



**Specific Speech and Language Disorder Class Enrolment Policy – Scoil Barra
(Updated January 2019)**

Definitions used in the document:

AC:	Advisory Committee
ADC:	Advisory Discharge Committee
BOM:	Board of Management of Scoil Barra
DES:	Department of Education & Skills
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 Barra's SSLD Class

INTRODUCTION

What is a Specific Language Impairment?

IASLT has defined SSLI as follows:

“Specific Speech & Language Impairment (SSLI) is a term currently used to describe children whose skill in understanding and/or expressing themselves through speech and language is significantly impaired. These difficulties exist in the context of normal cognitive abilities and are not primarily attributable to social, emotional, behavioural, educational, physical or sensory difficulties.” IASLT (2007)

What is a SSLD Class?

A SSLD Class is a class in a mainstream primary school which caters for the educational, speech and language needs of children with a diagnosis of SSLI, who meet the Department of Education’s (DES) criteria as per DES Circular 0038/2007.

The SSLD Class is staffed by a primary school teacher ‘The SSLD Class teacher’. A HSE Speech and Language Therapist ‘The SSLD Class SLT’ provides a service to the class for a number of hours per week.

There is a maximum of seven pupils in a SSLD Class in any one year, as per DES Circular 0038/2007.

There are currently four SSLD Classes in the Cork South Lee Primary Care SLT Area, two in Greenmount National School, one in Scoil Barra and one in Shanbally National School. These 4 SSLD classes were established to provide SSLD class placements specifically for pupils who are receiving their HSE SLT support in the Cork South Lee HSE Area.

It is to be noted that not all children with SSLI/SSLD need to attend a SSLD Class. Other placement models may be more appropriate to meet a child’s educational and speech and language needs.

Further information regarding the operation of, and application for, enrolment in a SSLD Class is available from the South Lee Speech and Language Therapy Department, HSE South, Speech and Language Therapy Dept., City General Hospital, Infirmary Road, Cork: Tel: 021-4927801.

Further information regarding the operation of, and application for, enrolment in the SSLD Class is available from Karen O’Sullivan, Principal, Scoil Barra.

What Happens in the SSLD Class?

The pupils in the SSLD Class are full time pupils of Scoil Barra and follow the Primary School Curriculum, i.e. the mainstream curriculum of their equivalent class, differentiated as appropriate.

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. Pupils may attend the SSLD Class for one or two years only.

The pupils in the SSLD Class are integrated with pupils in the mainstream for subjects like physical education, drama, visual arts, etc., where appropriate. They also integrate with their peers in the mainstream classes during break times and they are encouraged to participate in all school activities e.g. Christmas concert, sports day, tour day etc.

The SSLD Class Teacher and SSLD Class SLT work closely together to help promote integration of each pupil’s speech, language and communication skills in the educational setting. The SSLD Class SLT works closely with the teacher to provide therapy that can be integrated into the pupil’s school day. The SSLD Class Teacher can modify his/her teaching to suit each pupil’s unique speech, language and learning needs. If a child enrolled in the SSLD Class requires Occupational Therapy or input from a NEPS Psychologist, a referral may be made in consultation with the parent to further help the pupils. In this setting the pupil has the benefit of maximum therapeutic input integrated into the school day.

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 (Appendix 3 and/or included in Enrolment Pack sent to parents)

An applicant who wishes to be enrolled in Scoil Barra'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*' as per DES Circular 0038/2007).
- 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 (021-4873459) or the South Lee Speech & Language Department (021-4927801) to request an application form (Appendix 2 and /or included in Enrolment Pack sent to parents).

Parents retain this form until all the reports that are required to be submitted to Scoil Barra with the completed application form are available. The completed application form and accompanying reports must be received by Scoil Barra on or before the 'Closing Date' which will be notified to parents in a cover letter with an Enrolment Pack which is sent to parents who have made contact with the school.

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 **6 documents** by the Closing Date:

1. Completed Application Form
2. Speech & Language Therapy ('SLT') Report, which includes results of standardised assessment/s of speech and language skills, which must be dated within twelve months of the closing date.
3. A recent Educational Psychological Assessment Report that clearly identifies performance/nonverbal IQ as required by the DES, which must be dated within twenty four months of the closing date. This should include results of a comprehensive assessment of both non-verbal and verbal ability including subtest results.
4. A completed School or Pre-school report (Blank report forms are provided to parents):
(Appendices 4 & 5 and/or included in the Enrolment pack sent to parents)
5. Two completed Social, Emotional and Behavioural Rating Forms (Blank report forms are sent to parents or found at Appendix 6). One of these is to be completed by the applicant's school or preschool, and one is to be completed jointly by parent and the applicant's SLT.

