

What is Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)?

Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) occurs when a young person struggles to attend school due to emotional distress, anxiety or other psychological barriers, rather than a lack of interest in education. While they may want to attend, feelings of worry, stress or fear can make this feel overwhelming.

Common signs may include:

- + Frequent absences from school
- + Difficulty leaving home or remaining in school throughout the day
- + Anxiety, distress or physical symptoms associated with school attendance

Who can benefit?

The programme may benefit young people experiencing:

- + Social difficulties
- + Bullying
- + Low confidence
- + Sensory sensitivities
- + Challenges with change and transitions
- + Mild to moderate neurodevelopmental differences, such as autism spectrum disorder (ASD) or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), that impact school attendance
- + Physical symptoms linked to school-related anxiety, such as headaches, stomach aches, or nausea

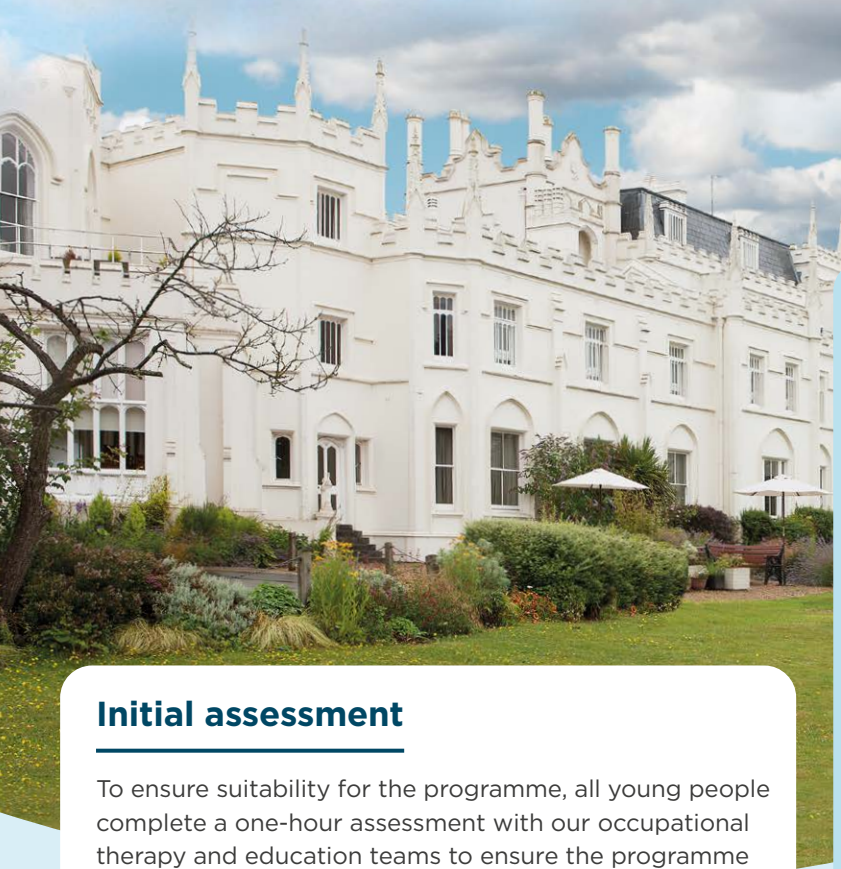
Priory Hospital Roehampton

Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) Programme

Priory Hospital Roehampton offers a specialist Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) Programme supporting children and young people, aged 12-18 years, who are finding it difficult to attend school due to anxiety, emotional distress, or other challenges impacting their education.

Delivered by experienced occupational therapists and specialist education staff, the programme combines therapeutic and educational support to help young people build confidence, develop practical coping strategies reconnect with learning at their own pace.

The programme is delivered face-to-face at Priory Hospital Roehampton in a welcoming, sensory-friendly environment where young people feel safe, supported and empowered to achieve their goals.



How does the programme work?

The programme combines occupational therapy with educational support, to help young people overcome barriers to school attendance and re-engage with learning.

Our onsite school provides a safe, structured environment where young people can gradually rebuild confidence through graded exposure, supported at all times by experienced professionals. Where appropriate, we also encourage continued links with their own school to help ease the transition back into education.

Following an initial assessment, each young person receives:

- + A personalised support plan
- + Support from a dedicated key teacher and occupational therapist
- + Practical strategies to manage anxiety and overcome barriers to learning
- + Support to build confidence and achieve realistic educational goals

Initial assessment

To ensure suitability for the programme, all young people complete a one-hour assessment with our occupational therapy and education teams to ensure the programme is suitable for their needs, which costs £155. Should the young person go on to enter the programme, this will be included on the overall programme cost.

If the young person is not deemed suitable to join the programme, we will work with parents/carers to recommend alternative routes to support.

What will young people gain?

The programme aims to help young people:

- + Build confidence in attending education
- + Understand the factors contributing to school avoidance
- + Develop strategies to manage anxiety
- + Strengthen emotional regulation, resilience and independence
- + Establish healthy routines that support learning
- + Improve problem-solving and self-advocacy skills
- + Work towards realistic educational goals
- + Develop a sustainable plan for ongoing school engagement

Family involvement

Parents and carers play a vital role in supporting a young person's return to education. Throughout the programme, they can expect:

- + Involvement in assessment and goal setting
- + Regular progress updates
- + Midpoint and final reviews, including recommendations for ongoing support

We believe the best outcomes are achieved through close collaboration between young people, families, schools and professionals.

Programme details

The programme runs over 5 weeks and includes 10 sessions (two per week), each lasting 2.5 hours, which are delivered during normal school hours. Sessions are led by an occupational therapist (OT) alongside our education lead/teacher.

The total cost of the programme is £3,375. Parents and carers can self-refer, and we also accept referrals from healthcare and education professionals. Please **visit our website** for further information.

