



Presentation

Primary

School

Procedures and Policies for the
Junior and Senior Language Classes
for Kilkenny/Carlow

Reviewed December 2023

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Presentation Primary School,
Parnell Street,
Kilkenny.

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HSE- Primary Care Carlow/Kilkenny,
Community Services,
James' Green,
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NEPS Carlow / Kilkenny,
C/o Kilkenny Education Centre,
Seville Lodge,
Callan Road,
Kilkenny.

Introduction

The Language Class is a joint venture between the Department of Education and the H.S.E.

The Junior and Senior Language Classes which cater for children with Developmental Language disorder in the Carlow/Kilkenny area are based in the Presentation Primary School, Parnell Street, Kilkenny. The Junior Class was established in September 1994 and the Senior Class was established in 1997 by the Department of Health and the Department of Education. A teacher and a Speech and Language Therapist work in each class. The maximum number of children in each class is 7 and these children attend school on a full-time basis: five days a week, normal school hours 8.50a.m. – 2.30p.m. The Primary School Curriculum is taught. Irish is not taught formally in the Language Class. Parents can apply for an exemption prior to the child's return to their base school.

In order to obtain maximum benefit from the Language Class placement it is essential that children have been exposed to the challenges and skills required of the Junior Infant class. Information gleaned from this first year of school assists the Committee in evaluating the suitability of the child for the Language Class. Therefore, it is recommended that children spend one year in mainstream school before being considered for the Language Class. It is also recommended that children will have undergone a period of SLT treatment to help assess how likely they are to benefit from placement in a language class. For children where English is a second language three full years exposure to English is recommended, this can include pre-school years.

Definition of a Developmental Language Disorder:

A 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 2017).

DLD affects comprehension and expression of language, speech and pragmatics either in isolation or as a combination. The severity of these can range from mild to severe.

Objectives of the Language Classes:

1. To develop the child's academic, social and emotional and communication skills through intensive speech and language therapy and teaching.
2. To maximise parental involvement in the above process by maintaining open communication.
3. To ensure the child experiences meaningful integration within the school.
4. To maintain open communication with the school of origin/return and with other professionals working with the child so that the speech and language class intervention will be of maximum benefit to the child.

Criteria for Enrolment:

The criteria for enrolment in special classes for pupils with developmental disorder have been set by the Department of Education (Circular 0038/2007). A pupil enrolled in a special class for pupils with developmental language disorder (DLD) should meet each of the following criteria:

- The pupil has been assessed by a Psychologist on a standardised test of intelligence that places performance ability within the average range or above.
- In the case of Developmental Language Disorder, it is a pupil's **non-verbal or performance ability** that must be within the average range or above (i.e non-verbal or performance IQ of 90, or above)
- The pupil has been assessed by a Speech and Language Therapist on a standardised test of language / speech development that places performance in one or more of the main areas of speech and language development at two standard deviations or more below or at a generally equivalent level i.e. 2 standard deviations or at or below a standard score of 70.
- The pupil's difficulties are not attributable to hearing impairment; where the pupil is affected to some degree by hearing impairment, the hearing threshold for speech-related frequencies should be 40dB.
- Emotional and behavioural disorders or a physical disability are not considered to be primary causes of the Developmental Language Disorder.

Note: It may be necessary to seek further professional reports to confirm a primary diagnosis of Developmental Language Disorder (e.g. Neurologist, Audiologist, Clinical Psychologist, Psychiatrist, Occupational Therapist) etc.

