

# Red Balloon of the Air

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## *Candidate Pack*



# Welcome to Red Balloon of the Air

Thank you for your interest in a position at Red Balloon of the Air.

Red Balloon of the Air is a special place where the lives of extremely vulnerable young people who previously felt they had no opportunity for a bright future are transformed. This transformation is thanks to the dedication, skill and perseverance of the people we appoint. Our work is challenging but immensely rewarding, and each day brings a sense of achievement as we work together to develop the confidence and skills our students need to move towards a fulfilling and secure adult life.

Key to the success of any Red Balloon is the flexibility our staff bring, no more so than when working with young people who aren't yet able to leave their home, or whose local Centre has a waiting list, or who live too far away from one of our Centres. Working professionally as a team is essential but despite the important nature of our work, you will understand that the best learning environments are filled with kindness, laughter and joy.

This pack is designed to help you get a feel for what it's like to work with us, to share comments from existing staff, and to explain the recruitment process. I hope the information you find here, on the [website](#) and in your wider research helps you determine whether you are the sort of person who can make a difference in the unique environment we have at Red Balloon of the Air. Should you require further information prior to your application do not hesitate to ask for an informal conversation with me.

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**Michelle Williams**  
Headteacher

# Who are our staff ?

**Our staff members are committed, patient, resilient, empathic, reliable and reflective.**

Our staff deliver quality teaching, therapeutic services and support for our students. They hold their colleagues in high regard, displaying the highest level of professionalism. With honesty and care, our staff collectively support students on an individual basis to achieve their goals. We make every day matter and every student count.

**We're passionate and committed to the development, wellbeing, and education of our students.**

Our young people are all unique individuals, but chances are they have not had a good experience with the education or mental health system. We help them feel safe, gain the confidence to explore and share their ideas and take ownership of their own negotiated learning at their own pace.

With unconditional positive regard, we hope our students will tread the steps of success and become lifelong learners. They do their best to value every lesson and every day, respect themselves, each other and their community, be polite, prepared and demonstrate a sense of pride.

Our teams support our students to grow as individuals, restore their confidence, and build the skills they need to successfully handle returning to education, work, or further training.

## Testimonials From Staff



"Working at RBAir is a joy because the needs of individual young people are 100% at the heart of everything we do. I joined feeling disillusioned with a profession in which I felt like I was forcing square pegs into round holes. Now I have rediscovered my love of teaching because every day is about doing what is best for each of the students I work with, not a spreadsheet of statistics."

**-Kirstie, Science Teacher**

"It's an honour to play a part in supporting vulnerable young people and to witness how their lives can be transformed through RBAir's holistic, integrated approach. At the end of my first term, a young person said to me 'Without you I would never have learnt to trust new people that are trying to help me.' There are not many jobs that provide this level of satisfaction!"



**- Harriet, Link Mentor**

# What can we offer you?

The chance to become a valued and supported member of a team making a difference to young people's lives

Knowing you've made a difference at the end of the day is a lovely feeling - and so is knowing that your employer is looking after your best interests. We want our staff to be happy and fulfilled in their role with us, with the support and opportunities they need, and so we offer:

- Support for your professional development and the opportunity to continue to develop your skills.
- Recognition of the importance of your work-life balance, and support to help you maintain it.
- Support for your emotional wellbeing.
- Commitment to an inclusive working environment.
- A real opportunity to work in partnership with colleagues across the organisation.
- Excellent relationships and loyalty with pupils, parents, carers, volunteers and the wider community.
- Central shared services to take some of the strain from frontline roles (HR, Finance, Fundraising, Marketing and IT ).

## Benefits

- Flexible working from Day 1
- Pension Scheme
- Cycle to Work Scheme
- Employee Assistance Programme
- Paid lunch breaks (that we make sure you take!)
- Wellbeing support
- Free Counselling provided by our EAP service
- Annual pay progression opportunities
- Training and Development opportunities

## Testimonials From Staff

"Every day I look forward to getting up and going to work, I feel excited at what the day may hold. Yes it's busy, but spending time with our students - watching them grow, develop new skills, challenge themselves, and grow in confidence and resilience - makes it all worthwhile and gives me a feeling of joy! RBAir's sense of community, respect, understanding and the therapeutic approach all mix together and create a great place to work with cherries on top!"



**- Kathleen, Link Mentor and Satellite Centre Lead**



"The five years I have spent with Red Balloon are by far the most rewarding period of my teaching career. The provision, in small groups or individually, enables us to tailor the learning for each young person, so they can progress at the pace that is right for them. The all-around wellbeing provision is what makes Red Balloon special, and we have seen so many wonderful 'turnarounds' where learners find the confidence to unlock their potential."

