



Radharc na Mara Primary School

Address: Walter Macken Road, Mervue, Galway, H91A3H2

Phone: 091 755920 **Roll Number:**205541

Special Class for Children with Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) or Speech Sound Disorder (SSD)

Introduction

Radharcna Mara has 1 Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) / Speech Sound Disorder (SSD) which caters for the needs of children with Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) or Speech Sound Disorder (SSD), from 3rd class to 6th class. The maximum enrolment in this class is 7 pupils. The class is staffed by a full-time teacher, and a part-time speech and language therapist (SLT). The pupils in this class are integrated with the other pupils at playtime, during school trips and outings, and through integration during selected subjects as deemed appropriate.

Pupils follow the normal primary school curriculum, with the possible exception of Irish (refer to Circular 0054/2022). They receive group and one to one speech and language therapy.

Developmental Language Disorder/Speech Sound Disorder (DLD/SSD)

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. It is not associated with a known differentiating condition (Irish Association of Speech and Language Therapists, 2017). It occurs when a child's language is an area of significant need and does not improve with regular speech and language therapy. Children with DLD may present with difficulty learning, remembering, understanding and using spoken language.

A Speech Sound Disorder (SSD) of unknown origin is an umbrella term which describes a range of speech disorders including: articulation disorder, childhood apraxia of speech, dysarthria and/or phonological disorder that is not associated with a known medical condition.

In this document the term SSD refers to a Speech Sound Disorder of unknown origin.

Criteria for Referral

SLT Criteria

- A speech and language therapist (SLT) has clearly identified and diagnosed a current diagnosis of DLD/SSD following attendance at webinar and clinical discussion.
- A SLT has made a written recommendation for an application to the DLD/SSD class within three months of the application closing deadline.
- The referral to the DLD/SSD class must be coordinated by a SLT.
- Children who do not meet these SLT criteria should not be referred to the DLD/SSD Class.

Education Criteria: Department of Education and Youth (DEY): Circular 0024/0025

Children who meet the following criteria may benefit from the intensive and collaborative approach to meeting their therapeutic and educational needs, that is offered in a DLD/SSD class.

1. The child has a conclusive diagnosis by a SLT of DLD where:
 - a) There are significant and pervasive needs evidenced by response to intervention and assessment over time including:
 - use of speech and language assessment tools
 - observation in both clinical environments
 - assessment risk factors
 - clinical markers
 - monitoring of responsiveness to intervention
 - language scores at or below a standard score of 78 (-1.5 SD from the mean)

b) Speech Sound Disorder (SSD) of unknown origin diagnosed by a SLT where there is evidence of a significant and pervasive impact of the SSD on the learning, literacy and social relationships evidenced by response to intervention and assessment over time including:

- use of speech and language assessment tools
- observation in both clinical and social environments

AND

2. The child has complex or severe educational needs as a result of their DLD and/or SSD, that are pervasive in nature and require the integrated and targeted educational and therapeutic supports of a special class for children with DLD/SSD. Supporting evidence should include:

- Evidence that despite targeted and intensive therapeutic and educational supports, the child's DLD and/or SSD continues to impact on their learning, participation, socialisation, and well-being in their current educational setting.
- Evidence of engagement with therapy input, including response to and impact of, intervention across impairment, functioning and participation over time through SLT review.
- Educational documentation from schools or early learning and care settings including student support plans and/or access and inclusion profiles detailing:
 - i. regular reviews of needs as part of an ongoing cycle of assessment and review with parents and educational staff
 - ii. target-setting
 - iii. Evidence-informed intervention and review of key points

Please refer to the DEY Circular: 0024/0025 for further information.

Spare Capacity

In instances where there is spare capacity in a DLD/SSD class due to insufficient eligible children at the time of the admissions meeting i.e., fewer than seven children, the board of management on the recommendation of the admissions committee, may offer a place to a maximum of two pupils. These are for children who do not meet the DEY eligibility criteria, but who have a current diagnosis of DLD/SSD, diagnosed by an SLT and could benefit from enrolment in the class for one year on a concessionary basis.

