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Powerstown Educate Together National School

Specific Speech and Language Disorder (SSLD) / Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) Class Enrolment Policy 1.1

This policy has been formulated by Powerstown ETNS to assist parents in making an informed decision in relation to ***child enrolment in our Specific Speech and Language Disorder (SSLD) / Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) class*** *and to comply with legislation and Department of Education and Skills circulars.*

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Introduction

This policy is set out in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act, 1998. The Board of Management trusts that by so doing, parents will be assisted in relation to enrolment matters and procedures for the Specific Speech and Language Disorder / Developmental Language Disorder Class in Powerstown ETNS. Furthermore, the Board of Management and the Principal will be happy to clarify any further matters arising from the policy.

Powerstown Educate Together ETNS is a national school which operates under the patronage of Educate Together. We are a mainstream co-educational national school with an SSLD / DLD (Specific Speech and Language Disorder / Developmental Language Disorder) class. Educate Together schools are national schools that teach the National Primary Curriculum and are open to all, irrespective of social, cultural or religious background. Teachers are fully qualified, as in all national schools.

Please note that this enrolment policy is for the SSLD / DLD class only. Enrolment Policy for mainstream classes can be viewed here:
www.powerstownetns.com/policies/SSLDenrolment2017.pdf

Educate Together schools have four underlying principles:

- **Multi-denominational** – children of all denominations and none are equally welcome into our schools.
- **Co-educational** – Educate Together schools are open to girls and boys and gender stereotyping is addressed and challenged.
- **Child-centred** - this applies not only to teaching and learning within the classroom but to all decisions at staff and management level, which must have the well-being of the children at their heart.
- **Democratically-run** – parents are viewed as a positive resource for the school. Parental involvement is welcomed and encouraged, where appropriate. The professional role of the teacher is validated at all times.

The school support the principles of:

- Inclusiveness with reference to the enrolment of children with a disability or other special educational need
- Equality of access and participation in the school
- Respect for the diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life in society within:
  a) the rights of the Patron as set out in the Education Act (1998),the Equal Status Acts (2000-2011)the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004), The Education Welfare Act (2000), the Education Amendment Act (2012) and the Health and Safety at Work Act (2005).
  b) the context and parameters of Departmental regulations and programmes,
  c) the provisions of Section 14(b) (i) of The Equal Status Act 2000
  d) the funding, teacher resources and accommodation available.
  e) The school admission policy will not discriminate against a pupil on the grounds of;
     - ✓ The student having a disability or other special educational needs
     - ✓ The student's sexual orientation
     - ✓ The student's Family Status
     - ✓ The student being a member of the Traveller community
     - ✓ The student's race
     - ✓ The student's gender
     - ✓ The student's faith or religious tradition
     - ✓ The student having no faith

Powerstown Educate Together National is fully recognised by the Irish Department of Education and Skills and work under the same regulations and funding structures as other national schools.

Specific Speech and Language Disorder / Developmental Language Disorder

Specific Speech and Language Impairment (SSLD / DLD), Specific Language Impairment (SLI), and Specific Language Disorder (SLD) are the labels used interchangeably in the literature/clinically to describe this client group. Specific Speech and Language Disorder / Developmental Language Disorder (SSLD / DLD) is the term used by the Department of Education and Skills (DES).

The Irish Association of Speech and Language Therapists (IASLT) defines this impairment as follows; "Specific Speech Language Impairment (SSLD / DLD) 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 occur in the context of normal cognitive abilities and are not primarily attributable to social, emotional, behavioural, educational, physical or sensory difficulties". (IASLT 2007).

Any or all of the following areas of speech/language may be affected: language comprehension; learning and using the rules of grammar; pronunciation; learning, storing and retrieving words; conversation and describing skills. Children with SSLD / DLD often experience literacy difficulties i.e. problems learning to read, spell and write.

One option within the clinical care pathway for provision of a Speech & Language Therapy (SLT) service to children with SSLD / DLD is by means of enrolment within a specific class. These classes, termed SSLD / DLD (Specific Speech & Language Disorder) classes by the DES offer intensive speech & language therapy which is integrated with the child's academic development

How the SSLD / DLD Class is organised

For school aged children with SSLD / DLD in Ireland an arrangement exists between the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and Department of Health & Children DOHC)/Health Services Executive (HSE) to provide school-based Speech and Language Therapist (SLT) to children through attendance at an SSLD / DLD class.

