



Powerstown Educate Together National School

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Powerstown Educate Together National School

Developmental Language Disorder (DLD)

Class Policy 1.7

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

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Introduction

This policy is set out in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act, 1998 and the Department of Education and Skills Circular 0038/2007. The Board of Management trusts that by so doing, parents will be assisted in relation to enrolment matters and procedures for the 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 a DLD (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 DLD policy exists to explain the role and function of the DLD class. The school Admission Policy and Admission Notice is accessible on the school website.

Educate Together schools have four underlying principles:

- **Equality based** – all students are treated with care and equal treatment regardless of their socio-economic, cultural or religious background.
- **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.

Developmental Language Disorder

Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) means that a child has significant, on-going difficulties understanding and/or using spoken language, in all the languages he/she uses. DLD was previously known as the interchangeable terms Specific Speech and Language Impairment (SSLI) or Specific Language Impairment (SLI). In Ireland, the new term DLD has been adopted by the Irish Association of Speech and Language Therapists (IASLT) in line with international consensus. Specific Speech and Language Disorder (SSLD) is the term which the Department of Education and Skills (DES) in Ireland continues to use.

IASLT, in its 2017 Position Paper and Guidance Document *Supporting Children with DLD in Ireland*, explains that children with DLD are “likely to have language problems enduring into middle childhood and beyond, with a significant impact on everyday social interactions and/or

educational progress". For this group of children, their language disorder is not caused by other medical conditions, such as, hearing loss, physical impairment, Autism, severe learning difficulties or brain injuries. The characteristics of children with DLD include speech, language and communication difficulties affecting the following areas: phonology, syntax, semantics, word finding, pragmatics/language use and verbal learning and memory. Children with DLD can also have other difficulties (e.g. attention, motor, literacy, and speech or behaviour difficulties).

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

How the DLD Class is organised

For school aged children with 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 DLD class.

- Powerstown ETNS has one DLD Classes
- This class accommodates the needs of children with DLD. All children must be in Senior Infants, 1st class, 2nd class or 3rd class, 4th or 5th class on the 1st of September of the year of enrolment (on rare occasions, a 6th class student may be allocated a place).
- 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 etc.
- 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 an Additional 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 20 hours of Speech and Language Therapist provision per week and 0.5 ANA post.
- Eligible pupils may spend up to a maximum of two years in the DLD class.
- Pupils follow the regular primary school curriculum, differentiated where necessary, to the level at which they can access it.
- All children enrolled in the DLD class automatically get an Irish Exemption.
- Children receive intensive group and one to one Speech and Language Therapy.
- The pupils in the DLD Class are included with their peers from mainstream classes for curriculum subjects, during break times and for school activities such as concerts, school performances and school tours. The inclusion programme is accelerated in Term 2 / 3 of the pupil's final year placements to prepare the pupil to successful transition back to full-time mainstream education.
- 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.

Admission Process

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 DLD Class.

Eligibility:

The child must live within the designated catchment area at the time of referral. This is defined as the Dublin North Central & North West Dublin areas of the greater Dublin North City & County Community Healthcare Organisation CHO).

Criteria for enrolment in the DLD classes

The following eligibility criteria must be met by each applicant:

Criteria 1: DES Criteria

The DES has outlined the criteria for enrolment in DLD Class. These include exclusionary and discrepancy criteria in relation to language and IQ scores in children with DLD. In order to meet criteria for DLD class, students must meet the following criteria, from the DES Circular 38/07:

1. 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)
2. 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
3. The pupils' difficulties are not attributable to hearing impairment; the hearing threshold for the speech related frequencies should be 40dB
4. Emotional or behavioural disorders or a physical disability are not considered to be primary causes.

