

### FACTSHEET FOR TEACHERS

# Sudden onset of tics in schools



**We recognise that having a child, or multiple children, with a sudden onset of tics in the school setting can be very complex and challenging.**

The causes may not always be clear and there may, in some cases, be no diagnosis or advice given due to long waiting times to see a clinician. We have consulted with specialists in London to provide the best information and advice that we can share with schools. The following is what they suggest:

- Ignore the tic episodes as they happen so the movements/vocalisations do not receive attention
- When the person stops movements/vocalisations or in-between episodes, this is time to give the young person planned attention and positive praise
- Distract them if they start to panic or show lots of their tics – for example, ask them to deliver something to another classroom
- Reduce the audience and ask others to carry on with normal activities
- Educate others about the need to **not** give attention to the tics
- Have a plan in place to automatically revert to with the least fuss possible
- Normalise the tics
- Discuss possible triggers for the tics with the pupil
- Consider and investigate modifications to the environment to prevent triggers
- Suggest the child steps out to self-regulate and to remove themselves from the area/situation
- Lots of praise for managing the planning of the situation/triggers to the tics, but not the lack of tics themselves
- Plan in movement breaks into their day
- Reduce possible work load but not the level/quality
- Avoid sending home and only use this as a last resort to aid safety or if the child is suffering exhaustion
- Make sure that none of the consequences of the tics are reinforcing any challenging behaviour. For example, with school refusal, we shouldn't punish for this time off but rather reward if they manage to be in school.

For further advice, resources or teacher training, please contact our Education Manager at [lucy@tourettes-action.org.uk](mailto:lucy@tourettes-action.org.uk).