John Ray Times

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

28th September 2026

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

@ facebook.com/**johnraycompassps**

Online learning links

Accelerated Reader	Century Tech	TTRockstars	Nessy

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:

28.09.26 Week 1 05.10.26 Week 2, 12.10.26 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	**School Attendance Difficulties**	**Supporting Anxiety**
		
Curriculum maps are available on our website	Year 3 curriculum map	Year 4 curriculum map
	Year 5 curriculum map	Year 6 curriculum map

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.

Assemblies

In our assemblies last week, we revisited our core values of trust, hope, respect, perseverance, responsibility ad courage. We thought of different ways in which we display these values at home, at school in class and in the playground.

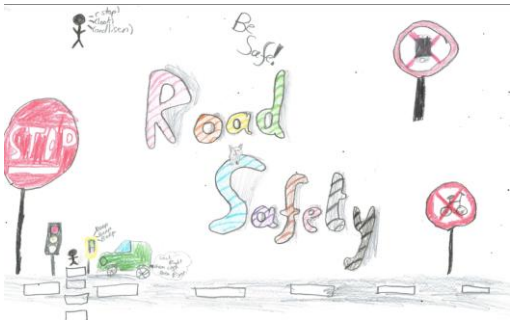
Our school council also met for the first time last week after being elected. Their task this week is to get feedback from their classmates to help us decide on the playground markings to be added to our new playground surface. We are hoping to get these added in October half term.

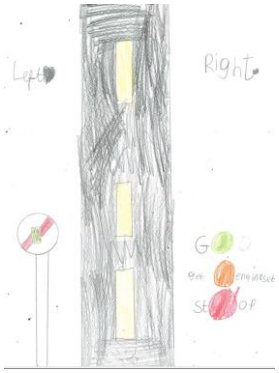
Harvest 2026

As a school we will be supporting the Braintree Foodbank this year with our harvest donations. Many members of our community use this essential service. We will be accepting donations from 28th September until 12th October. The following list of items are what the foodbank are particularly in need of at the moment.

- ✓ Bars of soap
- ✓ Jam
- ✓ Rice
- ✓ Shampoo
- ✓ Shower gel
- ✓ Tinned carrots
- ✓ Tinned macaroni cheese
- ✓ Tinned ravioli
- ✓ Tinned tomatoes
- ✓ Toilet roll
- ✓ Washing up liquid

Y5 Road safety talks





Last week, Year 5 pupils took part in an engaging road safety session delivered by Safer Essex Roads. Following an interactive classroom workshop, children explored the local area on a supervised roadside walk, where they identified key road features and practised safe crossing checks in real-life situations.

The session helped pupils develop the knowledge and confidence needed to begin making simple independent journeys safely. To finish, the children designed road safety posters, demonstrating their understanding and sharing important safety messages with others.



5AW learning conference

Please note a change of dates for 5AW Learning Conferences. These will be held on Monday 12th and Tuesday 13th October.

Year 5 Homework

Year 5 parents please check your children's bags for new homework that was set on 25th September. Instructions for completion are on the inside front cover.

Parking around the school site

We have received complaints from local residents regarding driveways being blocked during school drop off an pick up times. Please be considerate when parking around the school.

Dogs in school

From time to time, we may invite dogs, including therapy dogs, into school. In line with our risk assessment, let the school office know if your child has a phobia about dogs.

Apply for a secondary school (year 7) place for September 2027

If your child is in year 6, you can apply for a secondary school (year 7) place between **12th September and 31st October 2026.**

Information can be found on the Essex website: Secondary school places | Essex County Council

Should you require any assistance, please contact the school office.

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.

Chartwells' parent taster session – save the date, 10.12.26

Chartwells, our school meal provider, will be hosting a school meal taster session for parents on 10.12.26 at 3:30 . This will take place in our school hall.

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.

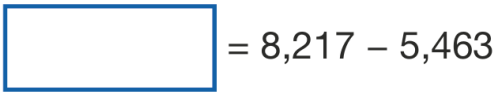
Nuts and nut products

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 2023 Maths arithmetic paper.



Here is a question from the 2023 grammar and punctuation paper. It is worth 1 mark.

Circle two words in the sentence below that are **synonyms** of each other.

