

# Newsletter

Dear Parents/Carers,

As we move closer to the end of the school year, there is much to celebrate and look forward to across RBAir. This issue of our newsletter includes updates on recent events, important reminders, and upcoming activities for our learners and families. Our learners are currently working hard on their exams, and we are incredibly proud of the focus, resilience and determination they have shown throughout this busy period.

As always, please take the time to read through the newsletter for important updates, celebrations and news from across the RBAir community.

Hannah Curry  
Head of Centre

## Annual Surveys

We would like to offer you the opportunity to tell us about your experiences of Red Balloon of the Air via a short online questionnaire. We strive to ensure that our provision offers appropriate support to learners and their families and as such we value all feedback.

The questionnaire is anonymous, giving you the space to be open and honest. However, if you have any concerns about our provision or your young person, please do not hesitate to contact our Head of Centre, Hannah Curry, by email ([hannah.curry@rbair.org.uk](mailto:hannah.curry@rbair.org.uk)) or telephone 01223 354338.



[Link to Annual Survey](#)



We have also sent a short questionnaire to learners via Arbor. This is also anonymous, and we are keen to hear about their time at Red Balloon of the Air.

Please click the link to the parent/carer questionnaire; we would be grateful if you would complete it by **8 June** at the latest. Thank you!

## Mobile Phone Usage at RBAir

Please refer to the attached letter for full details regarding updated national guidance and our proposed approach to mobile phone use at RBAir. In line with recent Department for Education expectations, schools and alternative providers are expected to operate as mobile phone-free environments by default, with exceptions only made where there is a clearly identified need, such as SEND, medical, disability or safeguarding reasons.

The attached letter explains how RBAir will implement this guidance in a way that reflects the needs of our learners and remains consistent with our safeguarding, behaviour and SEND frameworks. As an Alternative Provider, we recognise the importance of taking a careful and individualised approach to any changes, ensuring that support is proportionate and appropriate to each learner.

We have also shared a draft RBAir Mobile Phone Use Policy, which is now open for consultation during the May half-term period. We welcome feedback from parents and carers and encourage you to review the policy and discuss it with your young person. Any comments can be shared with us during the half-term break. Please email me directly on [hannah.curry@rbair.org.uk](mailto:hannah.curry@rbair.org.uk).

Further updates will be provided following the consultation period once feedback has been reviewed and any amendments agreed.

### Exams

We are delighted with the fantastic attitude learners have shown as exams get underway at Willow Lodge and Danbury. They have been working incredibly hard, and we are proud of how positively and maturely learners are approaching this important time



Results Day at Willow Lodge is **Thursday 20th August**. Willow Lodge will be open to candidates and families for results collection from **9:30am–11:00am**, with results also being **emailed from 10:00am**.

To receive results by email, please make sure you complete the **Email for Release of Results Form** that was sent to you on **27th April**.

If you have any exam-related questions, please do not hesitate to contact:

[gosia.krolak@rbair.org.uk](mailto:gosia.krolak@rbair.org.uk) (Willow Lodge) or  
[samantha.coles@rbair.org.uk](mailto:samantha.coles@rbair.org.uk) (Danbury) directly.

## Subject Discussions and Timetables

It's been a valuable experience connecting with so many of you recently to chat about your young person's subject preferences. These conversations have given us useful insights – not just about which subjects interest them, but also about what's happening in their lives right now and how we can best support their learning journey.

Behind the scenes, our Timetable Manager has been working hard to create individual timetables that will work for each young person. We've carefully balanced your young person's preferences with what's realistic and practical for the whole of RBAir's community, making sure every learner gets the support they need to thrive.

### What happens next ...

Your young person's new timetable will be shared with you by the end of this half term, ready to start on **Monday 1st June**.

Once you've had a chance to look it over, please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions. Your young person's **Link Mentor** is your **first point of contact** and will be happy to talk things through with you.

Thank you so much for your continued partnership in supporting your young person's education – it really does make all the difference.

Ali Bigglestone

## Nut-free Zone



Due to severe nut allergies within our community, we are now officially a nut-free zone. This includes all tree nuts and nut products such as peanuts, almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, cashews, pistachios, pecans, Brazil nuts, macadamia nuts and pine nuts.