- ✓ Powerstown ETNS has one SSLD / DLD Classes
- ✓ This is a 'Junior class' and caters for the needs of children with SSLD / DLD. All children must be in Senior Infants, 1st class, 2nd class or 3rd class on the 1st of September of the year of enrolment.
- ✓ Places will be restricted to a range of 3 consecutive class groups, meaning children enrolled in Senior Infants, 1st and 2nd class and/or children in 1st, 2nd and 3rd class.
- ✓ The maximum enrolment in each class is in line with the Department regulations (i.e. 7 children per class) to allow for intensive educational and Speech and Language Therapy programmes suited to the children's needs.
- ✓ Each class is staffed by a full time teacher, and has designated time assigned to it by a speech and language therapist.
- ✓ Each class is staffed by a Special Needs Assistant with a 0.33 post. (i.e. 1/3 of a post)
- ✓ Speech and Language Therapy is provided by arrangement with the DoHC/HSE and the therapy delivery is integrated with the educational provision.
- ✓ At the time of revising this policy the class is receiving 2.5 days of Speech and Language Therapist provision per week.
- ✓ Eligible pupils may spend up to a maximum of two years in the SSLD / DLD class.
- ✓ Pupils follow the regular primary school curriculum to the level at which they can access it, but they do not formally implement the Irish curriculum. They receive intensive group and one to one Speech and Language Therapy. The pupils in the SSLD / DLD Class are integrated with their peers from mainstream classes for some subjects, during break times and for school activities such as P.E./concerts/ school tours. The teacher and speech and language therapist work closely together to help promote each child's speech, language and communication skills in a programme which is integrated into the educational setting.

Eligibility:

The Common Advisory Admissions Committee under the direction of the Board of Management (BOM) of Powerstown ETNS has the final decision in the enrolment of children in the SSLD / DLD Class. The following eligibility criteria must be met by each applicant:

- A child must be 4 years of age on / before 1st September of their Junior Infant school year.

- The child must live within the designated catchment area at the time of referral (i.e. HSE areas Dublin North Central and North West Dublin).

- A child must have attended a minimum of eight sessions of 1:1 speech and language therapy within the past 9 months [of the referral date (i.e. 1st March 2017)].

Criteria for enrolment in the SSLD / DLD classes

Criteria 1: DES Criteria

The DES has outlined the criteria for enrolment in an SSLD / DLD Class**.** These include exclusionary and discrepancy criteria in relation to language and IQ scores in children with SSLD / DLD. In order to be described as having a Specific Speech and Language Disorder / Developmental Language Disorder in Ireland pupils should meet each of the following criteria (from the DES Circular 38/07):

I. 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)
II. 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
III. The pupils' difficulties are not attributable to hearing impairment, the hearing threshold for the speech related frequencies should be 40dB
IV. Emotional or behavioural disorders or a physical disability are not considered to be primary causes.

Criteria 2: Priority Rating Scale

- The Priority Rating Scale for SSLD / DLD Class Admissions is used by the Common Advisory Admissions Committee Meeting.

- This priority rating scale (PRS) was adapted from the New Brunswick Health and Community Services PRS and was developed in 1997. The Special Interest Group of Speech and Language Therapists in SSLD / DLD in Ireland has adapted the New Brunswick PRS for application to SSLD / DLD class admissions procedure. The rating scale has three sections: impact of the presenting problem (academic, social, emotional), predicted outcome of intervention (e.g. history and success of previous intervention) and impact of service delay. Information from the reports received on each

applicant is used in the completion of this rating scale. Each child is then given an overall priority rating that is high, medium or low.

- All children are then listed in order of their priority. Those children at the top of the priority list will be recommended for places in the class for the academic year commencing in September of that year.

- Where the number of children referred exceeds the number of places available, names are placed on a prioritised waiting list for that admission year. This list of both children offered SSLD / DLD class places and children on a prioritised waiting list will be ratified by the BOM and noted in the BOM minutes.

***Criteria 3:* Age and Geography**

- Once children meet the eligibility criteria and the Department of Education criteria, they are listed in order of the Priority Rating Scale as detailed above.

- The Advisory Committee will then proceed to the enrolment stage. Children may be offered a place in PETNS or St. Patrick's National School depending on age appropriate available places in St. Patrick's SSLD / DLD Class and PETNS Junior SSLD / DLD Class.

