

**Specific Speech & Language Disorder (SSLD) Class,**

**Stapolin ETNS, Belmayne Avenue, Dublin 13.**



**Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive**



**Referral Information Leaflet for Speech & Language Therapists & Psychologists  
(Referral Agents)**

**CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS is 8<sup>th</sup> March 2022**

Referrals to the Language Classes are only accepted from Speech & Language Therapists and Psychologists. We require 5 copies of each referral to be sent to:

**Clodagh Farrell, Stapolin ETNS, Belmayne Avenue, Dublin 13.**

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**Referral of children to the Specific Speech and Language Disorder (SSLD)  
Class, Stapolin ETNS, Belmayne Avenue, Dublin 13.**

**General Information**

The Stapolin ETNS Language Class opened in September 2021. There are seven children in the class each year. The aim of the class is to provide children with Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) in the severe range, the opportunity to spend one or two years in a small class setting where they can receive intensive educational and speech & language therapy support.

The class is staffed by a full time Teacher employed by the Department of Education (DE) and a part time Senior Speech & Language Therapist employed by the HSE.

Applications are accepted for children who are in 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> class at the time of referral.

The child must live within specific areas of the HSE Community Healthcare Organisation Dublin North City & County. If you have a query regarding the catchment area for the child whom you are referring, please contact Stapolin ETNS or the local HSE SLT Department.

Transport is provided by the Department of Education (DE) to successful applicants.

### **Terminology:**

#### **Developmental Language Disorder**

Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) is the up-to-date term for 'Specific Speech & Language Disorder or Impairment' (SSLD/SSLI).

In May 2017 the Irish Association of Speech & Language Therapists (IASLT) launched a Position Paper & Guidance Document called 'Supporting Children with Developmental Language Disorder in Ireland'.

The term Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) is the current term now in use in Ireland to refer to a wider group of clients. This term replaces the terminology of Specific Speech & Language Impairment (SSLI) or Specific Speech & Language Disorder (SSLD).

The current Department of Education (DE) criteria for referral to an SSLD Class have not changed. These classes continue to be referred to as an SSLD Class- Specific Speech & Language Disorder Class- by the DES.

Children eligible for referral to the SSLD class under the current DE criteria are a specific sub-group of children with a diagnosis of DLD.

### **Criteria for admission**

#### **Criteria A**

Children referred for consideration for the SSLD Class must meet the following **Department of Education (DE) criteria** as described in the DE Circular 38/07:

- Assessment by a psychologist on a standardised test of intelligence, which places non-verbal, or performance ability within the average range or above. (i.e. non-verbal IQ of 90, or above)
- Assessment on a standardised test of speech/language development by a speech and language therapist which 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.

- The pupils' difficulties are not attributable to hearing impairment; the hearing threshold for the speech related frequencies should be 40dB.
- Emotional and behavioural disorders or a physical disability are not considered to be primary causes.

### **Criteria B:**

Along with the DES criteria **additional local criteria** must be met by each applicant. The local criteria for the SSLD Class, Stapolin ETNS for 2022/2023 are:

(i) The applicant must live within the designated catchment area, as determined by the HSE, at the time of referral. At present this catchment area is HSE Community Healthcare Organisation Dublin North City & County (North Dublin Area). A full list of the addresses covered by this catchment area is available from your local HSE Office.

(ii) The referral agent must be satisfied that the applicant's needs cannot be met by the current Speech & Language Therapy service provision.

(iii) Applications are accepted for children who are in 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> class at the time of referral. Application will only be accepted for children who are up to and including 5<sup>th</sup> Class at time of referral.

(iv) Children who are in 5<sup>th</sup> class at the time of referral to the Language class can only be considered for a 1 year placement. Such children will be discharged after one year in the Language Class.

(v) The applicant must have attended SLT sessions in the 9 months prior to the closing date for applications.

(vi) The referral and application process and the required documentation must be submitted in strict accordance with the procedure detailed below.

### **Referrals should include the following:**

- A cover letter to the School Principal signed by the referral agent
- A completed '**Referral and Consent Form for SSLD Class**'. This includes a parental consent section and a Social, Emotional and Behavioural Rating Scale to be completed by the child's parents with the assistance of the SLT.
- An up-to-date **Psychology Report** (dated within 2 years of referral) which includes the results of a comprehensive assessment of intellectual ability, including non-verbal IQ score; index/factor scores and subtest results.
- A completed **School Report** form which provides information on the impact of the child's language disorder on his/her educational progress and social/emotional development. A School Report Form is provided. Please refer to the instructions on the top of the form prior to completion. A Social, Emotional and Behavioural Rating scale for the teacher(s) to complete is included in the school report form.
- An up-to-date **Speech and Language Therapy Report** (written within three months of the closing date) confirming a diagnosis of Developmental Language Disorder (DLD). The SLT assessment must have been carried out not more than 6 months prior to the closing date.
- Other reports where relevant should also be included such as Occupational Therapy Reports; Audiology Reports; Medical Reports etc.