If spare capacity arises during the academic year, an admissions meeting must be held to discuss the unsuccessful applicants from the admissions meeting. All original referral information will be reviewed, and relevant, up-to-date, information will be sought.

Such placements must be supported by the recommendation of a SLT. The question of the continued enrolment of these pupils for a second year can only be considered once all eligible children have been accommodated.

Application Pack

Referrals will only be considered where a full application pack has been submitted prior to the application closing deadline.

The application pack must include:

- A. An application and consent form are sent to the DLD/SSD class SLT, by the referring SLT, as an initial step in the referral process prior to the SLT assigned closing date.
- B. An up-to-date SLT report confirming a current diagnosis of DLD/SSD (in accordance with the SLT Department guidelines), is forwarded to the DLD/SSD class SLT, no later than the closing deadline for the year of admission. Please consult the Annual Admissions Notice for Radharcna Mara. This is available on the school website. A SLT must have made a recommendation for an application to the DLD/SSD class within three months of the application closing deadline.
- C. Educational documents including the log of actions, student support plan, access and inclusion profile, completed school reports and other relevant educational documents forwarded to the DLD/SSD class SLT, no later than the specified deadline date of the year of admission.
- D. All relevant health and education reports/documents e.g., psychology, National Educational Psychology Service (NEPS), Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), paediatrician, Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT), occupational therapy, Physiotherapy, audiology, Children's Disability Network Team (CDNT), etc., forwarded to the DLD/SSD class SLT, no later than the specified deadline date of the year of admission.
- E. A completed and signed parent/guardian report is forwarded to the DLD/SSD class SLT, no later than the closing deadline date of the year of admission. All relevant referral information is reviewed prior to the admissions meeting and additional information sought as required.
- F. All relevant referral information is reviewed prior to the admissions meeting and additional information sought as required.

Please note: A referral does not guarantee a place. No Eligibility Letter from the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) required currently

Consent and Application Form

Applicant and consent forms are sent to the DLD/SSD class SLT, by the referring SLT as an initial step in the referral process, prior to the SLT assigned closing date (date for applicant and consent form to be received by, may vary annually, but is always in the Spring).

Admissions Committee

- The DLD/SSD class admissions committee can consist of the:
 - Principal and/or Deputy Principal
 - DLD/SSD class teacher
 - DLD/SSD SLT
 - SLT Manager and/or Clinical specialist SLT
 - Psychologist
 - Special Educational Needs Officer(SENCO) where NCSE staff are asked to sit on the admission panel their role is to confirm eligibility for the class or sometimes if children are known to the NCSE. The NCSE have no role in determining who receives a place when a school are applying their admission policy
 - Any other board of management and admissions committee approved and relevant professional

- The admissions committee meets in the Spring of each school year, the date of which varies annually. A rating scale, which considers a number of criteria, is completed for each child referred and discussed in order to allocate the available places. This rating scale is informed by all application pack documents and the DEY decision-making matrix. The purpose of the rating is to estimate each child's potential to benefit from a placement in the DLD/SSD class. The impact of an individual on the dynamic of the class will also be taken into consideration.

- The number of places available each year will vary, depending on the number of children discharged from the class. The maximum number of places available at any one time is seven per class.

- Children with DLD/SSD who meet the DEY criteria will be offered a place ahead of children who have a diagnosis of DLD/SSD and do not meet the DEY criteria.

- Where the number of children exceeds the number of places available, names are placed on a waitlist for the current admissions year only.

Selection of Applicants for Admission

The admissions committee meets in Spring with regard to all DLD/SSD class leavers and new applicants. This decision is informed by the professional opinions of the DLD/SSD class team.

On this day the currently enrolled children in the DLD/SSD classes will not attend school.

The recommendation of the admissions committee will be conveyed to the board of management, and if approved, will be conveyed to parents, in writing, as soon as possible, by the school principal.

Where a child is offered a place in the DLD/SSD class, parents are asked to return an acceptance/non-acceptance form to the school principal, within one week of receipt of the offer.

