



# Red Balloon in Worthing

**Tailored education and therapy for young people absent from school**

## Why Red Balloon exists

Increasing numbers of young people are missing from education, not because they are not interested in learning or have been excluded from school, but because poor mental health or trauma leaves them unable to enter the school building.

What causes this state of mental trauma differs between individuals. Bullying, abuse, mental health problems or life-long conditions are among the most common causes that lead young people to isolate themselves from school, from society and even their families. This causes a downward spiral of social isolation, marginalisation, missed education and deteriorating mental health. In West Sussex there is currently no provision to support them. So children become 'hidden' at home with their voices ignored, and they risk not finding their place in the adult world.

## Introducing Red Balloon in Worthing

West Sussex is a vibrant and exciting area for students to live, learn and fulfil their potential. There are fabulous education opportunities provided by a range of schools and colleges both within the state and independent sectors.

In every part of the country, however, there are some young people for whom school is not the gateway to a successful and fulfilling adulthood. That is why we are delighted to be opening our new Red Balloon Centre in Worthing. Red Balloon is built on 25 years of experience and offers a highly specialised programme for children aged 11 to 20, but typically those in years nine to 11. It compliments a wider education provision, giving hope and opportunity to those unable to find their place in mainstream education.

## Complementing Red Balloon of the Air in Worthing

The new Centre runs alongside Red Balloon of the Air which offers a blended programme of education, therapy and mentoring online and face-to-face. To find out more about this innovative provision visit [redballoonlearner.org/RBAir](http://redballoonlearner.org/RBAir) or call 01223 354338.

# What makes Red Balloon different



## A first class service

Red Balloon is an alternative to school. Some students have been missing from their classes for months, if not years, before joining us so we create safe, supportive and caring communities to enable them re-engage with education.

Each student negotiates an individualised learning package, which is tailored to their academic, emotional and social needs. Our teachers, mentors and therapists are highly experienced, and trained in Red Balloon's Philosophy and Practice.

We were finalists in the Independent School Association's ISA Awards 2019. From across all of the independent schools in the UK, Red Balloon was among the top three finalists in the 'Excellence and innovation in mental health and wellbeing' category.



## An integrated approach

The strength of Red Balloon's programme is its holistic approach. Our highly experienced staff provide not only academic support, but mentoring and therapy too, to support students' mental health and to help them re-engage with the wider world.

As they learn, they grow as individuals, developing confidence and resilience, and building the skills they need to successfully return to education, or move on to college, training or work.



## Tailored learning

Students follow an individualised timetable which they negotiate with their teachers. The timetable meets the needs and interests of each child to help them re-engage with learning. This is particularly important for those who have become disenchanted with education because of their negative experiences at school. As the relationships with their teachers develop, students become more confident and resilient learners.

We provide academic teaching from Entry Level to GCSE in core subjects as well as additional subjects such as arts, music, sport, gardening and cookery. We also offer our students PSHEE and Careers Guidance.

## Why Red Balloon works

Students who attend Red Balloon:

- rebuild their self-confidence and regain their self-esteem
- re-engage with academic learning
- prepare for a return to appropriate education, entry to employment or on to training

Red Balloon's reputation is built on 25 years' experience of supporting vulnerable young people in our four Centres in Cambridge, Reading, Norwich and North West London, and via Red Balloon of the Air - our blended online and face-to-face service. Nearly 1,000 students have benefited from our academic, personal and social development programme since we began back in 1996.



## Small class sizes

Each Red Balloon Centre supports in the region of 20 young people. New students start with one-to-one sessions, then progress to learn in small groups, ranging from one or two students to a maximum of six. As their confidence grows, they will begin to join group lessons with others learning at a similar level.



## A safe space to learn to socialise again

Our Centres also provide the backdrop to students' re-engagement with their peers. They can take part in small group sessions such as cookery and craft, drama and music. For many of our young people this is the first time they have worked alongside fellow students for a very long time. They get together for meals, as well as social outings such as trips to local museums, galleries and bush craft activities.



## Transition support

Each student will receive individualised transition support, guiding them throughout their time with Red Balloon, from their first steps to helping them move on to the next stage of their learning and lives. Over 95% of students return to mainstream school or go on to college, training or into work.



## A registered exam centre

We know that some young people miss out on gaining qualifications because they can't go to school to sit their exams. Our Centres are also registered exam centres, where students can sit their exams in a safe, comfortable and familiar environment.



## Inspections

All Red Balloon Centres are inspected by the Independent Schools Association inspection team. This body is interested to see that the aims we have of raising self-esteem, academic, emotional and social progress are met and that students' plans for their next placement - returning to mainstream school, going on to college or training and into employment - are in place.





# Helping commissioners meet their obligations

We know that some schools and local authorities find it difficult to secure the right support for their isolated students. We can help.

Further information, including our safeguarding and other policies and practices, can be found on our website at [redballoonlearner.org/schools-commissioners/policies/](http://redballoonlearner.org/schools-commissioners/policies/)

## A student's view

"Red Balloon has always gone out of its way to help students and I really couldn't have higher praise. It kept me out of all the bad places and they kept me from doing stuff I probably would have done. If it wasn't for my experience there, I wouldn't be able to cope with day-to-day life. I wouldn't have my voice if it weren't for Red Balloon."

## From a parent

"You have made an incredible difference to our daughter. We have watched her really start to blossom. We are amazed at how she is starting to show signs of resilience and how she is even daring to look ahead and think about a plan for her future."



## Contact us

Costings available on request.

Email: [admin@group.rblc.org.uk](mailto:admin@group.rblc.org.uk)

Tel: 01223 366052

[www.redballoonlearner.org](http://www.redballoonlearner.org)

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Red Balloon relies on charitable donations to offer the individualised support our students need to thrive. If you would like to help please visit [redballoonlearner.org/donate](http://redballoonlearner.org/donate) or call us on 01223 366052. Thank you.