Enrolment Procedure

1. Potential candidates for Language class placement are identified by the HSE Speech and Language Therapists and local SLT services. The H.S.E. Speech and Language Therapists and the N.E.P.S. psychologist liaise as appropriate to support applications.
2. Applications to the Speech and Language Class will be made via Speech and Language Therapy services.
Parents / guardians may contact the school to request information. The principal will advise liaising with Speech and Language Services to organise the application.
3. Completed referral forms must be accompanied by a Parental Consent Form and must be sent to the HSE SLT services by the end of December.
4. Completed applications including a psychological report (not older than two years) and a Speech and Language Therapy report (not older than six months) are then forwarded to the school.
THE CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS IS FEBRUARY 28TH IN THE YEAR OF ENROLMENT.
5. On receipt of completed applications, the principal will send a letter of explanation to the principal of the base school requesting a school report and a social and emotional behaviour checklist to be completed by the class teacher before mid – March.
6. All reports are shared with the Management Advisory Committee (MAC) prior to the admissions meeting, which takes place during the last week in March.

The Advisory Committee

The role of the Advisory Committee is to advise the Board of Management on issues relating to the admissions, retention and discharge of the children in the Language Class. The Advisory Committee comprises:

- Speech and Language Class Teachers
- Speech and Language Therapists
- School Principal – representing the Board of Management
- Speech and Language Therapy Manager
- Designated National Educational Psychologist (NEPS)

The Principal reports the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on language class policy and practice to the Board of Management. The Committee also makes recommendations to the Board on the enrolment, retention and discharge of children from the language classes.

Admissions Meeting:

The Advisory Committee meets as soon as possible after the closing date for receipt of applications;

1. The Committee evaluates all new applications in the light of DES criteria (Circular 0038/2007) and deem them eligible/ineligible.
2. All eligible applicants are prioritised using a scoring form (appendix 1). Where children attain the same score, the older child is offered the place.
3. The Principal shall report recommendations regarding allocation of places to the school Board of Management. The BOM allocates places to suitable candidates.
4. Principal writes to parents and school of successful applicants informing them of the decision. Once places have been accepted Principal writes to remaining applicants and their schools. S/he informs these parents of their right to appeal the decision.
5. Speech and Language Therapy Manager advises Speech and Language Therapists of the outcome.
6. Unsuccessful applicants shall be notified in writing by the school Principal and a copy shall be sent to the SLT.
 7. Applicants who have been placed on the waiting list shall also be notified by the Principal and a copy shall be sent to the SLT.

Waiting List:

If there are more children eligible for places than places offered, the Advisory Committee will advise the board of a prioritised waiting list. When the waiting list is accepted by the Board of Management, the list will operate for the first term of that school year. If a vacancy arises during that time, places will be offered to children on the waiting list in order of priority.

Concessionary Places / Late Applications

If there is spare capacity in a language class because of insufficient number of eligible children, the Management Advisory Committee may advise the Board of Management to offer concessionary places, a maximum of two in each class.

These places may be offered to children who do not meet the Department of Education eligibility criteria, but who could benefit from enrolment in the class for one year. Such placements must be supported by a recommendation from a Speech and Language therapist and / or Psychologist.

Concessionary places are only available in the absence of eligible applicants seeking a full placement in the Speech and Language Class.

Enrolment

- Parents / guardians of pupils being offered a place are required to complete the following:
 - Language Class Acceptance Form
 - NCSE Application Form
 - The school standard enrolment form.
 - Transport Form (if relevant)
 - A child who is enrolled in a special language class may be eligible for free transport to the school, subject to the DES School Transport Scheme. Details and application form for school transport is provided to the child's parent / guardian when a language class place is being offered.
- New Entrants are initially offered a placement for one year subject to review in the first term.
- An Open Day is held in June for parents/guardians. The children visit the classrooms and parents/guardians meet with school staff to discuss school and language class procedures and policies.
- A further meeting is held in September with all the parents/guardians to explain the work of the language class, homework, etc.

Communication with Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO)

The Principal will inform the SENO of the decisions made by the Board of Management relating to the retention/discharge of children already in the language classes and decisions made by the board relating to all new applicants including candidates who were eligible but were not offered places.

Queries and Appeals

Queries

Where a parent / guardian has a query in relation to the procedures for enrolment, the parent / guardian should contact the school Principal. If necessary, a meeting will be arranged between the parent / guardian and members of the Advisory Committee as appropriate.

