

John Ray Times

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

1st September 2026

Phone: 01376 324107 **Email:** johnrayjunior@compassps.uk **Website:**

www.johnray.compassps.uk



@ facebook.com/johnraycompassps

Online learning links

 Accelerated Reader	 Century Tech	 TT Rockstars	 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 Unit 32-33 Block B, Braintree Enterprise Centre, Springwood Drive, CM7 2YN

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:

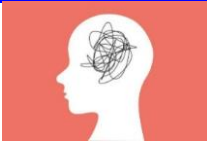
Spring/Summer Menus:

07.09.26 [Week 1](#) 14.09.26 [Week 2](#), 21.09.26 [Week 3](#)

A Message from our catering provider, Chartwells:

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 The ZONES of Regulation 	School Attendance Difficulties 	Supporting Anxiety 
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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.

Welcome back

We hope that you have all had a lovely summer break and enjoyed the wonderful weather. We are looking forward to seeing all the children back at school on Thursday 3rd September and extend a very warm welcome to the new families who have joined us.

Over the summer holidays, our site team have been very busy making improvements to the site. These have included:

- Improving the main entrance with updated signage and a new main door;
 - Security improvements on our main internal doors and external exits;
 - Refurbished pupil toilets;

- Playground resurfacing;
- New flooring to parts of the first floor;
- General painting.

Many thanks to Mr Piper and Mr Gray, our site staff, for organising the contractors and carrying out some of the work.

On Thursday, as we have done previously, we ask that children entering Y4, 5 and 6 arrive between 9:40 and 9:50am. Children in Y3, should arrive between 8:40am and 8:50am. Please enter through the double gate at the front of the school or the back gate that leads directly onto the playground. Usually adults say goodbye at the gates however on the first day Y3 parents should accompany children to the playground where staff will be waiting to greet you.

Y4, 5 and 6 children should enter the gates independently. Staff will be on duty to help them should they need a reminder of where to go,

The end of the day

It would be most appreciated if parents / carers could stand towards the back of the playground at the end of the day when waiting for children. This enables staff to be able to see parents more easily when dismissing the children. Please also be mindful when approaching staff at the end of day when teachers are still dismissing children. Some of our pupils have been bumped into at the by adults who are collecting and while this is not intentional, we don't want anyone to get hurt.

Our playground has now been resurfaced and once the surface has cured sufficiently, new markings will be added to identify where parents can stand and from where classes will be dismissed at the end of the day.

As a reminder, children in Y3 and Y4 finish at 3:20 and Y5 and Y6 children are dismissed at 3:25. Signs will indicated where the classes will line up on the playground.

Should you have any questions about the return to school, please contact the school office ideally by email or phone. Staff will be in school on 1st and 2nd of September but will be undertaking training for much of the day so please be patient if you are trying to make contact.

A parent guide for supporting children to get back into a routine can be found at the end of the newsletter.

09.09.26: Meet the teacher 3:30-4pm

Parents / carers are invited to see the classrooms and the informally meet class teachers on Wednesday 9th September from 3:30. Please collect your children as usual on the playground and then make your way to the white hall doors opposite the bus stop on Notley Road.

Our neighbours

When travelling to and from school, please be courteous and mindful of our neighbours by considering where you park. Please also ensure children do not ride scooters or bikes on private driveways and travel to and from school safely. Last year, there were several near misses and an accident where a child was hit by a car. Crossing Notley Road at the crossing patrol is the safest option.

Changes to Free School Meal (FSM) eligibility

If your child currently receives free school meals, you will now have to reapply for this academic year. If you do not complete the form, your child will no longer be entitled to receive FSM

From the start of the 2026 to 2027 academic year, all children from households in receipt of Universal Credit will be entitled to receive a free school meal. There will no longer be an income threshold of £7400 for the purposes of free school meals.

In order for us to check if you are eligible, please complete this [form](#) if you are in receipt of Universal Credit. One form should be completed per child. Full details can be found on the letter that was sent to parents on the 1st June.

