



Scoil Chaitríona Junior

Class for children with specific speech and language disorders

Scoil Chaitríona Junior has 2 Language Classes, which cater for the needs of children with specific speech and language disorders, from Junior Infants to 2nd class who are within the normal range of intelligence. The maximum enrolment in the class is 7 pupils, and the class is staffed by a full time teacher, and a speech and language therapist for four sessions per week. The pupils in the Language Class are integrated with the other pupils at playtime, during school trips and outings, and through integration during non-core subjects.

Pupils follow the normal primary school curriculum, but they do not study Irish. They receive group and one to one Speech Therapy.

Specific Language Disorder

Children with specific language disorders present with speech and language difficulties where skills are not developing in line with expected developmental sequence. These children may exhibit:

- Difficulty in understanding what is said to them
- Difficulty in expressing needs, thoughts and feelings, in developing vocabulary and using well formed sentences
- Poor concentration and listening skills, often preventing progress in the classroom
- Poor motor control which may affect a child's ability to produce the sounds necessary for speech
- Associated educational, emotional and behavioural difficulties

Pupils with specific speech and language disorders are those whose non-verbal ability is average or above, and whose skill in understanding and expressing themselves in spoken language is severely impaired. Their disability is not attributed to factors such as defective hearing, learning disabilities or primary social /emotional problems.

Referral Procedure

Children are referred to the class by their Speech and Language Therapist and/or Psychologist. These professionals will recommend the Language Class if they feel it is appropriate to the child's needs. The parents of the child submit an Application Form, which must be accompanied by the following:

1. Speech and Language Therapy Report
2. Psychologist's Report
3. School Report
4. Parents Report

Selection of Applicants for Admission

The class teams meet in Spring with regard to discharge. This decision is informed by the professional opinions of the class team. The Admissions Committee then meets in May/June to recommend admission for the following September. This will include the recommendation regarding which current pupils will stay in the class for a further year, and which pupils may return to their own primary schools. The Admissions Committee consists of:

1. Language Class Speech Therapists
2. Language Class Teachers
3. Principal of Scoil Chaitriona Junior
4. Principal Speech and Language Therapist HSE
5. Psychologists

On these days the children will not attend school.

Selection Criteria

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 7. The Admissions Committee applies a rating scale, which considers a number of criteria, for each child referred. The purpose of the rating is to estimate each child's need for and potential to benefit from placement in the Language Class. The Rating Scale is informed by

- Psychologist report
- Speech Therapist's Assessment
- Report from Class Teacher/Pre-School Director
- Report from parents

A priority list is drawn up following standard selection criteria, as described above. Those children at the top of the list will be recommended for the places in the class for the following academic year.

Where the number of children referred exceeds the number of places available, names are placed on a waiting list for that admission year only.

The recommendation of the Admissions Committee will be conveyed to the Board of Management, and if approved, will be conveyed in writing to parents as soon as possible by the school principal.

Where a child is offered a place in the Language Class, parents are asked to return an acceptance/non-acceptance form to the school principal within one week of receipt of the offer.

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

All relevant schools and referral agents will be notified in writing regarding the final placement decisions.

All pupils are accepted on the understanding that they and their parents fully accept the school's Code of Discipline, and all other policies currently in place, or which may be drawn up from time to time by the school's staff and/or Board of Management. Pupils in the Special Language Class will experience the normal day to day happenings, determined by the reality of school life, and the existing customs and practices. Every child in the school is bound by the school policies, both 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, at times other than when the school is in operation during the normal school year. The Class Teacher and Speech Therapist will periodically be required to participate at Staff Development and Curriculum or Training Courses. Such professional development events take place within the existing school year, and all pupils are in the care of their parents at these times. Such extraordinary closures will be notified to parents of all pupils through regular notices to parents.

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 in personnel.

The HSE psychologists appointed to the class maintain regular contact during the year and re-assess children who have spent two years in the class.

Placement Reviews

Placement in the Language Class is normally for a maximum of two years, but this may be extended in exceptional circumstances.

The pupil's progress will be reviewed throughout each year, and the Language Class Teacher and the Speech and Language Therapist will give feedback to parents.

The Language Class personnel, in consultation with parents, will carry out a review regarding suitability of placement, during the first term. Where difficulties arise, it may be necessary for the Admission Committee to meeting regarding the child's placement.

When a child leaves the Language 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 waiting list

Discharge from the Language Class

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

- The child has come to the end of the 2 year period
- The child has reached the upper class limit for attendance in the Language Class
- The Admissions Committee considers the pupil able to return to mainstream education
- The Admissions Committee no longer considers the Language Class as the most suitable placement for the child's educational development
- The parent/guardian of the child request transfer from the Language Class
- The Admissions Committee deems that the child is no longer benefiting from Language Class placement
- When school guidelines on behavioural/non attendance have not been complied with

Prior to discharge, formal psychometric, speech and language and academic assessments will be carried out and reports forwarded to the relevant parties.

The Language Class personnel will give feedback of assessment results and recommendations to parents on the pupil's discharge.

Parents have the opportunity to appeal the discharge decision through the DES.

School Transport

All children in the Special Language Class are entitled to free transport. The Schools Transport Service facilitates the children attending this class in the same manner as children attending other Special Classes/Schools. The school has responsibility for application for this service and distribution of tickets.

Transition to Mainstream Education

The following recommendations are made with regard to Language Class pupils returning to mainstream:

- Prior to return, pupils may attend the local school for a limited but regular time slot
- The Language Class teacher and the Speech Therapist will offer to meet the local school personnel
- The possibility of Resource Hours for the returning child will be investigated in advance

Professional Development of Staff

As the work of the Language Class involves a very specific area of education, it is recommended that the teacher/s are facilitated to attend the relevant conferences.

This policy has been drawn up and approved by all personnel in the Language Class i.e. school staff and HSE staff.

Applications for Language Class must be submitted by February 28th each year to the relevant Speech Therapist. Late applications will not be accepted.

Signed: _____
CHAIRPERSON

DATED: _____