Appeals

According to Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, a parent / guardian may appeal a decision by a Board of Management not to enrol a child. Parents are informed of this information if their child is not offered a place in the Language Class. The appeal is made in writing to: General Secretary, Appeals Administration Class, Department of Education and Skills. The appeal must be made within 42 calendar days from the date of the original letter informing them of the decision.

Discharge Criteria and Procedures:

1. Children are initially offered a year's placement; the recommended maximum length of stay is two years. For each child the first term is considered a trial period. Subsequent to this, or at any time during the school year any child considered inappropriately placed will be withdrawn at the discretion of the School's Board of Management. All children are subject to the school's Code of Behaviour.
2. In the exceptional circumstance a child requiring a third year the child is re-rated at the Admissions Committee Meeting.
3. Emotional and behavioural disorders, and hearing impairment may be associated with but are not considered to be primary causes of DLD. In instances where these emerge to be the prominent difficulties, transfer or discharge will be recommended.

4. In some circumstances, involvement from other professions such as Psychology, Occupational Therapy and Child and Family Services may be sought. This will be done in consultation with parents.
5. All parents are written to, prior to the Discharge Committee meeting in February, advising them that their child's placement is under review. Each child's placement in the Language Class is reviewed carefully by the committee at this time to determine whether or not the child will benefit from an additional year in the Language Class or should return to a mainstream setting.
6. Where a child requires a second year in the Junior or Senior Language Class the teacher and therapist agree to this recommendation. This decision is ratified by the Advisory Committee and the parents are informed in writing.
7. After one year, where a child is transferring to the Senior Language Class from the Junior Language Class, the teachers and the therapists involved agree on the recommendation.
8. The decision to discharge a pupil from the Junior or Senior language Class is arrived at by consensus. It occurs when:
 - a) The child has developed the necessary language and learning skills required to progress successfully within a mainstream class
 - or**
 - b) The Language Class placement is no longer indicated as appropriate even though the pupil may have special education needs and require alternative educational provision
 - or**
 - c) The child's primary need is no longer Speech and Language.
 - d) The child fails to progress after 2 years intensive input.
10. The whole Committee is involved in the decisions regarding discharge. In exceptional circumstances, the Principal of the school, who is also the Chairperson of the Committee and the Speech and Language Therapy Manager will make a decision.

Once the decision of discharge has been made the following steps are taken

1. The Principal informs the parents / guardians in writing of the decision to discharge the pupils. S/he will also advise them that they are now obliged to procure a school place for their child.
2. The child returns to local Speech and Language services if required.
3. Parental permission is sought for the Principal of Presentation Primary School to contact the Principal of the pupil's new school, so as to establish close links as early as possible between the two schools and the staff involved.
Permission is also sought so that end of year reports, test scores, speech and language therapy reports can be forwarded to the next school.
An explanatory information leaflet will be sent to the new school outlining the objectives and the work of the language classes.
Parents are advised to share psychological, SLT and school reports when returning to the base school.

Role of Language Class Teachers

- The language class teacher is a member of the Advisory Committee and attends the admissions and discharge meetings.
- S/he monitors and reports on the progress of pupils attending the language Class.
- S/he assesses each child's personal, social and academic needs, and in consultation with the child's parent/guardian and speech and language therapist, devises an individual education plan (IEP).
- The teacher ensures that the child follows the regular primary school curriculum, taking into account the child's speech and language abilities and the goals of the speech and language therapist.

Role of School Principal

- The Principal represents the Board of Management on the Advisory Committee.
- S/he is responsible for the day to day management of the classes and the support of children, staff and parents/guardians.

- S/he applies to the SENO for special needs assistant support, transport and assistive technology (if required).
- S/he also informs the SENO about language class enrolments, retention and discharges.
- S/he liaises with the HSE in relation to the management of the language classes and consults with the NEPS psychologist as necessary.
- The Principal also liaises with relevant school principals at times of intake and discharge.