Rita was overjoyed when she won the competition with her exceptional drawing – her mum was delighted too!

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. Although class teachers would love to see photos, we are now unable to publish these photos on our newsletter.

Boxing: Logan (4CS) won his fight and was awarded a medal

Football- players of the match: Mason (4SJ), Summer (6RR), Harry (4SJ)
Rugby: William (6NG)
Dancing: Bella-Rose (5KS) trophy for hoop and silk work

A special well done to Reuben (6CO) who volunteered at the Alzheimer's society walk at the weekend.

Stars of the week will be awarded this Friday.

3BB: Charlotte	4CS: Isabelle	5AW:	6CO: Henley
3DB: Kitty	4JB: Isla	5CE: Arabelle	6JL: Darcey Mi
3JB: Ashiya	4JW: Mikey	5DC: Mia	6NG: The whol
3LA: Lyla	4SJ: Ben	5KS: Joshua	6RR: Teddy

PE

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.**

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.



Keeping children safe: What parents and carers need to know about TikTok

Now the world's go-to short video platform, TikTok captivates young audiences with its endless stream of engaging clips, but not without potential pitfalls. From unsettling or age-inappropriate content to harmful viral challenges, misinformation and even radicalisation, this ever-popular app can expose children to content that may not always be suitable for them.

Our #WakeUpWednesday guide explores TikTok's hidden hazards, including in-app spending, compulsive screen time and privacy concerns, offering clear advice for parents and educators. With expert insight and practical safety tips, it aims to help families ensure that TikTok use remains fun, positive and, most importantly, safe.

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	4JB: jbird@compassps.uk, kbreen@compassps.uk
3DB: dbanks@compassps.uk	4CS: csteadman@compassps.uk
3LA: larcher@compassps.uk	4JW: jwhitehouse@compassps.uk
3JB: jbrennan@compassps.uk	4SJ: dsayer-jones@compassps.uk
Year 5	**Year 6**
5KS: kswann@compassps.uk	6NG: ngibson@compassps.uk
5CE: cellis@compassps.uk	6JL: jlarbalestier@compassps.uk
5DC: dcasey@compassps.uk	6CO: cosullivan1@compassps.uk
5AW: awilson1@compassps.uk, rcottee@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 Cottee (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 johnrayjunior@compassps.uk

17/09/26 Year 5 Wonderdome - Year 5 Only

Dates for the academic year 2026-2027 (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**
12.10.26 5AW Learning conferences 13.10.26 5AW Learning conferences 14.10.26 Enhanced one planning for specific children 14.10.26 2:30pm Y6 parents invited into class to share spooky stories with the children, 15.10.26- SEND tea and chat 9:30-10:30 20.10.26 3:40 – 6:30 Learning Conferences 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) 20.11.26 Dick Whittington panto in school 23.11.26 4CS and 4JW to Colchester Castle 24.11.26 4SJ and 4JB to Colchester Castle ~~28.11.26 Christmas fete at JRIS~~ 30.11.26 Year 5 to Charter Hall for The Snowman 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	**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 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 22.03.27 School Council to visit the Houses of Parliament 24.03.27 Y5 and Y6 to walk to St Michael's church for an Easter service *(This takes place in school time and is for staff and children only. Children should wear suitable shoes for walking)* **26.03.27 Last day of term**	**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) 28.06.27 Last week of after school clubs 29.06.27 School group photos *(Children having PE today should bring their PE kit in a separate bag))* *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**

07.12.26 SEN tea and chat 2-3pm 10.12.26 Chartwells school meals parent taster session in hall 3:30pm 16.12.26 Y3 and Y5 Christmas dinner day *(children in Y3 / 3 are welcome to wear a Christmas jumper and / or accessory)* 17.12.26 Y4 and Y6 Christmas dinner day *(children in Y4 / 6 are welcome to wear a Christmas jumper and / or accessory)* 17.12.26 Y3 and Y4 to walk to St Michael's church for a Christmas service *(This takes place in school time and is for staff and children only. Children should wear suitable shoes for walking)* **18.12.26 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 TIKTOK

AGE RESTRICTION 13+

(Certain features are restricted to over-18s only)

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Online videos are often associated with apps such as YouTube, but among teens, TikTok is king. The app provides a potentially addictive, never-ending stream of short clips tailored to users' interests based on their viewing habits. Around half of British children use TikTok, and while most content is benign, Ofcom considers it the app where young people are "most likely to encounter a potential harm".

