

John Ray Times

Our Core Values: Hope, Perseverance, Trust, Courage, Respect, Responsibility





5th January 2026

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@ facebook.com/johnraycompassps

Online learning links

 Accelerated Reader	 Century Tech	 TTRockstars	 Nessy
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Links for permission for children in Y5 and Y6 to bring in a mobile phone: [Request to bring in a mobile phone](#)

Links for permission for children in Y5 and Y6 to walk home alone: [Permission to walk home alone](#)

For uniform orders visit: [Absolute Embroidery](#). or visit the shop at 286 Broad Road, Braintree, Essex, CM7 5NW

For information on Food Bank vouchers email: mkeegan@compassps.uk

For second hand uniform requests email: rcottee@compassps.uk

Breakfast club queries email: hwiltshire@compassps.uk

School dinner menus are on our website:

New Autumn/Winter Menus:

We're excited to launch our new Autumn/Winter menus this term!

You can view the updated menus below, and they're also available on our school website.

05.01.26 [Week 1](#) , 12.01.26 [Week 2](#) , 19.01.26 [Week 3](#)

A Message from our catering provider, Chartwells:

At Chartwells, we're passionate about fuelling every child's learning with meals that are tasty, nutritious, and sustainable. Our menus are designed to make smart nutritional choices, meeting – and exceeding – the UK Government's School Food Standards.

To view the Chartwells Parent Information Leaflet, please [click here](#).

The cost for a school meal is now £2.50 and is payable on your MCAS App. If you think that your child may be entitled to free school meals, please contact Mrs Wiltshire in the school office.

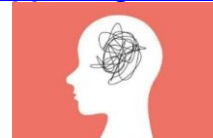
[Zones of Regulation](#)



[School Attendance Difficulties](#)



[Supporting Anxiety](#)



[My Happy Mind Parent App](#)

To access these materials just go to <https://myhappymind.org/parent-resources> We will send out a separate letter with the access code to enable you to access these at home.

Dance Days Workshops

We are looking forward to welcoming Dance Days back to school this week. Previously, the children have thoroughly enjoyed these sessions and use the skills to create dances over the coming weeks in their PE lessons. Please ensure that children wear their PE kit to school for these sessions. Children will be taking part in workshops on the following days:

Wednesday 07.01.26 Y5 & Y6

Friday 09.01.26 Y3 & Y4

Children will still need to wear PE kits on their usual PE days.

Hemisphere project

John Ray Juniors is taking part in a project, along with other Compass schools, to identify ways in which we can better support our pupils and families. Part of this involves completing training about racial literacy with Hemisphere Education about racial literacy. To understand the training's impact, we are asking students to take a short survey about their experiences and sense of belonging.

- Anonymous: The survey is anonymous, and no one at the school will see individual responses.
- Voluntary: Taking the survey is optional, and pupils can choose whether to participate.
- Timing: The survey will be done during the school day this week.

If you don't want your child to take the survey, please email class teachers by 3pm on 06.01.26.

Year 6 SATs question of the week

Here is a question worth 1 mark from the Reasoning paper.

Write these in order of size, starting with the smallest.

$\frac{3}{4}$

0.34

0.7

43%

smallest

Autumn term attendance

Last term, 111 of the children (26% of the school) achieved 100% attendance.

School attendance for the term was 94.8% which is broadly in line with the national average. Year group attendance is as follows:

Y3: 95.4%

Y4: 94.7%

Y5: 94.4%

Y6: 94.7%

Is my child too ill for school?

The NHS has produced useful information to support parents when deciding if their child is too ill to attend school. Information can be found on the NHS website.

[NHS- Is my child too ill for school?](#)

SEN Local Offer

Our SEN Local Offer is amended and published at the end of each academic year. It has the information on provision and processes across the school and the SENCo contact details: [John Ray Junior School - SEND Local Offer \(compassps.uk\)](mailto:John.Ray@compassps.uk).

