



SPOTLIGHT ON SEND

TOURETTE SYNDROME

If you have any questions please contact Mrs Downs, our Inclusion Leader.

Email: aen@birchington.kent.sch.uk Telephone: 01843841046

What Is Tourette Syndrome?

Tourette Syndrome is also known as TS and Tourette's and is an inherited, neurological condition. The main symptoms of Tourette syndrome are involuntary tics, sounds and movement. It is a complex condition and it generally starts around the age of six, affecting boys more than girls. It is not uncommon for those with Tourette syndrome to also have ADHD and OCD, all of which can lead to anxiety issues and low self-esteem. The condition generally becomes worse when a child is stressed, excited or nervous.

It is a myth that people with Tourette syndrome always swear (only about 10% of those with the condition do this). For Tourette syndrome to be diagnosed, a child must have had one or more symptom for longer than a year and it must be impacting on their life.

According to tourette-action.org.uk, whilst it is not a learning disability, Tourette syndrome can impact on academic progress and participation. It doesn't affect IQ, but often a child with the syndrome finds it difficult to concentrate in class.

Tics can occur in any part of the body. There are motor tics which include: grimacing; eye blinking and rolling; arm and leg jerking; and shoulder shrugging. There are also vocal tics like clearing the throat, shouting out and making animal noises and/or grunting.

Tics may also make writing difficult and shouting out in class can lead to distraction. It is important that the class teacher has a good understanding of the child's needs so that they are properly supported in the classroom. It is not unusual for a child with tics to try to repress them during the school day. This can result in increased tics in the evening and night, making homework and even sleeping difficult.

Here are a few tips on how parents can help a child with Tourettes

- Learn as much as you can about Tourettes. The internet can be a scary place, so make sure you are getting your information from reliable sources.
- Connect with other parents for support, guidance and referrals.
- Do your best to work with the teachers and the school in order to help them understand symptoms of Tourettes, and what your child needs to succeed.
- Work with the school to develop a plan that will accommodate your child's needs
- Have your child connect with other children with Tourettes.
- Introduce your child to successful adults with Tourettes. This provides hope and will most likely increase their motivation to overcome their challenges. Keep reminding them (and yourself) that there IS life beyond Tourettes.



Did you know that the singer Billie Eilish and famous YouTuber Caspar Lee both have TS?

