



# Ringwood School

## **Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA) How to tackle it head on with the support from the school**

This YouTube video by Dr. Sam Beasley, an educational psychologist, addresses the increasing issue of emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA) in children and young people. The video focuses on understanding, supporting, and overcoming anxieties related to school attendance for parents and carers.

<https://youtu.be/wCchkvp9hh8>

### **Key Points:**

- **What is EBSA?:** EBSA is an umbrella term describing severe difficulty attending school due to emotional factors, often resulting in prolonged absences.
- **Causes of EBSA:** EBSA stems from a complex interplay of factors, which can include academic pressures, health concerns, anxiety (social, health, learning, separation), sensory sensitivities, family issues, and negative reinforcement cycles (avoidance, reassurance-seeking).
- **Understanding Anxiety:** The video explains the fight-flight-freeze response and how it can be triggered by perceived threats, even imagined ones. It emphasises that the body's response to perceived threats in modern life (like school) is often disproportionate to the actual danger.
- **Maintenance Cycles:** Avoidance and reassurance-seeking behaviours, while providing short-term relief, reinforce anxiety in the long term. The video illustrates how these cycles can develop and persist.
- **Supporting Children:** The video offers practical advice for parents and carers, including:
  - **Early Intervention:** Talk to the school immediately if you suspect EBSA.
  - **Understanding Underlying Issues:** Focus on the root causes, not just the surface behaviour.
  - **Establishing Routines:** Predictability and consistency provide a sense of safety.
  - **Open Communication:** Create a safe space for children to express their fears and worries.
  - **Active Listening:** Practice empathy, validate feelings, and avoid interrupting.
  - **Cognitive Behavioural Techniques:** Challenge unhelpful thoughts and gradually expose children to feared situations.
  - **Collaboration with School:** Work with school staff to develop an individualised plan.
  - **Self-Care for Parents:** Parents need support too; remember to prioritise self-care.