranking of applicants.
- SLTs assigned to work in the South Lee SSLD Classes.
- Speech & Language Therapy Manager HSE Cork South Lee/Designated Officer.
- NEPS Psychologist (where available).

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. In the event of there being more applications than available spaces, the rating scale assists the AC to rank the applicants and to recommend to the BOM the allocation of the available spaces. In turn, the BOM, when allocating places gives due recognition to the following factors:

- Severity of need as per rating scale.
- Geographical proximity to the school.
- Other factors that may be significant to the child's needs, e.g. the availability of an age appropriate peer group for the child.

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 on **Friday, May 4th, 2018.**

Available Spaces

In the event that the SSLD Class has unfilled places either because:

- (a) there are fewer applicants than places
- (b) applicants decline the offer of a place

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 waitlist for Greenmount N.S. SSLD Class.
2. To suitable and eligible applicants on the waitlist for other SSLD Classes in the Cork South Lee Primary Care SLT Area (ref. Scoil Barra, Ballincollig and Shanbally N.S.) Places are offered to candidates according to the ranked order established by the AC and approved by the school Board of Management.
3. To applicants deemed suitable and eligible for a SSLD Class placement in the Cork South Primary Care SLT Area (ref. Barryroe N.S.) but who failed to secure a place due to lack of an available places.
4. To applicants deemed suitable and eligible for a SSLD Class placement in the Cork North Primary Care SLT Area but who failed to secure a place due to lack of an available place.
5. To applicants who applied for a SSLD Class after the closing date for applications provided suitability and eligibility have been established. The closing date for late applications is **Friday, 27th April, 2018.**
6. To children who are eligible under the DES 'spare capacity' criteria in accordance with DES Circular 0038/2007 which provides:

Spare Capacity Places

"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 Greenmount 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 Greenmount 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 AC 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 &/or Deputy Principal.
- Speech and Language Therapy Manager.
- SSLD Class Teacher.
- SSLD Class SLT.
- NEPS Psychologist on request
- SENO on request.

Each pupil is discussed individually at the Discharge Meeting. The most up to date reports/information available on the pupil are 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 Board of Management 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 Board of Management. 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 child's primary diagnosis has been revised and the SSLD class is no longer the appropriate placement.

The ADC will also make recommendations on each pupil's on-going unique educational needs and speech and language needs. The ADC will finalise a 'SSLD Discharge Report' which includes the above recommendations. This report is furnished to the receiving school of each pupil ahead of the pupil leaving the SSLD Class. 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.

Under Section 29 of the Education Act (1998), parents who wish to appeal the decision of the Board of Management to discharge their child from the SSLD Class may appeal the decision locally to the Chairperson of the Board of Management. If desired, parents may further appeal the BOM's decision 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.

School Policies

Greenmount N.S.'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.

Review and Implementation:

This Enrolment Policy is subject to review at the discretion of the BOM and will be reviewed by November 2020.

Communication and Ratification:

A copy of this Enrolment Policy, as approved by the BOM, is provided on request to the Patron. The Enrolment Policy is available on the school's website (www.greenmount.ie). The Enrolment Policy is emailed to all Staff members and to the Parents Association Committee. In addition, hard copies of the Enrolment Policy are issued upon request to staff members and to parents. Availability of the Enrolment Policy is notified to parents of currently enrolled pupils by means of Family Note. A copy of same is provided on request to prospective parents and to parents of currently enrolled pupils. This revised Enrolment Policy was reviewed, formally approved and ratified by the BOM at its meeting on the **17th January, 2018.**

Signed on behalf of the BOM:

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Chairperson of the Board of Management.