SEND Local Offer Newsletter

There are lots of activities and events for children with SEND on the Essex Local Offer and from the Local Offer website – sign up here to read more: [Stay up to date with the Essex Local Offer newsletter | Essex Local Offer.](#)

This includes our New POP Essex website and location: [POP Essex • SEN Stay & Play And Respite In Braintree, Essex \(pop-essex.org\)](http://pop-essex.org).

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS

Don't forget we would love to hear about any children who have been awarded badges or certificates for activities they do outside of school. Please email class teachers with your child's achievements.

Our next celebration assembly will be **Monday 12th January 2026**.

Stars of the Week

Each week, class teachers will choose a member of their class to be star of the week. Children who are chosen will have their name added in this section of the newsletter. Stars of the week from before Christmas will be on next week's newsletter.

PE days

Children need to come into school on PE days in their PE kit. Children will need an outdoor PE kit i.e., black tracksuit bottoms (or shorts in warmer weather), white T-shirt and a black fleece / tracksuit top.

We are noticing more children coming to school on PE days in wear that is not PE uniform. Please ensure that children have a plain white T-shirt and black shorts or tracksuit bottoms. We may ask children to change into any spare PE that we have in school if they do not come to school dressed appropriately.

PE days for each class are:

Monday: 4B, 4CB, 3W, 6G
Tuesday: Y5, 3P, 3B, 3C
Wednesday: Y4, 6R, 6O, 6L
Thursday: Y3, 5B, 5E, 5C
Friday: Y6, 4J, 4T, 5W

Please remember that children must remove earrings to participate in PE lessons. Taping over earrings is not permitted.

PE kit is black joggers / shorts and a black hoodie or sweatshirt with a white T shirt along with trainers.

We expect that children will either wear one of the black John Ray logo hoodies from our supplier or a plain black hoodie/sweatshirt and plain black joggers on the two days a week that your child has PE.

CASHBACK WHEN SHOPPING ONLINE

The Friends of JRI and JRJ have created a cash back account through **Easy Fundraising**. This is a fantastic way to raise much needed extra funds to support both schools.

The link below can be used for you to register:

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/invite/47ha4n/>

Once registered, for ease, you can download the app. Every time you shop from the app, across over 4000 online retailers, our schools earn cash back. It's free to join and includes top names like EBay, Argos, Iceland and John Lewis. You can share this link with friends and family members too. A letter with more information can be found on our [website](#).

Safeguarding

Are you worried about a child?

As a school, we consider safeguarding to be a priority. We welcome parents and carers talking openly to us about their concerns for the safeguarding of children and families. **Remember, safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.** If you have any concerns about a child, you can contact one of our Designated Safeguarding Leads via the school office. Please ask to speak to Karen Harrison, Rachel Cottee or Meriel Keegan and specify that you have a safeguarding concern. If you are worried about a child or young person, you can call the NSPCC helpline for support and advice for free on [0800 800 5000](tel:08008005000). If a child is in immediate danger, you should call 999.

Children can call [Childline](#) at any time on [0800 1111](tel:08001111)



National Online Safety: What parents and carers need to know about AI toys

AI-driven toys are becoming increasingly common, offering children personalised interactions that can feel surprisingly lifelike. This guide unpacks how these toys listen, learn, and respond – and what that means for privacy, security, and healthy development. From data collection to the subtle influence of artificial voices, it highlights why adults may need to look more closely at the tech inside modern playthings.

It also explores how features such as constant connectivity, engagement-boosting rewards, and behaviour-shaping responses can affect children's play habits. Alongside outlining the risks, the guide shares calm, practical advice to help parents and educators set boundaries, check permissions, and balance AI toys with offline experiences, ensuring AI remains a support for real-world interactions, not a substitute for them.

www.nationalonlinesafety.com

CLASS TEACHERS' EMAIL ADDRESSES

We understand that for many people email is a quick and efficient way of communicating and we are therefore happy to provide class teachers' email addresses. Although email is a quick and easy way for parents to communicate with staff, matters that require urgent attention should be communicated via the school office. Staff are not expected to respond to emails after 5pm, during weekends/holidays or when off work due to sickness. [A parental agreement relating to email communication with teachers is available from the school office or on our website under the communication tab.](#)

