



**Red Balloon**  
**LEARNER CENTRES**  
For the recovery of bullied children

Red Balloon Learner Centres

For the recovery of severely  
bullied and traumatised children

# Red Balloon – Cambridge



## Coordinator's welcome

Red Balloon Learner Centres, established in 1996, offer a combined educational and therapeutic programme in a small community setting for children and young people who have self-excluded from school because of severe bullying or other trauma. We aim to:

- raise students' self-esteem;
- get them back on an academic track;
- prepare them for return to mainstream education, employment or training.

Red Balloon - Cambridge opened in 1996. We provide for up to 16 students. We seek to develop a community in which all members (staff and students) support each other to learn and to develop the interpersonal skills that they will require to succeed beyond Red Balloon.

You are very welcome to visit us and see what we offer.



Jess Lechner,  
Coordinator

## Admissions

Children and young people aged 11 to 17 who have self-excluded from school can be admitted provided that:

- there is a place available;
  - we consider we can provide for the student's academic, wellbeing, social and physical needs;
- and the student:
- wants to come and will attend regularly;
  - wants to learn and make academic progress;
  - will behave with respect and consideration towards the other students, the staff, visitors and the property.

## What students study

Each student has an individualised programme which includes sessions in academic subjects, creative arts, wellbeing and personal development. Some of these are one-to-one and some are group sessions. This programme is devised in consultation with the student and the staff.

All students follow the core curriculum of maths, English, science, PSHEE, humanities and technology. Creative arts, including music, art, pottery and drama, are also on offer, and we try to enable students to study in other areas if they are of particular interest to them.



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The wellbeing curriculum, developed by Red Balloon, covers the themes of 'Self', 'Others' and 'The World'. It aims to help students become more confident, self-aware, empathetic and to be able to manage their emotions and behaviour. We encourage a healthy lifestyle. While there are some discrete sessions, such as therapy or counselling, Circle Time and life skills, wellbeing is embedded throughout the school day and within any extracurricular activities.

### Qualifications and transition

At KS4, students can take GCSEs in English, maths, science, history, art, computing, modern foreign languages and food technology. Entry Level qualifications in English, maths and science as well as a range of ASDAN qualifications are also available to all students.

When a student has recovered their self-esteem and re-engaged with academic work, they will be able to leave Red Balloon and return to mainstream school, employment or training. Care is taken to identify the next step for each student in consultation with their parents or carers, and to ensure that our provision prepares them for that, not only academically, but also with regard to social skills.

### Practical details

The Centre opens at 09:00 and closes at 16:00. Sessions begin at 09:15 and end at 15:30. There is one short break in the morning. Lunch break is from 12:30 to 13:30.

Students do not have to wear a uniform, although we do expect them to dress appropriately.

### Staff

We employ a range of teachers and wellbeing staff as well as an administrator and a housekeeper. The Centre is managed by the coordinator, Jess Lechner, together with her deputy Sarah Phelps and curriculum coordinator, Chris Lofts.

*Red Balloon is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and requires all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Our designated safeguarding lead person is Jess Lechner.*

### Additional information

The Red Balloon charity has its own website ([www.redballoonlearner.org](http://www.redballoonlearner.org)).

Details about the charity and all its policies, including safeguarding and complaints, are provided there. There is a page dedicated to the Cambridge Centre. If you anticipate difficulties in accessing a Centre, then please ask the coordinator about Red Balloon of the Air, our distance learning provision.



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**Flis:** *Red Balloon has a great atmosphere and I feel included. It's helped me so much to get my life back and feel like I have a place in the world again. All the people are lovely and being here helps me realise that I can do more than I ever thought. Red Balloon doesn't give up on people!*



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**We help local authorities meet their statutory responsibility to provide a full-time education.**

# If you'd like to know more...

Please contact us at:

Coordinator: *Jess Lechner MA*  
Proprietor: *Dr Carrie Herbert MBE*  
Chair of Trustees: *Mike Frankl*

Red Balloon – Cambridge  
Herbert House  
57 Warkworth Terrace  
Cambridge CB1 1EE

☎ 01223 357714

✉ [admin@cambridge.rblc.org.uk](mailto:admin@cambridge.rblc.org.uk)

Find us on:

   RedBalloonLCG

 [www.carrieherbert.wordpress.com](http://www.carrieherbert.wordpress.com)

Stay informed:

Sign up for the Red Balloon e-newsletter at  
[admin@group.rblc.org.uk](mailto:admin@group.rblc.org.uk)



All Centre policies are available on our website

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



**Alex:** *Red Balloon feels like a second family, a second home. It is relaxed and good fun. Lessons are very enjoyable – I enjoy them all! In short, Red Balloon is an amazing place.*