- The Advisory Selection committee will endeavour, where possible, to offer the child an available place in the closest SSLD / DLD class to their home address. This is dependent on available places in the SSLD / DLD class.

Criteria 4: Local criteria for PETNS

- PETNS is a 'Junior class' and caters for the needs of children with SSLD / DLD. All children must be in Senior Infants, 1st class, 2nd class or 3rd class on the 1st of September of the year of enrolment.
- Places will be restricted to a range of 3 consecutive class groups, meaning children enrolled in Senior Infants, 1st and 2nd class and/or children in 1st, 2nd and 3rd class.

The DES has outlined (in circular 0083/2007) a spare capacity provision for SSLD / DLD class admissions. This applies in instances where there is spare capacity in a SSLD / DLD class because of insufficient eligible children, the selection committee under the direction of the boards of management (BOM) may offer a place to a maximum of two pupils who do not meet the eligibility criteria above but who could benefit from enrolment in the class for one year on a concessionary basis.

Such placements must be supported by the recommendation of a speech and language therapist and/or psychologist.

The question of the continued enrolment of these pupils for a second year can only be considered once all of the eligible pupils have been accommodated. The National Council for Special Education through the local Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO) will monitor such situations

The Board of Management (BOM) of Powerstown Educate Together National School has the final decision in the enrolment of children in the SSLD / DLD Class.

Referral Procedure

Once a diagnosis of SSLD / DLD is established a child may be referred for SSLD / DLD class placement. Children are referred to the class by a Speech and Language Therapist and/or Psychologist. These professionals will recommend the SSLD / DLD Class if they feel it is appropriate to meet the child's needs. Either the Speech and Language Therapist or Psychologist should coordinate the referral.
The closing date for referrals is 1st March each year (or whereby the 1st falls on a weekend/school closure day the closest Monday to the 1st of March).

In order for a child to be considered for a place in the classes, **one original and six copies** of each of the following documents are required.

Reports Required for Referral to SSLD / DLD Classes in P.E.T.N.S.

1. Parental **consent form** signed by the child's parents/guardian.

2. An up to date **speech and language therapy report** (preferably within three months of referral) confirming a diagnosis of Specific Speech and Language Impairment. This report should include the following:
    - A summary of case history information
    - A history of the child's involvement with Speech and Language Therapy Services to date, including the number of therapy sessions attended, the focus of therapy and therapy outcomes.
    - A description of the child's current profile including standardized assessment results of receptive and expressive language development. Standard scores, percentile ranks, confidence intervals, standard deviations and age equivalents should be included where possible.
    - A description of the child's phonological system where relevant. A short transcription is also helpful and a report of oro-motor examination where applicable.
    - A summary of the impact of the child's speech and/or language impairment on their educational progress and social/emotional development.

3. A **Social, Emotional and Behavioural Rating Scale** to be completed by the child's parents/guardians with the assistance of the Speech and Language Therapist.

4. An up to date **psychology report** (within 2 years of referral) which includes the results of a comprehensive assessment of intellectual ability, including index/factor scores and subtest results.

5. A **pre-school/school report** which provides information on the impact of the child's specific language impairment on his/her educational progress and social/emotional development. Recent educational attainments and assessment results should be included if available. Referral forms for primary school children are provided. All staff involved with the child must fill out pages 1-8 and pages 10—11 of this form. Page 9 of this form must be completed by the resource or learning support teacher if the child is receiving additional support at school. Referral forms are also provided for pre-school teachers. **Social, Emotional and Behavioural Rating scales** for teachers are included in both preschool and primary school referral forms.

Where to send referral forms

Referral forms should be sent to:
SSLD / DLD Applications' Office, c/o St. Patrick's Boys National School, Drumcondra, Dublin 9.

Please note that all applications are considered by the Common Advisory Admissions Committee, which combines LHO areas of North West Dublin and Dublin North Central.

Children may be offered a place in Powerstown ETNS or St. Patrick's N.S. (not both).

Completion of this application does not guarantee or constitute an offer of a place in any of the SSLD / DLD classes

Following receipt of a referral, parents/guardians and the referral source will receive a letter from the SSLD / DLD Class Application Office. This will acknowledge that the referral has been received and give the ***Common Advisory Admissions Committee*** meeting date. It will also give an approximate date as to when the parents/referral sources will be informed of the committee's decision.