### **The SLT Report should include the following:**

- **Case history information:** background information should include all relevant information and risk factors for speech and language difficulties. If there is a history of hearing or other difficulties, please ensure reviews are up to date and enclose copies of any relevant audiology/medical reports. Please outline any involvement or onward referral to other services. Referring SLT should make onward referrals if possible, prior to SSLD class referral if this is required (e.g. ENT, OT, Audiology, Primary Care Psychology).
- Further specific information in the case of **children who are bi/multilingual** is required (e.g. languages used, for how long, in what contexts). Clinical judgment should include a description, if relevant, as to differential diagnosis between 2<sup>nd</sup> language learning and DLD. Please see the IASLT (2016) Guidelines for SLTs Working with Linguistically Diverse Service Users.

- **Educational history:** A brief summary of this is required as the school report should elaborate on this section. Where the child has access to additional support teaching in school this should be stated and summarise collaboration between SLT, school & home (e.g. school contacts; collaborating with school/parents for IEP goal setting; school programmes provided). If the child has access to SNA support or additional support teaching, please state the reason why this is in place. If a child does not have SNA support but requires it, this should be clearly stated in the report.
- **Current Diagnosis:** The child's **DLD diagnosis** should be clearly stated with a summary of the areas of speech, language and communication difficulties. Please refer to IASLT's Position Paper (2017) 'Supporting Children with Developmental Language Disorder in Ireland' for terminology to use and information on diagnostic markers. Child's age at diagnosis and co-occurring disorders should also be stated. Where a co-occurring disorder is suspected but has not been diagnosed give a description of the child's other needs.
- **Previous SLT assessments:** a very short paragraph will suffice. Give total language or index standard score of previous assessments– not necessary to elaborate on individual subtest score results. Include a summary of any non-standard and informal assessments.
- **Discuss Risk Factors & Response to Previous SLT Interventions:** State number of sessions offered and number attended, and a brief synopsis of therapy goals and response to intervention over time. Parental commitment and home carryover should be included.
- **Most recent Speech & Language Assessments:** these must have been carried out within the last 6 months. Provide standard and non-standard assessments results in table or other format for Language – understanding(receptive) and use (expressive). For standardised assessments, all subtest scores should be included as well as total or core/index scores. Give standard deviations, percentile rank scores etc. and severity of overall disorder.  
Describe the child's strengths and difficulties in the various domains of language:  
Vocabulary and Word Finding; Grammar; Semantics; Discourse; Pragmatics/Social Language Use; Verbal Learning & Memory.  
Include information from any observations made (or reported) of the child in natural settings to support the above findings. A short narrative or conversational transcript could also be included.  
In the case of children with additional **phonological/speech** needs up to date information on their current profile should be included so it is advisable for the SLT to review the child who is

presenting with a phonological difficulty close to the referral date. Standardised assessments of speech should be used where possible. For bi/multilingual children please refer to IASLT guidelines mentioned above. For speech assessments give results of test in report including percentage scores; standard scores; standard deviations and a description of the child's phonological system where relevant. Include speech intelligibility ratings across different settings. A short transcription is also helpful and a report of oro-motor examination where applicable. Referral to ENT in the case of children who are constant mouth breathers / have rhinitis should have been already considered.

- **Recent Speech & Language Therapy intervention/s & outcomes:** Summary of the child's and the family's level of engagement/motivation should be included (e.g. attendance at sessions, completion of home activities). Include parental priorities; child's presentation in therapy; and child and parent/s understanding of their DLD. Briefly describe therapy targets and outcomes and liaison with child's school.
- **Impact of the DLD** on functional communication; social participation and inclusion; emotional wellbeing; behaviour development and academic progress should be provided. Give clear objective examples of the impact of the disorder in each of the relevant areas. Describe briefly if the child has developed other skills or strategies to aid communication. If the DLD is not impacting significantly on these areas of development, you should state if the child has developed coping strategies or if specific support systems are in place at present such as SNA support in school.
- **Social, Emotional & Behaviour Rating Scale:** When completing this ensure that just **one** rating is chosen for each question. Additional information that is provided to the SLT by a parent while filling in this form should be included in the SLT report **only**.
- **Diagnosis and Recommendations:** Summarise diagnosis at end of report and provide clear recommendations as to the need for placement in SSLD Class based on severity and impact of the DLD. A recommended support plan should also be included should the child not be offered a place in the Language Class. Summarise other needs if relevant, other professional reports and any other onward referrals.

For further information please contact:

**Clodagh Farrell, School Principal, Stapolin ETNS, Belmayne Avenue, Dublin 13 on 01**

**5241618 or [principal@stapolinetns.ie](mailto:principal@stapolinetns.ie).**

**or**

**Ciara O'Donnell, Senior Speech and Language Therapist. Tel : 087-1081941**

This leaflet briefly describes the Language Class process. For further information please visit Stapolin ETNS website [www.stapolinetns.ie](http://www.stapolinetns.ie)