**- Andrew, Maths Lead**

# Staff Wellbeing & Work-Life Balance

Put simply, a work-life balance is the amount of time and focus a person gives their work versus other aspects of their life – whether it is raising a family, hobbies, relaxation, or anything else.

If the last few years have taught us anything, it is that work-life balance is key to not only job satisfaction, but mental health and wellbeing too. At Red Balloon of the Air, we aim to protect employee mental health against the potentially detrimental effects of work-related stress and ensure you have a healthy work-life balance.

To support staff wellbeing we:

- Encourage flexible working where possible
- Encourage managers and senior leaders to role model work-life balance themselves
- Do not expect employees to work/check emails in the evenings, weekends or outside their contracted working hours
- Make sure time off means time off
- Encourage breaks with our working time policy and ensure a paid lunch break for all staff
- Acknowledge that every employee is different and therefore their work-life balance needs will vary
- Support working parents
- Ask for feedback about improvements that could be made

In line with the support and safe space we are providing for our students, Red Balloon of the Air is on a mission to normalise mental health conversations in the workplace and improve overall employee wellbeing.

# Our Commitment to Flexible Working

At Red Balloon of the Air, we understand that doing a great job doesn't have to mean working full-time. In fact, in January 2022, 72% of our staff were working part-time or flexibly.

Our vision is for a flexible work environment that delivers on our mission, culture, and operational requirements. We want to unlock our employees' full potential through supporting their varied needs, placing their overall wellbeing at the fore, and trusting them to integrate their work and lives.

We will consider requests for flexible working on hiring. Our staff are able to work flexibly in many different ways; including part-time, job share, remote working and flexi-time, as well as term-time only.

Please talk to us at the interview about the flexibility you need. We can't promise to give you exactly what you want, but we do promise to see if it's possible - and not to judge you for asking.





# Our Commitment to Flexible Working

Flexible work decisions are guided by the following considerations:

- **Organisational mission and operational requirements.**  
Upholding Red Balloon's priorities and long-range vision, and alignment with school/business unit needs and staffing plans.
- **Diversity and culture.**  
Fostering a diverse and inclusive culture that enables us to be agile, retain talent, and further our position as a reputable and leading employer.
- **Creativity.**  
Commitment to developing creative solutions/approaches that evolve over time to engage our distributed workforce and community, and enable effective collaboration.
- **Employee experience.**  
Addressing the unique needs and affordability challenges of our teams by providing a consistent framework for varied flexible work arrangements.
- **Infrastructure.**  
Enabling flexibility through technology, communications, and approaches to physical space that allow for organisational alignment, efficiency and safety.
- **Training and support.**  
Providing guidance and development opportunities to strengthen our ability to evolve and operate in a distributed environment.

# Equal Opportunities and Equality

Equal opportunities and equality is not just a box-ticking exercise - we actively want our staff teams to be diverse and inclusive. We know that different perspectives and experiences strengthen our organisation, making us a better place to work and helping us provide better support to our students.

We want to hire the right people for the right job, and to enable them to shine, whoever they are.

Red Balloon of the Air has earned the Rainbow Flag Award, which is a national quality assurance framework that focuses on positive LGBT+ inclusion and visibility. The Rainbow Flag Award encourages a whole organisation approach to LGBT+ inclusion, as well as developing strategies to effectively challenge and combat LGBTphobic\* bullying.



We are always happy to make reasonable adjustments to the recruitment process to ensure that no applicant is placed at a disadvantage. So if you want to apply but need some adjustments, then get in touch and let us know how we can support you to make your best application.

## Notes from our policy

It is against our Equal Opportunities and Equality Policy to discriminate, either directly or indirectly, on the grounds of race, nationality, ethnic origin, gender, marital status, pregnancy, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, ethnicity, cultural or religious beliefs. We will also ensure that no applicant receives less favourable treatment than another on the grounds of marital status, parental status, caring responsibilities, or hours of work and that no applicant is placed at an unjustifiable disadvantage by requirements or conditions which have a disproportionately adversely effect on a particular group.

# Disability Confident Employer

We are proud to share that we become a Disability Confident Employer as part of the government's [Disability Confident Scheme](#).

The government scheme exists to support businesses by encouraging them to review how they think about disability, and to act on how they attract, recruit, retain, and develop employees with disabilities.

At Red Balloon Educational Trust, we value the incredible contribution and talent that people with disabilities can and do bring to our workplace. Achieving Disability Confident Employer status is part of our ongoing commitment to fostering an inclusive workplace where everyone can thrive.

As you'd expect, we really understand the importance of different voices, experiences, perspectives and backgrounds. Our teams are no different and we strongly encourage applications from members of minority groups and all sections of the community to apply.