The SSLD / DLD Class Application Office collates the incoming referrals. Copies of the reports for each referral will be distributed to all members of the Common Advisory Admissions Committee as soon as possible after the closing date for referrals.

Common Advisory Admissions Committee (CAAC)

The Common Advisory Admissions Committee (CAAC) is a multi-agency group made up of a group of professionals working for either the DES or the HSE who decide which referrals are selected for places in the SSLD / DLD classes. The Common Advisory Admissions Committee is comprised of the following: School Principals of Powerstown ETNS and St. Patrick's N.S., SSLD / DLD class teachers, SSLD / DLD Class Speech and Language Therapists, Speech and Language Therapy managers (HSE), Principal Psychologist Manager (HSE) and NEPS Psychologist.

The committee discusses the clinical and educational needs of the applicants for SSLD / DLD Class placement based on the information provided in the reports outlined above. It prioritises the applicants for allocation to the available places in the SSLD / DLD Class.

Common Advisory Admissions Committee Meeting.

This meeting usually takes place in April each year. This is the meeting at which the CAAC makes recommendations on the allocation of places in the SSLD / DLD classes. This will include discussion regarding which current pupils will stay in the class for a further year, and which pupils will return to their local primary schools.

The number of new places becoming 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 in line with DES regulations.

Initially the CAAC check that each child meets the DES and eligibility criteria outlined above.

The Common Advisory Admissions Committee then applies the Priority Rating Scale, which considers a number of criteria (as detailed above), for each child who meets the DES and eligibility criteria.

- All children are then listed in order of their priority.
- Those children at the top of the priority list will be recommended for places in the class for the academic year commencing in September of that year.
- Where the number of children referred exceeds the number of places available, names are placed on a prioritised waiting list for that admission year.
- This list of both children offered SSLD / DLD class places and children on a prioritised waiting list will be ratified by the BOM and noted in the BOM minutes.

The recommendations of the CAAC are conveyed in writing to all the parents and referral sources. This letter is signed by the School Principal on behalf of the BOM.

Pupils who are offered a place

In the letters to parents/guardians of children who are being offered a place in the SSLD / DLD Class, parents are asked to contact the SSLD / DLD Applications' Office by telephone within one week (5 working days) of receipt of the letter offering them a place to confirm that they are interested in the place.

These parents/guardians are invited to attend an information meeting in the school before confirming that they will accept this place.

- The parents/guardians and children meet with SSLD / DLD class teacher, Speech and Language Therapist and school Principal at this meeting.
- Parents/guardians are asked to fill out the School Enrolment form at the end of the group meeting if they are happy to proceed with enrolment.
- Parents/guardians are asked to fill out School Transport form if they are happy to proceed with enrolment.
- All pupils are accepted on the understanding that they and their parents/guardians fully accept the school's Code of Discipline, and all other school policies (e.g. Healthy Eating, Child Protection Policy, Homework Policy) currently in place or which may be drawn up from time to time by the school's staff and/or Board of Management.

Where an offer of a place is declined, the next child on the prioritised waiting list will be offered a place.

Pupils who are not offered a place

In letters to parents/guardians of children who are not offered places, parents/guardians are advised that under Section 29 of the Education Act 1988, they are entitled to appeal the decision to the Secretary General of the DES. It also informs parents that a form for this purpose can be obtained from the DES, Friar's Mill Road, Mullingar, Co Westmeath.

Referrals are not carried forward from one year to the next and children who are unsuccessful in securing places in the SSLD / DLD classes must be referred again if they are to be considered for the following year.

All referral reports except originals will be shredded by SSLD / DLD Class Speech and Language Therapist, Each child's original referral documents will be stored in the child's Speech and Language Therapy file in the case of children who attend the SSLD / DLD class following CAAC meeting. For children who are not offered a place and who are placed on the waiting list, the original referral documents will be stored in a secure filing cabinet in SSLD / DLD Speech and Language Therapist's clinic room.

Inclusion of pupils with SSLD / DLD

All the children in the SSLD / DLD Classes are integrated with other pupils during playtime, during school trips and outings. In as far as possible the child's individual and group speech and language therapy sessions are timetabled so as not to clash with the timetable for pupils integrating with their peers but this is not always possible.