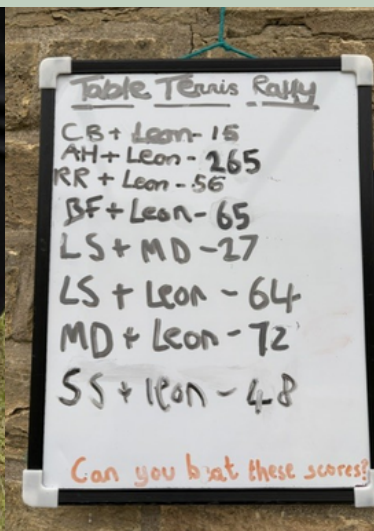
We kindly ask everyone to avoid bringing any products containing nuts into Willow Lodge to help us maintain a safe environment for all.

Thank you for your understanding, support and cooperation in keeping everyone safe.

# RBAR

It has been a wonderful and busy half term, filled with exciting enrichment activities for our learners! From outdoor games to hands-on animal encounters, here is a look at what we have been up to and what is coming next.

## Highlights from this half term



### Willow Lounge Fun

We have been making full use of our new outdoor games collection during our Willow Lounge sessions.

### Table Tennis Competition

The energy is high as our ongoing table tennis rally competition continues to challenge our learners.



### Mini Hoof

Last week, we were delighted to host a Mini Hoof event with two wonderful mini ponies. Our young people enjoyed an informative talk filled with interesting facts about ponies, the importance of animal care and welfare, and the positive benefits animals can have on our health and wellbeing.

We all then had the opportunity to groom, stroke and lead rein the ponies around the garden - and the ponies even helped us out by 'mowing' the lawn!

# Looking Ahead

The excitement continues into next term with a packed schedule, including:

## Picnic at Milton Country Park

Wednesday 3 June 1:10 - 3pm

Sign up via Arbor between 22 May and 2 June.

## Cambridge Golf Driving Range

Wednesday 10 June 2 - 3pm

Sign up via Arbor between 3 - 9<sup>th</sup> June.

There will be more events taking place over the coming weeks, so please look out for further details on Arbor.

We will also be ending the academic year with a **Celebratory Party** at Willow Lodge on **Wednesday 8 July** - further details will be shared next half term.

Thank you for your continued support in making these experiences possible for our learners!



**Picnic**  
at  
**MILTON**  
COUNTRY PARK

WEDNESDAY 3<sup>RD</sup> JUNE  
1.10 - 3PM

PLEASE BRING YOUR OWN FOOD AND DRINK

PLAY TABLE TENNIS

FEED THE DUCKS

HAVE AN ICE CREAM

PLEASE SIGN UP ON ARBOR IF YOU WANT TO COME!



WEDNESDAY 10 JUNE | 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM

**CAMBRIDGE**  
GOLF DRIVING RANGE

**SHARPEN YOUR SWING!**

Whether you are a complete beginner or a seasoned pro, come down and hit some balls with us.

It is the perfect chance to practice your technique, de-stress, and enjoy the game.

**THE DETAILS**

WHERE: Cambridge Golf Driving Range

WHEN: Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> June

TIME: 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM

**SIGN UP ON ARBOR**

# Curious Connections

## Exploring Our Connected World: Globalisation in Curious Connections

This half term, we have been diving into the fascinating topic of globalisation – discovering how our world is more interconnected than ever before. We have explored several key themes that help us understand how globalisation shapes our daily lives.

### How the World is Shrinking

We investigated how advances in technology, transport and communication have made it easier for people, goods and ideas to move around the world – bringing us all closer together.

### The Journey of Jeans

By tracing the lifecycle of a pair of jeans, from cotton fields to factory floors to shop shelves, learners gained insight into global supply chains and how a single product can connect multiple countries and continents.

### Food Production and Supply Chains

We examined where our food comes from and the complex networks that bring it to our tables.

This helped us understand the environmental, economic and social impacts of our food choices. Our in-Centre group visited The Longhorn Farmshop in Oakington where we sampled some local (and some not-so-local) produce!

### The UK's Imports and Exports

We explored what the UK buys from and sells to other countries, developing our understanding of international trade and the UK's place in the global economy.