Year 3	Year 4
3C: cwaspe1@compassps.uk 3B: dbanks@compassps.uk 3P: sphillips@compassps.uk 3W: zwatson@compassps.uk	4B: pwatts@compassps.uk , jbird@compassps.uk 4CB: hcollier-brown@compassps.uk 4J: jbrennan@compassps.uk 4T: tbeeson@compassps.uk , kbreen@compassps.uk
Year 5	Year 6

5B: hbreeze@compassps.uk 5E: cellis@compassps.uk 5C: dcasey@compassps.uk 5W: awilson1@compassps.uk, rcottee@compassps.uk	6G: ngibson@compassps.uk 6L: jlarbalestier@compassps.uk 6O: cosullivan1@compassps.uk 6R: rroberts@compassps.uk
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Please contact class teachers in the first instance to resolve any issues. Should you feel you need to escalate the issue, please contact:

Miss Coffee (Assistant Head) if your child is in Y5 or Y6 – rcottee@compassps.uk

Mrs Breen (Assistant Head) if your child is in Y3 or Y4 – kbreen@compassps.uk

RECENT LETTERS INCLUDING NEWSLETTERS – MANY OF OUR LETTERS ARE AVAILABLE ON THE WEBSITE

All communication will be sent through Bromcom. Please ensure that you have given us a current email address. Issues with Bromcom communication should be emailed [to jrcontact@compassps.uk](mailto:jrcontact@compassps.uk)

- 18.07.25 [School meal cost](#) (all year groups)
- 06.10.25 [Gemma's Farm Visit](#) (Y3 only)
- 14.10.25 [Autumn Term Learning Conference](#)
- 15.10.25 [Scroogical pantomime](#) (all year groups)
- 22.10.25 [Proposal to reduce the Published Admission Number](#)

Dates for the academic year 2024-2025 (new dates in red)

[Please see the website for the term dates](#)

Spring term	Summer term
05.01.26 Non Pupil day 06.01.26 Children return to school 07.01.26 Y5 & Y6 Dance Days workshops (children to wear PE kit to school) 09.01.26 Y3 & Y4 Dance Days workshops (children to wear PE kit to school) 12.01.26 After school clubs start 22.01.26 Young Voices at the O2 03.02.26 SEND tea and chat 04.02.26 Enhanced one planning for specific children 05.02.26 In class individual photos (<i>Children having PE today should bring their PE kit in a separate bag</i>) 09.02.26-15.02.25 Children's mental health week 10.02.26 Safer internet day 16.02.26 Half term week 05.03.26 World book day (<i>Children are invited to dress as a book character or bring in a prop from a book</i>) 09.03.26 Science week 11.03.26 Learning conferences 3:40 – 6:00 12.03.26 Learning conferences 3:40 – 6:30 23.03.26 Last week for clubs 24.03.26 Y5 and Y6 to walk to St Michael's church for an Easter service (<i>This takes place in school time and is for</i>	13.04.26 Children return to school 20.04.26 First week of after school clubs 11.05.26 SATs week 20.05.26 Sports day (<i>Y5 / 6 in the morning, Y3 / Y4 in the afternoon, picnic 12-12:45</i>) 25.05.26 Half term week 01.06.26 Multiplication check for 3 weeks (Y4 only) 02.06.26 Enhanced and focussed one plans 03.06.26 reserve sports day in case of poor weather 08.06.26 - 10.06.26 Mersea residential for Y6 22.06.26 Secondary school transition week (schools will choose their own dates) 26.06.25 School fete after school 29.06.26 Last week of after school clubs 01.07.26 Class photos (<i>Children having PE today should bring their PE kit in a separate bag</i>) 09.07.26 Annual reports sent out 30.06.26 Children to spend time with new teacher 08.07.26 Open afternoon 3:30-4:30 14.07.26 Y6 production for 6L and 6R 1:30 and 4:30 15.07.26 Y6 production for 6O and 6G 1:30 and 4:30 16.07.26 Last day of term for children

staff and children only. Children should wear suitable shoes for walking)
 27.03.26- SEND tea and chat
 27.03.25 PTA Break the rules day
 27.03.26 Last day of term