Parents should request all relevant reports from the therapist/school/pre-school in sufficient time to ensure that the reports are forwarded to Scoil Barra 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 Scoil Barra's Board of Management 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 and Shanbally N.S. all of whom have been authorised by their respective Boards of Management to assist with the ranking of applicants using Speech and Language approved ranking scales and other relevant criteria and factors in collaboration with the Speech and Language representatives.
- SLTs assigned to work in the South Lee SSLD Classes.
- Speech & Language Therapy Manager, HSE Cork South Lee/Designated Officer.
- NEPS Psychologist (where available).

At this meeting, the AC agrees on a Minutes Secretary to minute the meeting. A Chairperson (usually a School Principal) is elected for a two year period. The number of class places available each year varies depending on the number of pupils discharged from the classes. 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. Each member of the AC will be given ample and equal opportunity to express his/her professional opinion with regard to these issues.

The 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.

Following the meeting of the AC, a meeting of the BOM is held and the BOM considers all applications for admission to the SSLD Class. The BOM offers available places to eligible applicants in ranked order as decided by the Board of Management. 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 **the 30th September on an annual basis.**

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

(a) there are fewer applicants than places, or

(b) applicants decline the offer of a place,

the available places **may** be offered by the BOM to eligible candidates in the following priority order (subject to the BOM's satisfaction that the applicants meet the criteria for enrolment):

- Suitable and eligible applicants on the waitlist for Greenmount N.S. SSLD Class.
- 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 with the highest ranking first.
- 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 place.
- 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.
- Applicants who applied for a SSLD Class after the closing date for applications provided suitability and eligibility have been established. As it would not be feasible to reconvene the AC, the members may be contacted by the BOM and their opinions sought on the eligibility and suitability of the applicants.
- 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 a speech & Language therapist and /or a 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.”

In the event of spare capacity remaining in the SSLD Class after all the above steps have been exhausted, the following applies:

- South Lee Primary Care Speech and Language Therapy Services will identify pupils from their case load with SLT needs significant enough to warrant placement in the SSLD Class.

How long does a pupil spend in a SSLD Class?

DES Circular 0038/2007 provides that eligible applicants may spend up to two years in a SSLD Class. The typical placement duration is for two academic years. For some pupils, one year in the SSLD Class is sufficient. Each pupil's placement in the SSLD Class is reviewed in their first term of each academic year of attendance. In the second term, the Advisory Discharge Committee (ADC) reviews each pupil and recommendations are made to the BOM regarding the most appropriate placement for the child for the following school year. **The BOM takes cognisance of such recommendations but the BOM ultimately retains responsibility for deciding on the child's continued enrolment or otherwise in the SSLD Class.**

It should be noted that enrolment in the SSLD Class confers no entitlement whatsoever to enrolment in a Mainstream Class in Scoil Barra upon discharge from the SSLD Class. Any such application will be processed in accordance with an application for admission to a Mainstream Class.

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
- Occupational Therapist 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 BOM considers that the pupil is able to return to mainstream education.
2. The BOM no longer considers the SSLD Class as the most suitable and/or appropriate placement for the pupil's educational development.
3. The pupil's parents request removal from the SSLD Class.
4. The BOM deems that the pupil is no longer benefiting from the SSLD Class placement.
5. The pupil has spent 2 years in the SSLD Class as per the DES Circular 0038/2007 or does not require a second year in the SSLD Class.

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 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 S.S.L.D. Class may appeal the decision locally to the Chairperson of the Board of Management. If desired, parents may further appeal the B.O.M.'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:

Scoil Barra's BOM has a range of policies relevant to all pupils enrolled in the school, both in the Mainstream and SSLD Classes, including the Child Protection Policy, Anti-bullying Policy, Health and Safety Statement, Code of Behaviour, etc. It is the responsibility of parents to familiarise themselves with such policies (available from the School Secretary and on the school website at www.scoilbarra.ie). 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 Scoil Barra 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 in any event be reviewed by November 2019.

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.scoilbarra.ie). The Enrolment Policy is emailed to all Staff members and to the Parents and Friends' 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 24th Oct. 2016.

Paddy Staunton,

Chairperson of the Board of Management, on behalf of the BoM, Scoil Barra, Innishmore, Ballincollig, Cork

Dated: 24th Oct. 2016.

(Updated ref New Procedural Manual January 2019)