We are a Disability Confident employer and offer a guaranteed interview for any disabled applicant who may wish to take up this offer, where they meet the minimum requirements for the role.

If you would like to apply in an alternative format such as a video or alternative method, please get in touch with us and we will ensure that you can submit your application.

“When I become physically disabled in my late 20’s, I thought my career was over as I no longer had the stamina to carry out a full-time role due to chronic pain and had days where I was unable to “clock on” by a certain time due to painful sleepless nights. The flexibility I am able to have with my part-time hours within the Operations team at Red Balloon means that I can still do a job I love, that I can work around my disabilities, for an organisation that really cares about its team and who has an incredible purpose supporting young people”.

Operations Lead  
Red Balloon Educational Trust

# Our Recruitment and Selection Process

We want to find the right person for the right job so they can really make an impact, and ensure they feel happy in their role so they're excited to come to work each day.

Our recruitment and selection process is designed to ensure that we select the most suitable person for the job in respect of skills, experience and qualifications. We also take into account candidates' longer-term career goals and aspirations and how they could support the strategic objectives of the Centre in the future. This is to make sure our chosen candidate has the ability to make a positive contribution to the values and aims of the organisation.

## Our Job Descriptions

Our job descriptions are a key document in our recruitment and selection process. All job descriptions will clearly and accurately set out the duties and responsibilities of the job role. If something's unclear, or you'd like more information then get in touch - we want you to have everything you need to make an informed application.

## Our Person Specifications

Our person specification is of equal importance to the job description and informs the selection decision. It details the skills, experience, qualifications, abilities and expertise that are required to do the job. It will be specific, related to the job, and not unnecessarily restrictive.

The person specification forms the basis of the selection decision and enables the selection panel to ensure objectivity in their selection.

# How to Apply

Well, you've read a little bit about us - now it's over to you!

In line with safer recruitment practices, we are only able to accept applications via our application forms, which can be accessed by following the application link for the role you are applying for, via the specific application pack, or via our website.

Our forms can be saved and come back to at any point. If you're unable to complete it and need some support, and/or you need our documents in an alternative format, for example, large print, please get in touch with [admin@rbair.org.uk](mailto:admin@rbair.org.uk) who will be able to help and advise.

All candidates for all of our posts, including internal applicants, will be asked to complete our standard application form, in order that all applicants can be judged on comparable information.

Unless our advert requests it, we won't accept CVs. We're looking for some specific information that we want to ask you about so we need you to complete an application form for the role on offer.

## Our Interview Process

Interviews are scheduled as soon after the closing date as reasonably possible, and specific details are within each job advert. If you are shortlisted for an interview you will be notified by email or phone call. If you have provided your email address, we will normally contact you this way. We also ensure that we communicate with applicants who have not been shortlisted.

Red Balloon of the Air is an England wide charity, with our Central Services team based in Cambridgeshire. This means that, depending on the role, our interviews may be carried out virtually to allow the most appropriate members of staff to attend. We will always endeavour to give candidates the opportunity to visit the Centre they are applying to work for and meet the local staff prior to accepting an offer of employment.

# Confirmation of Right to Work in the UK

We have a legal responsibility to ensure that you have the right to work in the UK, therefore if you are given an offer of employment you will be subject to the submission of the appropriate documentation evidencing your right to work.

It is essential that we apply the same criteria to every person who is offered employment with us, regardless of race, nationality, or ethnic or national origins, and therefore this check will be undertaken for all new employees offered employment with us.

## Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment

Red Balloon of the Air is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, and we require the successful candidate to commit to this. The person appointed will be subjected to an enhanced DBS check.



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We wanted to get a Red Balloon school set up in my town, but I was suffering from PTSD and unable to leave the house. Luckily, it was around that time they set up an online programme called Red Balloon of the Air. They gave me a laptop which I could use to access online sessions, and I can honestly say I learned more from one lesson of Red Balloon than I did from the whole of comprehensive.

More than that, though, it was a way to move back to normality. It was a way to keep up with my education at a time when nobody else would offer it. I continued Red Balloon until securing a place at a special school, where I slowly expanded my timetable from one hour a week to full time.

”

-Jack,

Former Red Balloon of the Air  
student

# APPLICANT PRIVACY

We are committed to being clear and transparent about how we will collect and use applicants' data and meet our data protection obligations. During the recruitment process, we will collect and process personal data relating to job applicants. You can find out more about how we store your data in our privacy policy on our website.

**Red Balloon of the Air  
Willow Lodge  
37 High Street  
Milton, Cambridge  
CB24 6DF**

**Telephone: 01223 354338  
Email: [admin@rbair.org.uk](mailto:admin@rbair.org.uk)**

**Charity no: 1109606**

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