### The Drivers of Globalisation

Finally, we looked at the key factors that have accelerated globalisation – from technological innovation to international agreements – helping us understand the 'why' behind these global connections.

Understanding globalisation helps our young people make sense of the world around them. It encourages them to think critically about where products come from, how different countries depend on each other, and their own role as global citizens.

### Conversation Starters for Home

Why not continue learning at home? Here are some questions you might ask yourselves:

- 'Can we find three things in our home that were made in different countries?'
- 'What's the longest journey we think our dinner has taken to reach our table?'
- 'How do we think the world would be different without the internet or aeroplanes?'

## Elsa's Craft Stall



One of our learners, Elsa, recently ran a fundraising craft stall in the Community Room as part of her Silver Arts Award Leadership Project. Throughout the week, learners, staff and families enjoyed browsing and buying a range of handmade items, including sea-glass earrings, mosaic tea light holders and embroidered tote bags, all created by Elsa herself. The stall raised funds in support of Red Balloon of the Air.

It was lovely to see the RBAir community getting behind Elsa's creativity and effort, and she should be really proud of the time, care and enthusiasm she put into the project.



## RBAir Event for Past & Present Learners

We are delighted to welcome **past and present learners**, along with their families and friends from the RBAir community, to a special Open House event on

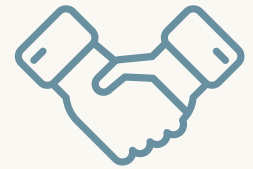
**Wednesday 24th June 2026  
from 3pm to 5pm.**

This exciting afternoon offers the opportunity to explore our newly renovated building and garden, reconnect with staff and friends old and new, and enjoy light refreshments in a warm and welcoming atmosphere, with a selection of our learners' artwork also on display. Please call our Admin Team if you would like to come along **(01223 354338)**.

We look forward to celebrating the RBAir community with you and sharing this special occasion together.



# PSHE Topics: Summer 2



If you have any concerns or questions about any of the topics we'll be working on, please do not hesitate to contact [elaine.beattie@rbair.org.uk](mailto:elaine.beattie@rbair.org.uk), our Head of PSHE. Elaine will be happy to talk to you and guide you through the sessions in more detail.

## Year 8: Cyber Crime & Online Fraud

- **Cyber Crime 1** – an exploration of why someone might become involved, how to assess the risks and make the right decisions in relation to online crime.
- **Cyber Crime 2** – an exploration of the impact of online crime for the victim and the perpetrator and how and where to seek support.
- **Understanding Fraud 1** – learning about the different types of fraud, how to identify them, and the possible consequences.
- **Understanding Fraud 2** – Exploring the importance of online safety strategies to protect us from fraud and keep our personal data secure.

## Year 9: Financial Literacy

- **Opening a Bank Account** – the importance of having a bank account, steps to opening an account, and the advantages and disadvantages of different types of account.
- **Bank Statements** – the purpose of bank statements, understanding the sections and language, and different ways to track our finances.
- **Saving Money** – exploring the different ways to save money and creating a savings plan.
- **Using Bank Cards** – understanding the difference between debit and credit cards, credit card payment options and how to make informed spending decisions.

## Year 10: Financial Literacy

- **Managing Debt** – the difference between 'good' and 'bad' debt, how borrowing works and different ways of borrowing.
- **Take-Home Pay** – Understanding the main salary deductions, the key elements of a payslip and how income tax is calculated.
- **Budgeting for the Future** – The difference between financial needs and wants, the purpose of budgeting and applying a budgeting framework.
- **Savings Accounts** – exploring different ways to save for the future, different savings products and how to calculate interest for savings accounts.

## Year 11: Living Responsibly

- **What's so Great About Democracy?** - an exploration of the different types of government around the world and the importance of democracy.
- **Voting and Elections** – the voting systems in the UK and around the world.
- **Being a Responsible Driver 1** – an exploration of the personal responsibilities young people have when travelling and how to manage the risks involved.
- **Being a Responsible Driver 2** – an exploration of online insurance fraud and the importance of making positive choices as a driver and vehicle owner.

