John Ray Times

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

2nd November 2026

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

@ facebook.com/**johnraycompassps**

Online learning links

Accelerated Reader	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:

Autumn/Winter Menus:

02.11.26 Week 1 9.11.26 Week 2 16.11.26 Week 3

A Message from our catering provider, Chartwells:

To view the Chartwells Parent Information Leaflet, please click here.

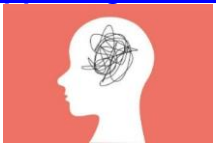
The cost for a school meal is now £2.50 and is payable on your MCAS App.

Free School Meals (FSM):

If you receive Universal Credit, your child will be eligible for free school meals.

If you think your child may be entitled to free school meals, please apply using this link.

Once you have submitted your application, you will receive an instant confirmation confirming whether your child is eligible or not eligible.

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 before half term, we discussed the story of eleven-year-old Bodhana Sivanandan from London has become the youngest person ever to earn the woman grandmaster title in chess. We discussed the question, should age decide what we're allowed to do? To continue our work on

Black History Month, we found out more about the life of Harriet Tubman who, after escaping slavery, undertook missions to rescue enslaved people including her family and friends. We linked this to our own school value of courage.

Y5 collaborative art lessons

Year 5 parents and carers joined us in the classroom for a wonderful collaborative art lesson. Together, pupils in 5CE and 5DC worked alongside their guests to paint intricate geometric patterns on Islamic tiles as part of their current art topic. Thank you to everyone who came in to make the session so memorable and help bring our children's creative projects to life! We will be running similar sessions in different subjects over the year in different year groups so please keep an eye on your emails.

Snacks in school

Children are welcome to bring **healthy snacks** to enjoy during break time. Healthy snacks may also be brought on school trips and for children to enjoy after swimming.

Please ensure that all snacks are healthy. **Snacks, such as cakes, sweets, crisps and chocolate, are not permitted.** Y6 children will also not be able to use the vending machine at the swimming pool when attending the school swimming lessons.

BBC Children in Need

We are excited to let you know that we will be taking part in a fun run on Friday 13th November in support of Children in Need! The children will have the opportunity to get active, have fun and raise money for a cause that supports children and young people across the UK.

This will be a sponsored event and we would love for the children to get involved in raising money. Every child will have a sponsor sheet where they can keep track of their sponsors and children can ask family members and other adults at home if they would be willing to sponsor them for taking part in the run.

We look forward to seeing the children have fun whilst raising money for a great cause!

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.

Unacceptable Behaviour in the School Community

We have updated our Unacceptable Behaviour in the School Community policy. This policy along with our other school policies can be viewed on our school website.

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.

Poppy Appeal

Poppies will be available to purchase in school this week, along with a selection of other items listed below, as well as the traditional poppy with a pin.

Children are kindly asked to bring the suggested donation amount for their chosen item(s) in a named envelope. Purchases can be made during breaktime in the school hall.

Please note we have a limited supply of each item, so initially children will be allowed to purchase one item only, on a first come, first served basis.

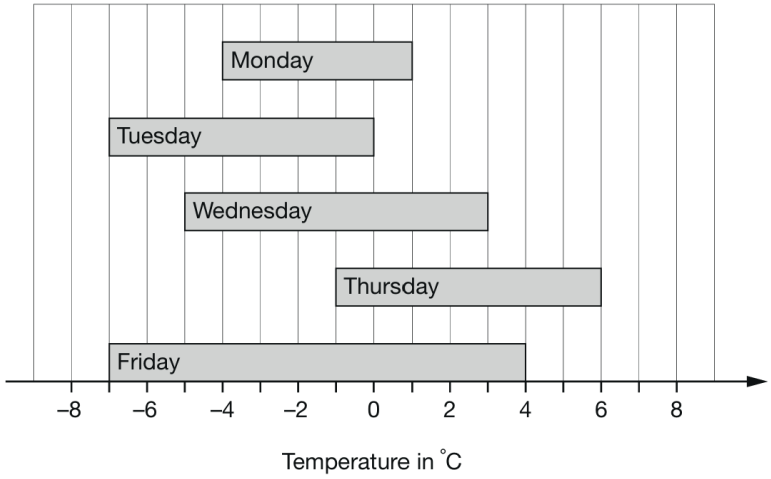


Thank you for supporting the Poppy Appeal.

Year 6 SATs question of the week

Here is a question worth 2 marks from the 2022 Maths reasoning paper.

This chart shows the range of temperatures each day during one week from Monday to Friday.



What was the **lowest** temperature?

Here is a question from the 2022 grammar and punctuation paper. It is worth 1 mark.

Which sentence is punctuated correctly?

Tick **one**.

- Add one ounce (around one) tablespoon of yeast to your bread mix. ☐
- Add one ounce around one tablespoon of yeast (to your bread mix). ☐
- Add one ounce (around one tablespoon) of yeast to your bread mix. ☐
- Add one ounce around (one tablespoon) of yeast to your bread mix. ☐

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.

Hobby Horse competition: Gracie (4JB) 3 X 1st place rosettes and a 3rd place rosette
Rugby player of the match: Freddie (3LA), Kieron (3BB)
Swimming and lifeguard stage improvement: Jack (3DB)
Football player of the match: Aqib (4JW)
Gymnastics trophy: Ashiya (3JB)
Theatre school performance of Paddington: Thea (3BB) and Amelie (4SJ)

Stars of the week

3BB: Bella-Rose	4CS: Penny	5AW: Isabella	6CO: Ashton
3DB: Ishaq	4JB: Kerim	5CE: Grace, Freddie	6JL: Morgan
3JB: Olivia H	4JW: Dexter	5DC: Jorgie	6NG: Brooke
3LA: Ella	4SJ: Tyler	5KS: Evelyn	6RR: Ella

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 mobile phones

Mobile phones are a major part of young people's lives, but growing concerns about their impact on mental health, learning and wellbeing have prompted tighter restrictions. From classroom distractions and excessive screen time to cyberbullying and harmful online content, this #WakeUpWednesday guide examines the potential risks and explores what the evidence tells us about smartphone use.

