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Bord Oideachais agus
Oiliúna Thiobraid Arann
*Tipperary Education and
Training Board*



Admission procedures to Special Speech & Language Class

Introduction

The Language Class in Nenagh CNS caters for children, (boys/girls), presenting with Specific Speech & Language Impairment, (SSLI). The class is a junior class and caters for children from junior infants to first class. **However**, a child in first class who is deemed eligible for a second year in the Language Class will follow the programme for second class. A full-time teacher is assigned to this class and the class operates with a reduced pupil-teacher ratio of 7:1. A minimum number of five pupils is required for the school to retain the Language Class. Eligible pupils may spend 2 years or in exceptional cases 3 years in the Language Class, subject to meeting criteria under Placement Review.

The Health Service Executive, (HSE), funds the provision of speech & language therapy for the children attending the Language Class. The Speech & Language Therapist, (SLT), attends the Language Class a minimum of 3 days a week. SNA allocation for the Language Class is 0.3 of the school day.

Criteria for Enrolment

To be eligible for consideration for the Language Class children must meet the criteria for diagnosis of **SSLI** as detailed in the **Special Education Circular Sp Ed 02/05** page 18 and **Circular 0038/2007**.

The criteria are as follows:

1. The child has been assessed by a psychologist on a standardised test of intellectual ability that places non-verbal ability within the average range or above, (i.e.. non-verbal IQ of 90 or above). This assessment needs to be within 2 years of applying for a place in the Language Class.

2. The child has been assessed by an SLT on a standardised test of speech & language development that places performance in one or more of the main areas of speech & language development at 2 standard deviations or more below the mean, or a generally equivalent level, (i.e. 2 standard deviations or below, at or below a standard score of 70). This assessment needs to be within 1 years of applying for a place in the Language Class.
3. The child's difficulties are not attributable to hearing impairment, where the child is affected to some degree by hearing impairment, the hearing threshold for the speech-related frequencies should be 40Db.
4. Emotional and behavioural disorders or a physical disability are not considered to be primary causes for the SSLI.

Admissions Process

- The SLT submits names for consideration by the Admissions Committee.

The Admissions Committee consists of school Principal, Language Class Teacher, Principal SLT, Language Class SLT and an independent psychologist.

- The Admissions Committee will meet in Term 3.
- All applications need to be in by the closing date, which will vary from year to year depending on the school calendar.
- The Admissions Committee will consider all applications with regard to eligibility and score each applicant using an objective measurement scale designed by the Speech & Language Department, HSE West.
- The Admissions Committee will examine all relevant reports. Compulsory documentation: SLT report, psychological report, parental feedback form, preschool/school written feedback and **all other relevant reports**. This is essential for the Admissions Committee to make accurate decisions regarding eligibility and suitability for the Language Class. The Admissions Committee will ensure that all potential candidates meet the criteria for SSLI as outlined in SP ED 02/05 and Circular 0038/2007. It then prioritises the candidates in terms of urgency of need and ability to benefit from placement in the Language Class.

Notification of Admissions Committee Decision

1. Successful applicants will be informed in writing by the School Principal **within five working days** of the Admission Committee meeting.
2. Where a child is offered a place in the Language Class, parents/guardians are asked to return an acceptance/non-acceptance form to the school Principal **within one week of receipt** of the offer.
3. Where an offer is declined, the next child on the waiting list will be offered a place and will have **one week** to accept or reject the offer.
4. Vacant places may be filled under spare capacity as per circular 0038/2007.
5. Children and their parents/guardians who have accepted a place in the Language Class will be invited to the school Open Night to meet with the Language Class teacher and the Language Class SLT.
6. Unsuccessful candidates will be informed in writing by the school Principal when all places have been both allocated and accepted.

Appeals Process

Any parent/guardian who is unhappy with the decision of the Admissions Committee can seek a review of the decision by contacting the school Principal **within one week** of been informed that their application was unsuccessful. This is further explained in Section 7.2 of school's Admissions' Policy.

Spare Capacity

In instances where there is spare capacity in the Language Class because of insufficient eligible children, the Board of Management may offer a place to a maximum of 2 pupils who do not meet the criteria, (Criteria for Enrolment 1 & 2), 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 The Admissions Committee.

Placement Review

- Parents/guardians must be informed by the school Principal about the placement review policy on accepting a place in the Language Class. The criteria for placement review will be stated on the acceptance form and will need to be signed off on by the parents/guardians.

- Placement in the Language Class is for a maximum of 2 years and a minimum of 1 year.
- In exceptional cases a 3rd year may be offered.
- All places will be reviewed at the end of term one by the School Principal, Language Class teacher and SLT.
- Retention of a place in the Language Class for a 2nd year or in exceptional cases a 3rd year, is subject to the following:
 - The child's overall progress is satisfactory.
 - The child attends on a regular basis.
 - Parental support and homework is satisfactory.
 - The child's behaviour is not negatively impacting on his/her progress or that of the other children.
- The child's progress will be reviewed throughout the school year and the option of a 2nd/3rd year will only be offered if the child meets the above requirements and if it is considered that he/she will benefit from an extra year. This will be decided by the Admissions Committee.

Discharge from the Language Class

Prior to discharge from the Language Class the Teacher and SLT will meet with the parents/guardians to:

1. Discuss overall progress.
2. Identify learning needs.
3. Identify Speech & Language needs.
4. Where necessary discuss onward referral.

The Language Class Teacher will be available to be contacted in the 1st term by the child's new school regarding any queries. The SLT will update the child's Speech & Language assessment and report and where necessary will transfer the case back to the child's original SLT.

Policy Approval/Ratification

The policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Nenagh CNS on _____.

Signed: _____

Chairperson, Board of Management