



# Red Balloon of the Air

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

## Student-focused provision

Red Balloon of the Air is a blended online and in-person therapeutic education programme for children and young people who are out of school and unable to attend due to Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA). They may have been bullied, have physical or mental ill-health, or have social or personal needs that are unable to be met in a mainstream school environment.

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.

The aim is to raise their self-esteem, get their education and personal development back on track, and build the resilience and skills needed to successfully reintegrate with their peers. Ultimately, we want to help students get back on an academic track so they can return to education or move on to college or work.

## Who are our students?

Most Red Balloon 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 be at Red Balloon and will attend regularly
- they want to learn and make academic progress
- they will behave with respect and consideration to other students, the staff, the property and any pets we might have

# What makes Red Balloon of the Air different?



## Online and in person

A blended mix of real-time online and in-person sessions allow us to meet the individual needs of our students at every stage of their journey with us. Whether they are unable to leave their bedrooms, or preparing to move on to mainstream school, our sessions can be delivered in a way that best suits each student, their goals, and their current progress.



## An integrated approach

The strength of our programme is its holistic approach. Our highly qualified and experienced staff provide wellbeing and therapy to support students' mental health and to help them re-engage with the wider world. All staff are interested in and actively involved in the wellbeing of all students, and mental health support and personal development are an integral part of the entire day, not just restricted to designated therapy sessions.

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.



## Tailored learning

Our students follow an individualised timetable of lessons, alongside our effective and carefully planned wellbeing curriculum. Lessons are with qualified teachers, who plan individualised teaching to suit the needs and interests of each child. As the relationships with their teachers develop, students become more confident and resilient learners and build the skills they need to successfully return to education, work or further training.

We provide academic teaching from Entry Level to GCSE in core subjects and offer our students PSHEE and Careers Guidance.





## Small class sizes

Whether online or in person, 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 know returning to a school is a source of anxiety for our students, so our student hubs are purposefully based in houses so that they do not feel like traditional schools. We want our students to feel comfortable and safe when with us, so we strive to make our locations as homely as possible. We have a casual dress code and staff are called by their first names.



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

## 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 over 20 years' experience of supporting vulnerable young people in Red Balloon Centres in Cambridge, Reading, Norwich, North West London and Worthing, as well as our blended provision, Red Balloon of the Air. Nearly 1300 students have benefited from our academic, personal and social development programmes since we began back in 1996.



# 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 [www.redballoonlearner.org/RBAir-info](http://www.redballoonlearner.org/RBAir-info)

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



RBAir is part of Red Balloon Educational Trust  
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Red Balloon 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.