Toys and trading cards from home

This is just a reminder that toys and trading cards of any description e.g. Premier League cards are not permitted in school. Children are also not permitted to bring in their own fidget tools or ear defenders. If children need these as a reasonable adjustment, they will be provided for them by a member of staff.

Nuts and nut products

Please be aware that nuts, including peanuts, or products containing nuts are not allowed in school under any circumstances. This includes chocolate spread with nuts like Nutella and filled crepes and croissants.

Nuts should not be provided as part of a packed lunch.

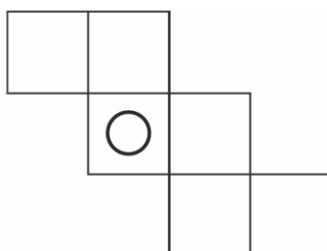
Year 6 SATs question of the week

Here is a question worth 1 mark from the 2025 Maths Reasoning paper.

Olivia is making a cube from a net.

She wants the cube to have two circles on opposite faces.

Draw **one circle** to complete Olivia's net.



Here is a question from the 2024 grammar and punctuation paper. It is worth 1 mark.

Which sentence uses **capital letters** correctly?

Tick **one**.

In July, I will visit my grandparents in newcastle. ☐

In July, I will visit my Grandparents in Newcastle. ☐

In July, I will visit my grandparents in Newcastle. ☐

In july, I will visit my grandparents in Newcastle. ☐

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).

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).

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.

PE days

PE lessons will start w/c 07.09.26

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 the autumn term are as follows:

Monday: 3LA, 6NG, 4CS, 5CE

Tuesday: Y5, 3BB, 3DB, 3JB

Wednesday: Y4, 6CO, 6JL, 6RR

Thursday: Y3, 4JB, 4JW, 4SJ

Friday: Y6, 5AW, 5DC, 5KS

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.



National Online Safety: What parents and carers need to know about What's real online.

From deepfake videos and cloned voices to fabricated screenshots and fake accounts, it is becoming increasingly difficult to tell what is genuine online. This guide explores how AI-generated content, misinformation and impersonation can affect children and young people, while explaining why polished presentation, familiar voices and repeated claims should never automatically be taken as proof that something is trustworthy.

It also offers practical advice for parents and educators on strengthening children's digital literacy and safeguarding them from manipulation. Discover how to encourage source-checking, verify unusual messages through another route, discuss online experiences openly and respond appropriately when harmful or deceptive content targets a child – including preserving evidence, reporting concerns and seeking further support where necessary.

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
3BB: tbeeson@compassps.uk , kbrighton@compassps.uk 3DB: dbanks@compassps.uk 3LA: larcher@compassps.uk 3JB: jbrennan@compassps.uk	4JB: jbird@compassps.uk 4CS: csteadman@compassps.uk 4JW: jwhitehouse@compassps.uk 4SJ: dsayer-jones@compassps.uk
Year 5	Year 6
5KS: kswann@compassps.uk 5CE: cellis@compassps.uk 5DC: dcasey@compassps.uk 5AW: awilson1@compassps.uk , rcottee@compassps.uk	6NG: ngibson@compassps.uk 6JL: jlalbastier@compassps.uk 6CO: cosullivan1@compassps.uk 6RR: rroberts@compassps.uk

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 tojrcontact@compassps.uk

Dates for the academic year 2025-2026 (new dates or changes in red)

