



Tourette syndrome and school

This information sheet provides some suggestions of strategies for dealing with the difficulties children with Tourette syndrome (TS) might face at school. In our experience, the earlier these strategies are put in place, the more benefit the child with TS will gain from them.

Children with TS at school

Most children with TS are of average intelligence. However, difficulties associated with TS may mean that attending school can present additional challenges. It is possible, through working in partnership with the school, to support your child and ensure that school years are as enjoyable and successful as possible. Later in this leaflet are some suggested steps to follow to ensure that your child gets the help that they need.

Steps to getting support for your child

Your child may already have completed several of these steps before you have a firm diagnosis of TS, but they serve as a useful reminder of the process to follow to get your child the support they need. At all stages, your child should have an Education, Health and Care needs assessment, which includes what help is being offered and when, targets for improving your child's progress and how and when this progress is checked. It will also contain details of what you can do to help your child at home, so that both school and home are following similar strategies.

A useful booklet to read is *Special Educational Needs and Disabilities: a guide for parents and carers*, which is produced by the Department for Education. Further details are at the end of this information sheet.

SEN support

This is the first step in the special educational needs (SEN) process and happens when a child is identified as needing extra help of some sort. This could include help from an adult learning assistant, a different way of being taught or extra equipment, such as an adapted computer. The SEN support plan should be devised in collaboration with you, and you should be included in any decisions made.

Teachers may suggest getting input from other specialists, such as an educational psychologist or another health professional.

Education, Health and Care needs assessment

This stage is reached if your child has not shown enough progress under School Action and School Action Plus. The school, in collaboration with you, will ask the Local Education Authority (LEA) to organise an assessment of your child's educational needs. The results of this assessment are used to write a Statement of Special Educational Need, which sets out the help your child needs to progress in school and how it will be delivered. This is reviewed annually and updated to take account of any changes in your child's condition. You will be invited to take part in these review meetings.



Questions and concerns

If you feel your child is not receiving the support they need, the first person to talk to is your child's SENCo. They will be able to advise you about moving to the next step or asking for an assessment of your child's special educational needs. Another useful resource is your local Parent Partnership Service. They provide information on options to take in a neutral and non-judgemental way. They can offer a parent supporter to help liaise with the school and LEA if required.

How you can help

- Forming close links with your child's school is essential throughout their school days. Sharing information about strategies you have found helpful at home will be useful for the teaching staff and will ensure a more consistent approach to reward and discipline.
- Explaining about your child's medication and its possible effects will deal with any misunderstandings, particularly if side effects include sleepiness and lack of energy.
- If your child has TS in combination with another condition, such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) or obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), teaching staff may need extra information and suggestions of which difficulties are caused by which condition and how they should be treated. We have produced information sheets for teachers, which contains tips and strategies for helping a child with Tourette

Syndrome alongside other difficulties get the most out of school life.

- Ask your child's class teacher to explain about TS to the rest of the class so that classmates have a better understanding, which could reduce any unwanted attention or bullying.
- Build a positive relationship with your child's school and keep lines of communication open. This will enable you to be aware of any difficulties your child experiences as they happen and which strategies have been put in place to deal with them.
- Meet your child's class teacher and/or SENCo on a regular basis and keep records of discussions about your child's progress. Avoid complex discussions at parents' evenings, which are often rushed and crowded.

Further information

A comprehensive guide to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities is available from www.gov.uk/topic/schools-colleges-childrens-services/special-educational-needs-disabilities

Regulations and guidance about access arrangements and reasonable adjustments is available from www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance

Tourettes Action

Helpline: 0845 458 1252 - Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm

Website: www.tourettes-action.org.uk