Where an offer is declined, the school and admissions committee will be notified. This place will be offered to the next applicant from the recent admissions meeting, following agreement by the admissions committee.

All relevant schools and referral agents will be notified in writing regarding the final placement decisions.

All pupils are accepted on the understanding that they and their parents fully accept the school's Code of Behaviour, and all other policies currently in place, or which may be drawn up from time to time by the school's staff and/or board of management.

Every child in the school is bound by the school policies, both in existence and those developed from time to time by the staff and/or board of management.

Pupils in the DLD/SSD class will experience the normal day-to-day happenings, determined by the reality of school life, and the existing customs and practices.

The school cannot offer any additional tuition, support, and supervision beyond that which is offered to any other pupil in the school, at times other than when the school is in operation during the normal school year. The class teacher and SLT will periodically be required to participate in staff development and curriculum or training courses. Such professional development events take place within the existing school year, and all pupils are in the care of their parents at these times. Such extraordinary closures will be notified to parents of all pupils through regular notices to parents.

From year to year, the allocation of teachers to classes is focused on the needs of the whole school, and consequently, the school cannot guarantee long-term continuity or predictability in personnel.

Placement Reviews

- Placement in the DLD/SSD class will be reviewed during the first academic year. If the child's primary diagnosis is no longer DLD/SSD the child will not be considered for a second year. The DLD/SSD class personnel, in consultation with parents, will carry out a review regarding the suitability of placement, during the first term. Where difficulties arise, it may be necessary for the professionals involved to meet regarding the child's placement.
- A second year is not guaranteed and the placement is for two years maximum.
- Where a child leaves the DLD/SSD class during the academic year, this needs to be communicated in writing to the school and admissions committee.
- Where a placement is terminated, the place is then offered to an unsuccessful applicant from the admissions committee meeting.

Discharge from the DLD/SSD Class

- On discharge, SLT assessments will be carried out and the report forwarded to the parent(s)/guardian(s) and/or relevant parties with consent.
- Feedback of assessment results and recommendations will be given to parent(s)/guardian(s) by the DLD/SSD class personnel prior to discharge from the DLD/SSD class.
- Post-placement communication between DLD/SSD class personnel and the teachers working with the child will be offered either in the final term of the DLD/SSD class placement or the first term of the child's discharge from the DLD/SSD class. This transition meeting will be accommodated in Radharcna Mara.
- On discharge from the DLD/SSD class, SLT care will be discharged back to the local primary care or CDNT SLT.

Leaving the DLD/SSD Class

A child may leave the DLD/SSD class for any of the following reasons:

- The child has come to the end of the 2-year period. The second year applied for and approved by the admission committee.
- The admissions committee considers the pupil able to return to mainstream education.
- The admissions committee no longer considers the DLD/SSD class as the most suitable placement for the child's educational development.
- The parent/guardian of the child requests transfer from the DLD/SSD class.

- The admissions committee deems that the child is no longer benefiting from DLD/SSD class placement.
- When school guidelines on behavioural/non-attendance have not been complied with.

Parents have the opportunity to appeal the discharge decision through the DEY.

School Transport

In general, a child who is eligible for placement in a DLD/SSD class, is also eligible for free transport to the DLD/SSD class nearest to their place of residence, subject to the terms of the school transport scheme. The schools transport service facilitates the children attending this class in the same manner as children attending other special classes/schools. The school has responsibility for the application for this service.

Learning a Second language

For advice please consult:

- Educational provision for pupils with Specific Speech and Language Disorder: Special Classes attached to Mainstream Primary Schools in Ireland, April 2021, page 65
- Circular 0054/2022: Exemptions from the Study of Irish page 6

Professional Development of Staff

As the work of the DLD/SSD class involves a very specific area of education, it is recommended that the teacher/s are facilitated to attend the relevant conferences.

This policy has been drawn up and approved in conjunction with all personnel in the DLD/SSD classes, i.e., school staff and HSE staff.

The policy was approved by the BOM of Radharcna Maraon:

Patrick Kelly

Keith Joyce

Chairperson

Principal