## Post-16: Planning for the Future

- **Making the Most of the Money We Have** – making informed decisions about how to save and invest money for the future.
- **Starting a Business** – the ways people can start their own business, the challenges and rewards, and making informed decisions about future careers.
- **Careers in a Global Economy** – how the global market and world politics affect our lives and the things we're able to do.
- **Creating Influence** – Volunteering – identifying the types of volunteering, and the benefits for both individual growth and the community.

## Upcoming Events

### Open Garden

**We hope to see you all at the Red Balloon Open Garden this year!**

On the **6th and 7th of June**, our founder, Carrie Herbert, will be opening her Cambridge garden in support of Red Balloon for the **last time**.



**Open Garden**

49 NEW SQUARE  
CAMBRIDGE CB1 1EZ

10am - 5pm

Saturday & Sunday  
6th-7th June 2026

Free entry and refreshments

All proceeds to  
Red Balloon  
Educational Trust

By visiting our garden and donating you will support the recovery of children and young people in our Red Balloon Learner Centres who are missing education, having self-excluded from mainstream school because of severe bullying, mental health problems or trauma.

Registered charity no: 1109606

The beautiful garden at **49 New Square, Cambridge CB1 1EZ** will be open again in aid of the charity Red Balloon, which began its work here in 1996.

Children will enjoy seeking out the frogs, newts and fish in the ponds, and watching the bees go in and out of the hive.

If you have been before, you will notice quite a few changes. Come and enjoy this hidden gem, have a drink and a biscuit / piece of cake, and hear about the work of our charity.

By coming to the garden you will be supporting the recovery of children who, having experienced traumatic events, are too anxious for the time being to attend mainstream school.

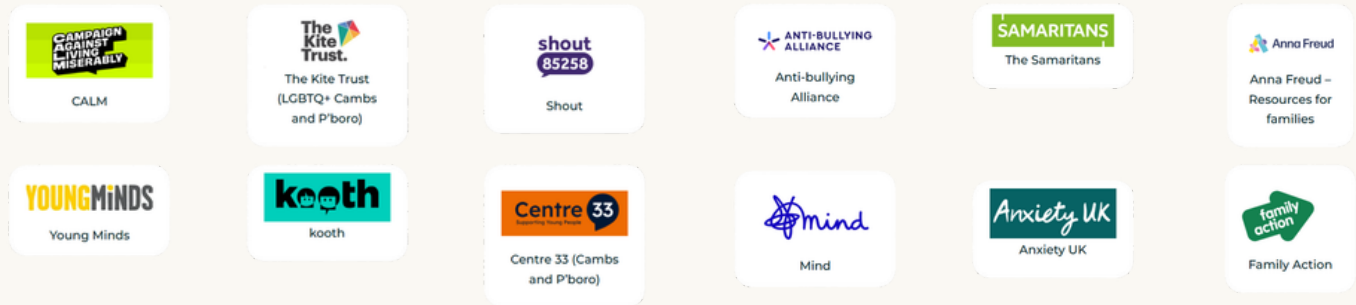
For more information please visit:

[www.redballoonlearner.org/news-events](http://www.redballoonlearner.org/news-events)

## Additional Support

We understand that young people and their parent(s)/carer(s) often experience difficult challenges in life, and that finding the right support is not always easy.

Please visit our Additional Support page on our [website](#) for a list of organisations that may be able to help.



## Term Dates Reminder

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### Term Dates 2025-6

#### Summer Term 2026

Monday 13th April – Friday 10th July

**Half Term: Monday 25th May – Friday 29th May**

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### Term Dates 2026-7

#### Autumn Term 2026

Monday 7th September – Friday 11th December

Half Term: Monday 26th October – Friday 30th October

Staff Training: Wednesday 2nd September, Thursday 3rd September, Friday 4th September

#### Spring Term 2027

Tuesday 5th January – Thursday 25th March

Good Friday Bank Holiday: Friday 26th March

Half Term: Monday 15th February – Friday 19th February

Staff Training: Monday 4th January

#### Summer Term 2027

Tuesday 13th April – Friday 16th July

Early May Bank Holiday: Monday 3rd May

Half Term: Monday 31st May – Friday 4th June

Staff Training: Monday 12th April

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**From all of us here, we wish you a wonderful and restful half-term holiday. Enjoy the break, and we look forward to seeing you all when we return.**