Role of Speech and Language Therapist

- The Language Class Speech and Language Therapist (SLT) are members of the Advisory Committee and provide professional opinions on the suitability, eligibility and prioritisation of referrals to the Language Classes.
- The SLT provides support and advice to SLT's involved in the referral process to the Language Classes.
- The SLT provides intervention for the communication needs of children attending the Speech and Language classes
 - This includes reviewing existing reports, setting and targeting current therapy goals in conjunction with teachers and parents, working closely with education staff regarding speech and language performance in classroom and providing training on speech and language intervention for education staff when necessary.

Role of Speech and Language Therapy Manager

- The role of the Speech and Language Therapy Manager is to attend the Advisory Committee Meetings and provide advice and support to SLTs involved in the referral process to the Language Classes.
- S/he provides professional opinions with regard to suitability, eligibility, and prioritisation of referrals.

- The Manager oversees the speech and language therapy service provision to the language classes and liaises with the Irish Association of Speech and Language Therapists on any pertinent issues arising. (ref: Supporting children with Developmental Language Disorder in Ireland (IASLT Position Paper and Guidance Document 2017)).

Role of Parents

- The Parents will make an application to the Board of Management of the school for a place in the Language Class as appropriate.
- They will stay in regular contact with the school and attend the required meetings.
- They will have input into the IEP.
- They will be asked to support the school in its work by ensuring their child's attendance and punctuality.
- They will be expected to support the child in doing the homework.
- Parents are responsible for securing an alternative school placement once the child is discharged from the Language Class.
- Parents are responsible for sharing all relevant reports with the base school.
- Parents may apply for an Irish Exemption upon discharge from the Language Class.

Communication

Every effort will be made to maintain open communication between parents and the school.

Regular contact will be maintained and parents may make an appointment at any time through the office to meet with the Principal/teachers/therapists and they will be facilitated.

Two formal Parent/Teacher/Language Therapist meetings take place during the year. The Principal, Class Teachers and Speech and Language Therapists will communicate with the base school as required and during transition periods.

Data Protection / Record Retention

All language class applications and reports of children not in receipt of places will be shredded at the end of the school year. Psychological reports must be kept. Assessments and reports of pupils in the Language Class will be stored in secure filing cabinets in the Language Class classes for the duration of their placement. On leaving the Language Class their school files will be stored in a secure filing cabinet in the school office. One copy of each report will be maintained in the school. Speech and Language Therapy files will be maintained by the HSE Team as part of each child's SLT Service File.

Review and Ratification

This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Advisory Committee and the School Board of Management on _____

Signed on behalf of the Presentation Primary School Board of Management.

Chairperson of the Board of Management
Mary Ryan

Date

Application Form: Speech and Language Class

Name of child: _____ Date of Birth: _____

P.P.S.No.: _____

Parents/Guardians: _____

Address: _____

Nationality: _____ First Language: _____

Contact phone no. _____

Name of school child is attending: _____

School Address: _____

School Phone No.: _____ School Principal: _____

Current Class: _____ Class Teacher: _____

Speech & Language Therapist: _____

I wish to apply for a place in the Presentation Primary School Speech and Language Class for September _____

I understand that I must submit a Speech and Language Report, a Psychological Report and a Class Teacher's Report before 28th February.

Please tick:

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Speech and Language Report | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Psychological Report | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Class Teacher's Report | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Copy of child's Birth Certificate | <input type="checkbox"/> |

CONSENT FORM

I, parent of _____ give my consent for:

- . A copy of my child's psychological report to be forwarded to the Language Classes Advisory Committee.
- . Copies of other relevant reports _____ (specify) to be forwarded to the Language Classes Advisory Committee.

I understand that these reports will be returned to my child's file following the meeting in March.

Signed: _____
(Parent / Guardian)

Date: _____