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

Academic diary dates for 2026-27		
Autumn term	Spring term	Summer term
03.09.26 Children return to school 09.09.26 Meet the teacher 3:30-4:00 12.09.26 Secondary school admissions open (Y6 only) 14.09.26 After school clubs start 18.9.26 (delayed) Summer Fete 21.09.26 Y6 meeting 4:30pm (Mersea and Y6 information) 25.09.26 Individual photos (Children having PE today should bring their PE kit in a separate bag) 14.10.26 Enhanced one planning for specific children 15.10.26- SEND tea and chat 9:30-10:30 20.10.26 3:40 – 6:30 Learning Conferences	04.01.27 Children return to school 11.01.27 After school clubs start 01.02.27-7.02.27 Children's mental health week 09.02.27 SEND tea and chat 9:30-10:30 03.02.27 Enhanced one planning for specific children 05.02.27 Individual photos (Children having PE today should bring their PE kit in a separate bag) 9.02.27 Safer internet day 15.02.27 Half term week 04.03.27 World book day (Children are invited to dress as a book character or bring in a prop from a book) 05.03.27 Science week	12.04.27 Children return to school 19.04.27 First week of after school clubs 10.05.27 SATs week 19.05.27-21.05.27 Mersea residential for Y6 25.05.27 Sports day (Y5 / 6 in the morning, Y3 / Y4 in the afternoon, picnic 12-12:45) 31.05.27 Half term week 07.06.27 Multiplication check for 3 weeks (Y4 only) 08.06.27 reserve sports day in case of poor weather 09.06.27 Enhanced and focussed one plans 21.06.27 Secondary school transition week (schools will choose their own dates)

21.10.26 3:40 – 6:30 Learning Conferences 26.10.26 Half term week 31.10.26 Secondary school admissions close 13.11.26 Non uniform day in exchange for a donation for the PTA gift shop 19.11.26 Wonderdome for Y5 children 20.11.26 Children in need (non – uniform: children can wear spots / stripes in return for a donation) 28.11.26 Christmas fete at JRIS 30.11.26 last week for after school clubs 03.12.26 PTA gift shop 05.12.26 Christmas fete at JRIS Note change of date 07.12.25 SEN tea and chat 2-3pm 16.12.26 Y3 and Y5 Christmas dinner day <i>(children in Y3 / 3 are welcome to wear a Christmas jumper and / or accessory)</i> 17.12.26 Y4 and Y6 Christmas dinner day <i>(children in Y4 / 6 are welcome to wear a Christmas jumper and / or accessory)</i> 17.12.26 Y3 and Y4 to walk to St Michael's church for a Christmas service <i>(This takes place in school time and is for staff and children only. Children should wear suitable shoes for walking)</i> 18.12.26 Last day of term	9.03.27 Learning conferences 3:40 – 6:00 10.03.27 Learning conferences 3:40 – 6:30 22.03.27 Last week for clubs 24.03.27 Y5 and Y6 to walk to St Michael's church for an Easter service <i>(This takes place in school time and is for staff and children only. Children should wear suitable shoes for walking)</i> 26.03.27 Last day of term	28.06.27 Last week of after school clubs 29.06.27 School group photos <i>(Children having PE today should bring their PE kit in a separate bag))</i> 29.06.27 Class swaps – children to spend time in their new class 02.07.27 Y6 leavers' disco 5pm-7pm 07.07.27 Open afternoon 3:30-4:30 08.07.27 Annual reports sent out 13.07.27 Y6 production for 6JL and 6CO 2pm and 4:30 14.07.27 Y6 production for 6RR and 6NG 2pm and 4:30 16.07.27 Last day of term for children
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What Parents & Educators Need to Know about WHAT'S REAL ONLINE

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Children are growing up in a digital world where seeing and hearing no longer mean they can always believe. One major emerging concern is what UNESCO describes as 'synthetic media': AI-generated audio, images or video, including deepfakes, that can convincingly imitate a person's voice or likeness. As these tools become easier to access, children may encounter manipulated content, cloned voices, and fabricated messages that appear or sound real. Parents and educators therefore need to help them question what they experience online, which can often feel harder when we're experiencing it for the first time, too.

AI-GENERATED CONTENT

Artificial Intelligence can now create realistic images, audio, video, and text in a very short time. Online, children may encounter fabricated news clips, AI 'influencers', fake screenshots, or entirely invented events without ever realising they are fake. The real challenge is that this content often looks polished and convincing. Parents and educators need to help children understand that professional-looking content is not automatically reliable and that all digital material should be questioned before it is trusted or shared.

