



Specific Speech and Language Disorder (SSLD) Class: South Lee Area, Cork. (Updated November 2019)

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

The classes serve the geographical area currently defined by the HSE as “South 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 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 DLD, 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 speech or 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.

For further information and to request the Application Forms please make direct contact with the school(s):

Scoil Barra NS, Innishmore, Ballincollig, Co. Cork

Tel.: 021-4873459

E-mail: info@scoilbarra.ie Website: www.scoilbarra.ie

Greenmount N.S., Green Street, Cork
Tel: 021-4966242
Email: principal@greenmount.ie Website: www.greenmount.ie

Shanbally NS, Shanbally, Ringaskiddy, Co. Cork
Tel.: 021-4378178
E-mail: office@shanballyns.ie Website: www.shanballyns.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 Application School or Pre-school Report
- (4) SSLD Application Rating Scale Form

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 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 Committee 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 Committee** 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 Committee** 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:

Enrolment in the SSLD class confers no entitlement to enrolment in a mainstream class in the host school upon discharge for the SSLD Class. Any such applications 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