

# Red Balloon of the Air

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

## Student-focused provision

RBAir is a therapeutic education programme for children and young people who are out of school and unable to attend due to anxiety, bullying or illness.

Students come to us because they are missing out on their education and are becoming increasingly socially isolated at home. We help students re-engage with learning and life.

In September 2019 we were a finalist in the Independent School Association's Awards. We were among the top three finalists of all the independent schools in the UK in the category: 'Excellence and innovation in mental health and well-being'.

## Who are our students?

Most RBAir students are secondary-school aged, have a reading age of 10+ and are able to access online services. Our students need to agree to and comply with the following three conditions:

- they want to join RBAir, will log-on regularly and on time, and attend the Satellite Centre when they are ready
- they want to learn and make academic, social and emotional progress
- they will behave with respect and consideration to all members of the RBAir community.

# Why Red Balloon of the Air works

Students who attend RBAir:

- 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

RBAir's professional reputation is built on over 20 years' experience of supporting vulnerable young people in our four 'bricks and mortar' Red Balloon Centres in Cambridge, Reading, Norwich and North West London. Nearly 800 students have benefited from our academic, personal and social development programmes since we began back in 1996.

## What makes Red Balloon of the Air different?



### Tailored learning

Our students follow an individualised timetable of online lessons, which are accessed from home. The real-time lessons are with qualified teachers, who make use of innovative techniques and hands-on practicals. 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 and offer our students PSHEE and Careers Guidance.



### An integrated approach

The strength of RBAir's programme is its holistic approach. Our highly qualified and experienced staff provide online and face-to-face well-being and therapy to support students' mental health and to help them re-engage with the wider world.

The curriculum is negotiated with each student. As they learn, they grow as an individual, develop confidence and resilience, and build the skills they need to successfully return to education, work or further training.



### Small class sizes

Students learn in small groups, ranging from one or two students to a maximum of five or six. New students usually begin with one-to-one sessions. 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

We have well-appointed facilities in Milton (Cambridgeshire) and Danbury (Essex). Here students can meet with their peers (when they are ready) and re-build their social confidence. They can take part in small group sessions such as cookery and forest skills, as well as practical experiments on science days. For many of our young people this is the first time they have worked alongside fellow students for many months, or even years.



## Transition support

Each student has a designated mentor. Mentoring is undertaken by our 'link professionals'. They are the key people who link together our academic, personal and social development programmes and liaise with outside commissioners. Our link professionals guide our students throughout their time with RBAir, from their first steps to helping them move on to the next stage of their learning and lives.



## 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. RBAir is a registered exam centre, where students can sit their exams in a safe, comfortable and familiar environment.



# 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 [rbl.ac/airpolicies](http://rbl.ac/airpolicies)

## 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.

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Red Balloon of the Air relies on charitable donations to offer the individualised support our students need to flourish. If you would like to help please visit [donate.rbet.ac](http://donate.rbet.ac) or call us on +44 (0) 1223 366052. Thank you.