DEEPFAKES LOOK CONVINCING

'Deepfakes' use AI to alter or create images and videos that appear to show a real person doing or saying something that never happened. They are sometimes used to spread false information, embarrass someone, or target people through bullying and image-based abuse. Even when others know the content is fake, the emotional and reputational impact can still be significant – and, in some cases, potentially life threatening. Deepfakes therefore need to be treated as both a digital literacy and safeguarding concern.

FALSE INFORMATION SPREADS

Misinformation is false or misleading information shared without necessarily intending harm, while disinformation is deliberately created to deceive others. Both types can spread quickly through social media, messaging apps, and video platforms. Their popularity, repetition, and confident presentation can make these false claims feel true. Children may also be more likely to trust content shared by friends, influencers, or familiar accounts, making source-checking and verification essential parts of developing their digital literacy.

VOICES CAN BE CLONED

AI tools can copy someone's voice using only a short audio sample. A child may receive a call or voice note that appears to come from a parent, friend, teacher, or trusted adult, but the audio is not genuine. These messages can be used to create panic, request money, obtain information, or pressure a child into secrecy. Hearing a familiar voice is no longer enough to confirm someone's identity, especially when a message is urgent or unusual.

ACCOUNTS MAY BE FAKE

Not every online profile represents the person it claims to be. Fake accounts may impersonate another pupil, a teacher, a family member, or someone connected to the school. They can be used for acts such as bullying, scams, grooming, or manipulation. A convincing photograph, username, or message history does not prove that an account is genuine. Children should be cautious when someone asks for their or someone else's personal information, images, passwords, money, or access to private conversations.

ALGORITHMS INFLUENCE REALITY

Many online platforms, such as social media, are shaped by algorithms that recommend content based on what users view, like, search for, and share. This means children do not see a neutral or balanced version of the world. They may repeatedly encounter similar opinions, misleading claims, or increasingly extreme content. Over time, this repetition can make an opinion feel more common or credible than it really is, because the child may never see this opinion opposed or countered.

Advice for Parents & Educators

PAUSE, CHECK, COMPARE

Teach children not to accept content as true simply because it looks professional, sounds confident, or has been widely shared. Encourage them to pause, identify the original source, check the date, and compare the claim with another reliable source. Ask questions such as: Who created this? What evidence is provided? Could anything have been altered? What is the real motive? Regular, age-appropriate practice helps children develop the critical thinking needed to navigate their online worlds.

VERIFY ANOTHER WAY

A familiar face, voice, or account is no longer enough to confirm someone's identity. If a message is unusual, urgent, or asks for secrecy, money, personal information, or immediate action, children should verify it through a separate route. They should be encouraged to call the person directly using a known number, speak to them face to face, or check with another trusted adult. Families can also agree a private 'code' phrase to help them authenticate genuine emergency messages from each other. This should be something random, non-personal, and known only to the family.

KEEP TALKING OPENLY

Create regular, non-judgemental conversations about what children see, hear, and experience online. Make sure you use parental controls where appropriate and understand each platform's age restrictions. Asking children about new platforms, influencers, unusual messages, or content they are unsure about can help open up valuable conversations. Avoid immediately blaming the child or removing their device, as this may discourage them from disclosing their concerns in the future.

SAVE, REPORT, SUPPORT

When fake content, impersonation, or manipulation targets a child, take it seriously, even if the material is fabricated. Save relevant messages, usernames, links, and screenshots without sharing the content any further. Report it through the platform, follow safeguarding procedures, and escalate concerns involving threats, grooming, sexual content, coercion, or extortion. Remind children that creating or sharing this content, even as a so-called 'joke', can have serious consequences for them and others, and may be difficult to remove once shared online.

Meet Our Expert

Philippa Walthamell is an educator, author and digital transformation specialist with expertise in digital safeguarding, online safety, AI in education and whole-school digital strategy. She is the Founder and CEO of EdRupture and works with schools, organisations and policymakers to help create safer, more ethical and more effective digital learning environments for children and young people.