Criteria 2: Local Criteria

- Referrals to the Language Classes are accepted from Speech & Language Therapists and Psychologists only.
- At the time of application, a child must be currently enrolled in Junior Infants, Senior Infants, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th or 5th class (or equivalent)*. Pre-school children can no longer be referred.
- An up-to-date psychology report, which includes the results of a comprehensive assessment of intellectual ability, including non-verbal index/factor scores and subtest results completed within 3 years of referral (i.e. dated anytime from 1st March 2021).
- A child must have attended a minimum of eight sessions of individual speech and language therapy within nine months of the application deadline (i.e., eight therapy sessions provided on/after the 1st of June 2023 onwards is required for applications for 24/25 school year).
- These eight sessions **must not include assessments**.
- Standardised speech and/or language assessments must have been carried out within six months of the application deadline (i.e., assessments administered on/after the 1st September 2023 onwards can be used for applications for 2024/25 school year).

**6th class students may be taken in Powerstown ETNS in exceptional circumstances*

Criteria 3: Priority Rating Scale

- The Priority Rating Scale for 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 DLD in Ireland has adapted the New Brunswick PRS for application to 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.
- In the event that there are two or more students tied for a place (or places), the place will be offered by way of a lottery.
- 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 DLD class places and children on a prioritised waiting list will be ratified by the BOM and noted in the BOM minutes.

Criteria 4: 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 admission 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 DLD Class and PETNS Junior DLD Class.
- The Advisory Selection committee will endeavour, where possible, to offer the child an available place in the closest DLD class to their home address. This is dependent on available places in the DLD class.

Criteria 5: Local criteria for PETNS

- PETNS is a “single” class and caters for the needs of children with DLD. All children must be in Senior Infants, 1st class, 2nd class, 3rd class, 4th class or 5th class on the 1st of September of the year of enrolment.
- Places will be restricted to a range of 3 consecutive class groups (where possible), meaning children enrolled in Senior Infants, 1st and 2nd class and/or children in 1st, 2nd and 3rd class.

Criteria 6: Spare Capacity

The DES has outlined (in circular 0038/2007) a spare capacity provision for SSLD class admissions. This applies in instances where there is spare capacity in a SSLD class because of insufficient eligible children, the board 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 DLD Class.

Referral Procedure

Once a diagnosis of DLD is established a child may be referred for DLD class placement. Children are referred to the class by a Speech and Language Therapist and/or Psychologist. These professionals will recommend the 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 Friday to the 1st of March).

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

The referral should be sent to the Language Classes Applications Office for St. Patrick's BNS and Powerstown ETNS, c/o St. Patrick's Boys National School, Drumcondra, Dublin 9.

The closing date for referrals is the 1st March each year (or whereby the 1st falls on a weekend/school closure day the closest Friday to the 1st of March). All and any professional reports in support of an application must be received by this date.

Any reports which are received following this date, will not be considered by the Common Advisory Admissions Committee for the year in question. (However they may form part of an application for the following year).

Please note that all applications are considered by the Common Advisory Admissions Committee for both schools, which combines Dublin North City & County Community Healthcare, Dublin North Central & North West Dublin areas. 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 classes

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

- A completed '**Referral and consent form for Language Classes**'. 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** (i.e. dated anytime from 1st March 2021) which includes the results of a comprehensive assessment of intellectual ability, including non-verbal index/factor scores, and all subtest results.
- A **school report** which provides information on the impact of the child's language disorder on his/her educational progress and social/emotional development. A specific report form for primary school children is provided and should be used. Please refer to the instructions on the top of the form prior to completion. A **Social, Emotional and Behavioural Rating scale** for teachers to complete is included in the primary school report form.
- An up-to-date **speech and language therapy report** (written within three months of the closing date of 1st March (i.e., dated anytime from 1st December) confirming a diagnosis of

Developmental Language Disorder (DLD). The Speech and Language Therapy report must specifically recommend referral to/placement in the Language Class for the child being referred as per the NCSE and HSE Guidance Document for Health Professional Reports with Recommendations on School Placement and Special Education Needs (2019).

Speech and Language Report

The Speech & Language Therapists report should include the following:

Developmental, Educational and Linguistic Information

- A summary of case history information: please include any related family history of speech, language, reading, writing or learning 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 (with parental consent). Please outline any involvement or onward referral to other services. Referring SLT should make onward referrals, if possible, prior to Language 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 be described if appropriate as to differential diagnosis between second language learning and a DLD. Please see the IASLT (2016) Guidelines for SLTs Working with Linguistically Diverse Service Users.
- A brief summary of the child's **educational history** 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 and home (e.g., school visits, attendance at IEP meetings, school programmes provided). If the child has access to SNA support or additional support teaching, please state the reason why this support was granted. If a child does not have SNA support but requires it, this should be clearly stated in the report.