AGE-INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

TikTok's Following Feed shows videos from known creators, while the default For You Feed serves endless clips based on viewing history. Most are harmless, but unsuitable content can still appear, and watching for long enough signals interest to the algorithm. Although TikTok bans illegal or inappropriate uploads, the volume of posts means some slip through, increasing the chance that children encounter age-inappropriate material before it is detected or removed.

CONTACT WITH STRANGERS

Between 1.6 and 1.9 billion people use TikTok, meaning there's a high risk of unwanted attention from strangers. Accounts created by over-16s (or young people using a fake date of birth) are set to public view by default. This means that not only is someone's profile visible to everyone else on the app, it also suggests their videos to others and allows anyone to download or comment on them.

BODY IMAGE AND DANGEROUS CHALLENGES

Ofcom reports that most online harms for girls involve body image, while boys more often see dangerous stunts. Both types appear frequently on TikTok and spread quickly through its engagement-driven algorithm. Harmful challenges have included the "blackout" trend, where users held their breath until passing out. Families filed lawsuits after children died linked to the trend, showing how extreme or risky content can rapidly reach young people and negatively influence them.

MISINFORMATION AND RADICALISATION

TikTok's short videos may appear lighthearted, but they can expose young people to harmful ideas. Misinformation is common, and Ofcom reports that nearly one third of 12–15-year-olds use TikTok as a news source, increasing the chance of seeing racist, misogynistic, extremist or conspiracy material. Even brief clips can influence impressionable users and shape their worldview, making discussions about critical thinking, propaganda and online influence especially important for parents and educators.

IN-APP SPENDING

TikTok is free, but children can still spend money. TikTok coins, costing £9.99 to £224.99, let users buy gifts for creators. TikTok Shop adds risk by allowing purchases from influencers or companies, sometimes leading to poor-quality items driven by persuasive marketing. A Canadian investigation found TikTok collected personal data from many children for targeting and advertising despite age limits, meaning young users may lose control over their personal information.

ADDICTIVE DESIGN

TikTok's fast-paced stream of eye-catching videos can be potentially addictive for young users. In 2024, UK children spent an average of 127 minutes per day on the platform, double the time recorded in 2020. Excessive use can disrupt sleep, increase irritability, and distract from healthier activities. Constantly skipping between short clips may also affect attention span, making it harder to focus on longer tasks such as homework or reading.

Advice for Parents & Educators

ENABLE FAMILY PAIRING

Family Pairing allows parents to link their TikTok account to their child's in order to manage settings remotely. Parents can then turn on Restricted Mode (reducing the chances of a child seeing inappropriate content), set screen time limits, make accounts private and manage whether their child can send messages – and if they can, to whom. Children cannot alter these settings without parental approval.

BLOCK IN-APP SPENDING

Parents can restrict in-app purchases on iPhone and Android devices to prevent accidental or impulsive TikTok spending. Young people can easily spend large amounts on TikTok coins or low-quality products promoted through TikTok Shop. If a disappointing purchase occurs, turn it into a discussion about influencer marketing and how online promotions can be misleading.

DISCUSS THE DANGERS

If a child wants to use TikTok and you're happy for them to do so, it's good practice to discuss the potential risks. Ensure they don't share any identifying personal information or respond to dangerous trends, and that they know to talk to a trusted adult if they're worried by interactions on the app. With more teens using TikTok for news, it's important to talk about misinformation and propaganda.

READ THE SIGNS

If you're concerned that a child is spending too much time on TikTok, or that they've been emotionally affected by something they've seen, it's important to know how to spot the signs. Increased irritability and a lack of concentration are potential red flags, as is failing to complete homework or skipping meals. Remember, the parental controls are there for a reason, and it's never too late to introduce limits.

Meet Our Expert

Alan Martin is an experienced technology journalist who has written for the likes of Wired, TechRadar, Tom's Guide, The Evening Standard and The New Statesman.



See full reference list on our website

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