With schools now expected to be phone-free environments, and further social media restrictions proposed for under-16s, understanding the changing rules is increasingly important. Featuring expert insight from Mark Emmerson OBE, our guide explains the latest requirements, including reasonable adjustments for pupils with additional needs, and offers practical advice to help parents and educators encourage healthier digital habits

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 5CE: cellis@compassps.uk 5DC: dcasey@compassps.uk 5AW: awilson1@compassps.uk, rcottee@compassps.uk	6NG: ngibson@compassps.uk 6JL: jlarbalestier@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 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
30/09/26 Colchester Castle - Year 4 only
23/09/26 The Snowman – Year 5 only
02/10/26 Learning Conferences – All year groups
05/10/26 Enhanced One-Plan – Selected children only
05/10/26 Focused One-Plan – Selected children only
09/10/26 The Compass Eko Trust Strategy 2026-2031 - All year groups
21/10/26 Children in Need Fun Run – All year groups

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**
07.11.26 Open morning for new parents 9:30-11am 13.11.26 Children in need (non – uniform: children can wear spots / stripes in return for a donation) 19.11.26 Wonderdome for Y5 children 20.11.26 Non uniform day in exchange for a donation for the PTA gift shop 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 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 07.12.26 SEN tea and chat 2-3pm	**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) 28.06.27 Last week of after school clubs

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**	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**	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**

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. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit nationalcollege.com.

MOBILE PHONES

Mobile phones have become a huge part of young people's everyday lives, but new restrictions on their use in schools and proposed restrictions on social media are changing how children and young people can use them. This guide explores mobile phones, their use by young people, what the evidence tells us, the current and future legal position, and what parents and educators should do.

What are the risks?

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The relationship between smartphone and social media use and young people's mental health is complex, and evidence does not establish a simple cause-and-effect relationship. Some researchers and commentators, however, including Jonathan Haidt, author of The Anxious Generation, argue that increased smartphone and social media use may be contributing to poorer mental health and wellbeing among young people.

LEARNING AND ATTENTION

Mobile phones can distract pupils from learning and make it harder to maintain attention and concentration. Research suggests that learning and attention have improved in schools that already prohibited mobile phone use, particularly among pupils with lower prior attainment. Now that the DfE's guidance on mobile phones is statutory, schools should ensure that the whole-school community understands and follows their policy, while monitoring how effectively it is implemented.

HARMFUL CONTENT AND BULLYING

Mobile phones can be a means of extending peer conflict from the community into schools and from schools back into the community. They also provide easy access to harmful and inappropriate content, including content that is sexually explicit, promotes self-harm or eating disorders, or is violent in nature. Exposure to this content can negatively affect children's mental health and wellbeing, potentially increasing the support they require from schools, parents, and support services.

EXCESSIVE SCREEN TIME

Ofcom research found that 13- to 14-year-olds spend an average of 4 hours 19 minutes online each day across smartphones, tablets, and computers. However, there is considerable variation between children, with some spending significantly more or less time online. Excessive screen time can contribute to disrupted sleep and fragmented attention, both of which can negatively affect children's mental health and wellbeing.

The current and upcoming rules

SCHOOL BANS

As of 1 September 2026, schools are expected to be phone-free environments by default, with any exceptions limited to specific circumstances. Schools can decide how best to implement this. For example, some may provide secure storage or collect phones at the beginning of the school day, while others may prohibit pupils from bringing them onto school premises altogether. Schools can also confiscate mobile phones in line with their behaviour policy, while searches for prohibited phones must follow the relevant legal requirements.

REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

Schools should make reasonable adjustments where necessary for disabled pupils and may allow exceptions in other circumstances, including where mobile phone use is necessary to support a medical condition or an identified need. For example, a pupil with diabetes may use a continuous glucose monitor linked to their mobile phone to monitor their blood sugar levels. Schools may also make adaptations where mobile phone use provides agreed support for pupils with SEND. Any exceptions should be clearly reflected in the school's policies and procedures.

ONLINE SAFETY ACT 2023 AND 2026 PROPOSALS

Platforms are required to protect children from harmful content and use age checks to prevent children from accessing pornography and certain other types of harmful content. In June 2026, the government announced that it intends to stop social media companies offering services to under-16s. These restrictions are expected to be introduced in spring 2027, but the precise scope and rules have not yet been confirmed.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

While there is ongoing debate about the relationship between smartphones, social media and young people's mental health, there are steps that parents and educators can take to help reduce the potential risks associated with their use:

1. Delay smartphones. Consider waiting until a child is 14 before giving them a smartphone. Where a child needs a device to contact family, a basic phone may be an alternative.
2. Delay social media. Consider delaying access to social media until the age of 16.
3. Support phone-free schools. Parents, pupils, and staff should understand and support the school's approach to mobile phones.
4. Encourage screen-free activities. Promote independent and outdoor play, alongside other activities that give children opportunities to socialise and spend time away from screens.

Meet Our Expert

Mark Emmerson OBE, CEO – City of London Academies Trust. With nearly 45 years' experience in inner-city education, including 26 years in senior leadership roles, Mark was an early advocate for tackling the risks of mobile phones in schools, introducing a ban as headteacher in 2000. He has also served as a national DfE adviser and held local authority roles, consistently driving improvements in pupil outcomes and Ofsted judgements, particularly in disadvantaged communities.



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