Staffing and resources in the SSLD / DLD Class

Pupils in the SSLD / DLD Class will be part of the normal day to day experiences, determined by the reality of school life, and the existing customs and practices. Every child in the school is bound by school policies, both those in existence and those developed from time to time by the staff and/or Board of Management. The school cannot offer any additional tuition, support and supervision beyond that which if offered to any other pupil in the school, at times other than when the school is in operation during the normal school year.

Pupils in the SSLD / DLD Classes will be no different to those in other classes in terms of not having any separate or additional provisions put into place from other classes in the event of staff illness, absences or whole school events such as school visits, parish liturgy etc.

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 with regard to teaching staff.

Parental involvement

Parents/guardians are expected to attend meetings with the SSLD / DLD class teacher and Speech and Language Therapist as required during the school year. Communication between teacher/ Speech and Language Therapist and parents is encouraged from the outset and where any classroom issues arise they are dealt with jointly (parents and SSLD / DLD Class staff).

Parents/guardians are encouraged to be involved with setting speech and language goals and implementing speech and language therapy programmes while their child is attending the class. Parental support is essential to ensure that a child benefits fully from his / her time in the class. Parents are required to attend at least 1 Speech and Language Therapist session per month where possible. This required in order for children to make the most benefit from their placement in the SSLD / DLD class.

Placement Reviews

Placement in the SSLD / DLD Class is for up to a maximum of two years.

The pupil's progress will be reviewed throughout each year, and the SSLD / DLD Class Teacher and the Speech and Language Therapist will give feedback to parents/guardians at regular individual meetings. At the review IEP meeting (usually in February each year), the Speech and Language Therapist and teacher will discuss with parents regarding suitability of 2nd year of placement for the child. A joint decision regarding this is made between SSLD / DLD Class staff and parents.

The SSLD / DLD Class staff, in consultation with parents/guardians, may carry out a review regarding suitability of placement, during the first term if necessary. Where difficulties arise, it may be necessary for the school staff to meet regarding the child's placement. When a child is required to leave the SSLD / DLD Class during the academic year, this is communicated in writing to the relevant parties by the school Principal. Where a placement is terminated, the place is then offered to the next child on the prioritised waiting list.

Discharge from the SSLD / DLD Class

A child may be discharged from the SSLD / DLD Class when any or some of the following apply:

- The child has come to the end of the two year period of attendance
- The child has reached the upper class age limit for attendance in the SSLD / DLD Class
- The SSLD / DLD Class staff considers the pupil able to return to mainstream education (this may occur after one year of placement).

- The Common Admissions Advisory Committee no longer considers the SSLD / DLD Class as the most suitable placement for the child's educational development

- The parents/guardian of the child request transfer from the SSLD / DLD Class

Prior to discharge from the SSLD / DLD Class speech and language and academic assessments will be carried out and reports forwarded to the relevant parties. The SSLD / DLD Class staff will give feedback on the assessment results and recommendations to parents/guardians on the pupil's discharge.

Transition to Mainstream/Other Educational Placement

Towards the end of their time in the SSLD / DLD Class pupils will complete Speech and Language and educational assessments. Children may have psychological reassessments if this is available/appropriate. Reports on these assessments will include recommendations for any supports they may need on their return to mainstream or other educational placements. The parents/guardians are encouraged to visit the school to which their child is transferring to ensure there will be appropriate support provided there for their child.

SSLD / DLD Class teacher and Speech and Language Therapist liaise with staff and other professionals involved in child's next educational placement prior to the child's transition there. Children are encouraged to visit their next school placement prior to transferring there full time (two visits are recommended, one in May and one in June).

Teacher/Principal from child's next school placement are encouraged to visit the child in the SSLD / DLD Class setting to get a sense of how the class operates and how the child functions with the SSLD / DLD class setting. This is done as a group meeting for all children leaving a class. Information is given to school staff regarding children's strengths/needs and useful strategies to help the child in their next school placement.

The Speech and Language Therapist from the SSLD / DLD Class will visit the pupil in their new school one to two months after the child has started there to allow time for the child to settle there. At this time, Speech and Language Therapist provides advice and school programmes to teaching and support staff if appropriate.

School Transport

In general, a child who is eligible for placement in a SSLD / DLD class is on the basis of DES criteria or spare capacity provision is also eligible for free transport to the SSLD / DLD class with capacity nearest to his/her 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.

Amendments to the policy

Powerstown ETNS reserves the right to amend the policy. Any such amendments would be brought to the attention of parents.

This Enrolment Policy will come into effect from 1st January 2017.