At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit nationalcollege.com.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about AI TOYS

This festive season, the newest toys on the shelves do not just blink or make noise; they listen. Many now come with artificial intelligence (AI), allowing them to talk, learn, and even respond to a child's emotions. These toys can be educational and engaging, but they also collect, store, and process information. This guide explains what that means for families and why it matters.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

TOYS THAT LISTEN AND LEARN

When a toy uses AI, it collects data such as voice recordings, interactions, and background sounds. This information is sent to remote servers, where it is analysed to improve responses. Your child's voice becomes training data, which may be stored indefinitely or shared with third parties.

WEAK SECURITY PROTECTIONS

Some AI toys have poor password protection or open network connections. Others may have microphones or cameras that stay on, even when the toy appears to be off. This can lead to recordings being made without your knowledge, including conversations unrelated to play.

ARTIFICIAL VOICES, REAL INFLUENCE

For very young children, an AI companion may become one of the first voices they interact with regularly. How that voice shows humour, empathy, or authority can shape how a child learns to communicate. If the model is artificial, then part of what is learned is artificial as well.

PRESSURE TO KEEP ENGAGING

Some toys reward repeated use or track engagement, encouraging children to interact more. When children compare how their toys perform, it creates pressure to play more often. This increases the amount of data collected and can make learning feel like competition.

MARKETING THROUGH PLAY

Toys that learn a child's preferences may feed that data into future advertising. A toy that knows a child's favourite colour or hobby could help a company design more targeted marketing to that child and their family.

PLAYTIME AS DATA TRAINING

The information collected from children helps train AI systems. Their voice, emotional responses, and behaviour shape how machines 'understand' people. Play becomes part of a much larger system that influences how future technologies behave.

Advice for Parents & Educators

START WITH A CONVERSATION

Talk to young people. Explain that some toys learn from what they say and do. Help them understand that even friendly technology should have boundaries, and to ask questions about it. Curiosity is healthy, blind trust is not.

SET LIMITS ON USE

Turn off Wi-Fi or Bluetooth when the toy is not in use. Check for updates regularly, as they can change privacy or safety settings. Treat connected toys like any smart device; they should be monitored, updated, and switched off when not in use.

MODEL DIGITAL AWARENESS

Children learn from adults. If they see you checking privacy settings, reading terms, and talking openly about online safety, they are more likely to do the same. Show them how to question technology in a healthy way.

RESEARCH BEFORE YOU BUY

Look for toys that work offline or store data locally. Check for a free or demo version so you can test how it behaves. Read privacy policies to understand what data is collected, where it goes, and whether it's shared with others.

REVIEW PRIVACY SETTINGS

Find out where the data is stored and who has access to it. Some companies sell or share data with advertisers. If the toy connects through an app, check what it requests access to and limit those permissions whenever possible.

BALANCE AI WITH REAL PLAY

AI toys can be fun and creative, but they are not a replacement for real human interaction. Encourage time away from technology with activities that foster emotional and social development. Use AI toys to support learning, not define it.

Meet Our Expert

Clara Hawking is Executive Director of Kompass Education. She advises governments, school trusts, and global organisations on AI governance and safeguarding, helping schools and families understand how technology shapes learning, wellbeing, and the digital future of children.



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Do you need help supporting your child? We offer a variety of online workshops to help you to support your child on the following topics:

- ✓ Fears and Worries
- ✓ Challenging Behaviour
- ✓ Emotionally Based School Avoidance
- ✓ Understanding Autism
- ✓ Understanding ADHD
- ✓ Sleep Support

Sessions will be held online during the day and evenings.



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