Speech and Language Assessment & Intervention

- **Most Recent Speech & Language Assessment:** This must have been carried out within the last 6 months of the referral deadline (i.e., SLTs may use assessments administered from 1st of September 2022 onwards). **Standardised assessments** should be used and **all subtest and core/index scores** (i.e., from CELF-P 2UK or CELF4 UK assessments) or an equivalent overall speech or language core/index score

(i.e., from CASL, DEAP, ACE, Reynell or PLS-4 assessments) are required for the 2023 applications year. Include the standard deviation (SD), percentile rank and state the severity when reporting each standard score. This assessment can be completed face-to-face or via online Telehealth platforms. ***SLTs are required to supplement this result with previous assessment results/findings and clinical observations, up to and including the past two years, to demonstrate the clinical markers for DLD present in the child's profile and therefore support the clinical diagnosis of DLD.*** For bi/multilingual children please refer to IASLT guidelines mentioned above. For standardised speech assessments include a description of the child's phonological and/or motor speech systems where relevant and if applicable. Referral to ENT in the case of children who are constant mouth breathers/have rhinitis should have been already considered. For pragmatic/social language skills include a description of the areas of difficulty and use a checklist where possible.

- **Previous Speech & Language Assessments and Intervention:** This can be a short paragraph summarising the details of the key information outlined here. Include the total language or index standard scores of previous assessments completed with the child ***prior to the past two years*** if/where applicable; however, it is not necessary to elaborate on individual subtest score results. Provide evidence of monitoring the child's progress with language development over time, particularly for younger children. State the number of intervention sessions offered, number attended and provide a brief synopsis of therapy goals and outcomes. Provide information about the amount of progress made relative to the level of therapy provided, including parental commitment and home carryover.
- **Recent Speech & Language Therapy Intervention:** This can be a brief paragraph summarising the key information outlined here. Briefly describe recent general targets and outcomes. Include information on the child and family levels of cooperation/motivation (e.g., attendance at recent sessions, completion of home activities, mitigating family circumstances where applicable). It may be helpful to include any information from any observations made of the child in more natural settings (e.g., waiting room).

The Functional Impact of Developmental Language Disorder

- A brief description of the impact of the DLD on **functional communication, emotional, social and behavioural development** should be provided. Give clear objective examples of the impact of the disorder on the child's ability to carry out

effective verbal interaction with family, peers (e.g., can the child make his/her needs and wants known to others etc.). 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 support systems are in place at present (e.g., small class numbers with high staff-pupil ratio).

Diagnosis and Recommendations

- Provide clear recommendations as to the **need for placement in Language Class based on severity and impact**. HSE Clinicians are asked to recommend a placement type (i.e., “Language Class placement”) rather than naming a class in a specific school in their reports as per the NCSE and HSE Guidance Document for Health Professional Reports with Recommendations on School Placement and Special Education Needs (2019). The child’s **current diagnosis** should be clearly stated and linked to a summary of the overall areas speech, language and communication affected. Include information on **any co-occurring disorders/needs** a child may present with. Please refer to IASLT’s Position Paper (2017) Supporting Children with Developmental Language Disorder in Ireland for terminology to use.

Processing DLD Class Applications

Following receipt of a referral, parents/guardians and the referral source will receive a letter from the DLD Class Application Office. This will acknowledge that the referral has been received and will state 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 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.

Role of 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 DLD classes. The Common Advisory Admissions Committee is comprised of the following: School Principals of Powerstown ETNS and St. Patrick's N.S., DLD class teachers, 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 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 DLD Class.

Common Advisory Admissions Committee Meeting.

This meeting usually takes place in late March each year. This is the meeting at which the CAAC makes recommendations on the allocation of places in the DLD classes. This will include discussions 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.