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Top Tips for SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S RETURN TO ROUTINE

Returning to school after the holidays can be challenging for some children and young people, and both families and education settings can play an important role in helping them readjust. Consistent routines, clear expectations, and supportive communication can support children and young people's wellbeing, self-regulation, and academic success. These practical tips can help make the transition back to school feel more manageable.

1 START EARLY

Gradually reintroduce school-day sleep, meal, and wake-up routines around a week before term begins. In education settings, familiar routines and expectations can also be introduced from the start of term to help pupils settle back in. A gradual and predictable approach can make the transition feel less abrupt and give children and young people the time they need to readjust to the structure of school life.

2 REBUILD ROUTINES TOGETHER

Involve the children and young people in your care in the rebuilding of familiar routines at home and in education settings. Having a say in their daily schedule can increase predictability for them and give them a greater sense of control. This might include discussing morning routines at home or reviewing classroom timetables, expectations, and activities together at the beginning of the school day.

3 ENCOURAGE RESPONSIBILITY

Giving children and young people age-appropriate responsibilities can help foster their autonomy and engagement. For younger children at home, this might include getting dressed independently or checking their school bag. In education settings, children and young people could organise their learning materials, complete simple classroom tasks, or follow a familiar morning routine. These manageable responsibilities can help them feel more involved in the school day while developing useful skills.

4 RECONNECT WITH PEERS

Re-establishing friendships can help children and young people feel more confident and connected when they return to school. Families might arrange opportunities for their children to speak to or spend time with school friends, while educators can use group activities, 'buddy' systems, or collaborative tasks to help rebuild classroom connections.

5 SUPPORT HEALTHY NUTRITION

Regular, balanced meals, particularly at breakfast, are linked to improved concentration, behaviour, and academic outcomes. Families can gradually return to familiar school-day mealtimes, while education settings can reinforce healthy eating routines at the start of term and signpost breakfast provision where available. Consistent access to food can help support children and young people's energy levels and concentration throughout the day.

6 COMMUNICATE OPENLY

Talk to the children and young people in your care about how they feel about the return to school and give them the opportunity to share any worries or questions. Anxiety around going back to school, particularly when starting a new year group, can be common, and children and young people may benefit from your reassurance and support. Parents and educators can all help with this by listening calmly to concerns and questions, and sharing relevant information with one another where appropriate.

7 RECONNECT WITH LEARNING AND PEERS

Light educational activities before term begins can help children become familiar with learning routines again without creating any unnecessary pressure on them. In school, low-pressure recap activities and familiar tasks from the previous year group can serve a similar purpose during the first few days back. Keeping learning positive and achievable can help rebuild children's concentration, confidence, and academic motivation as they settle back into their usual routine.

8 PRIORITISE SLEEP

Ensure the children and young people in your care get age-appropriate sleep and begin returning to their usual bedtime habits before term starts. Reducing screen use before bedtime may also support better sleep quality. Educators can also be mindful that tiredness may temporarily affect children's concentration, behaviour, and emotional regulation as they readjust to school routines.

9 PREPARE AHEAD

Organising uniforms, bags, lunches, and other school essentials in advance can reduce unnecessary stress when school mornings begin again. Educators can also help by preparing pupils for any changes to classrooms, timetables, staff, or behaviour expectations. Giving children clear information about what to expect ahead of time can make the return feel more familiar and help build up their confidence and independence.

10 BE PATIENT AND FLEXIBLE

Children adjust to changes in their routines at different rates, so your patience and flexibility can be important during the first days and weeks back. Some may settle quickly, while others need longer to adapt to earlier mornings, classroom expectations, or busy schedules. Parents and educators can support children and young people's readjustment by maintaining consistent routines, all the while recognising that concentration, behaviour, or confidence may temporarily look different for them.

WELCOME BACK!

Meet Our Expert

Adam Gillett is Associate Vice Principal for Personal Development at Penistone Grammar School, and a business development specialist for Minds Ahead, which works with schools to improve their mental health provision.



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