1. Initially the CAAC check that each child is eligible to apply i.e. lives within the catchment area
2. CAAC the review applications to ensure DES criteria and local criteria are met, as outlined above. (Children who do not meet the DES criteria or the local criteria are subject to spare capacity provision explained on page 8 of this policy.)
3. 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 local 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.
4. Applications considered under **spare capacity** (see page 8) are then processed using the Priority Rating Scale
 5. This list of both children offered 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 **Powerstown ETNS DLD Class**, parents are asked to contact the school by email (info@powerstownet.com) or telephone (01 8272018) 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 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 NCSE Enrolment in Special Class form and NCSE 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 Behaviour 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

Board of Management Review Request

The parent/guardian of the student, may request the Board of Management to review a decision to refuse admission. Such requests must be made in accordance with Section 29C of the Education Act 1998. The timeline within which such a review must be requested and the other requirements applicable to such reviews are set out in the procedures determined by the Minister under section 29B of the Education Act 1998 which are published on the website of the Department of Education. The board will conduct such reviews in accordance with the requirements of the procedures determined under Section 29B and with section 29C of the Education Act 1998.

Refusal due to oversubscription:

Where an applicant has been refused admission due to the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **must request a review within 21 calendar days of the date** of that decision by the Board of Management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. Please see DE website [HERE](#).

Where an applicant has been refused admission due to the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **must request a review** of that decision by the board of management **prior to making an appeal** under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. (see Review of decisions by the Board of Management)

Refusal other than oversubscription:

Where an applicant has been refused admission due to a reason other than the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **may request a review within 21 calendar days of the date** of that decision by the Board of Management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. Please see DE website [HERE](#).

Where an applicant has been refused admission due to a reason other than the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **may request a review** of that decision by the board of management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. (see Review of decisions by the Board of Management)

DE Appeal

Appeals under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 will be considered and determined by an independent appeals committee appointed by the Minister for Education.

The timeline within which such an appeal must be made and the other requirements applicable to such appeals are set out in the procedures determined by the Minister under section 29B of the Education Act 1998 which are published on the website of the Department of Education. More information on appeals can be found [here](#).

Refusal due to oversubscription:

Please see DE website [HERE](#).

Refusal other than oversubscription:

Please see DE website [HERE](#).

GDPR Guidelines

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

All access to referral reports (except originals) will be removed by school principals.

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 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 principal's office for maximum of 1 school year.

Inclusion of pupils with DLD

All the children in the DLD Classes are included 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' inclusion, but this is not always possible.

Staffing and resources in the DLD Class

Pupils in the 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 is offered to any other pupil in the school, other than when the school is in operation during the normal school year.

Pupils in the 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, workshops 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 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 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 is required in order for children to make the most benefit from their placement in the DLD class.

Placement Reviews

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

The pupil's progress will be reviewed throughout each year, and the DLD Class Teacher and the Speech and Language Therapist will give feedback to parents/guardians at regular individual meetings. At the review SSP 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 DLD Class staff and parents.

Parental engagement with SLT and teacher during the course of the year will be among the factors taken into consideration as part of any review.

The 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 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 DLD Class

A child may be discharged from the 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 DLD Class
- The DLD Class staff considers the pupil ability to return to mainstream education (this may occur after one year of placement).

- The DLD class staff and Board of Management no longer considers the DLD Class as the most suitable placement for the child's educational development
- The parents/guardian of the child request transfer from the DLD Class

Prior to discharge from the DLD Class speech and language and academic assessments (i.e. standardised, diagnostic and teacher designed) will be carried out and reports forwarded to the relevant parties. The 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 DLD Class, pupils will complete Speech and Language and educational assessments. Children may be referred for 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.

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 DLD Class setting to get a sense of how the class operates and how the child functions with the 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 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. At that time, the 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 DLD class is, on the basis of DES criteria or spare capacity provision, also eligible for free transport to the 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.

It is a parent's responsibility to ensure that a child is ready for collection at the agreed time in the morning and that there is someone to receive the child on return home in the evening.

Amendments to the policy

Powerstown ETNS reserves the right to amend the policy. Any such amendments would be brought to the attention of parents, staff and school community.