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FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/23**

Paper 2 Directed Writing and Composition **October/November 2022**

INSERT **2 hours**

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INFORMATION

- This insert contains the reading texts.
- You may annotate this insert and use the blank spaces for planning. **Do not write your answers** on the insert.

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Read **both** texts, and then answer **Question 1** on the question paper.

Text A: No more long school holidays

This text is a letter from the headteacher of Champion School.

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I am delighted to announce that from next month, Champion School will become an all-year-round school – the first in the district. As you join me in celebrating the exciting news, I would like to outline the new schedule and share with you some of the benefits all-year-round schooling offers your child.

All-year-round schools have been trialled in other countries with some success. The typical all-year-round schedule has students attending school for nine weeks, then taking a three-week holiday to help them reset, rest and catch up with any school work they have not finished. We plan to improve on this model – following a 'six-weeks-on, one-week-off' schedule, with one extra week's holiday in the summer to allow for visiting relatives overseas.

During traditional lengthy summer breaks, students often experience difficulty retaining skills and knowledge. Students from lower-income families especially may find themselves losing ground that they gained during the previous school year. Mathematics and reading, in particular, often have to be retaught at the beginning of each school year. Avoiding this 'summer slide' is easier when teachers have access to the children all year.

As a parent of teenagers myself, I know that during the long hot months of our summer holiday students and parents can easily become frustrated and bored, putting relationships under strain. With all-year-round school, there is no need to reset routines before embarking on a new school year. The breaks aren't long enough to disturb the usual pattern and you're cooped up with your family for less time. A report from those at the forefront of educational reform says that all school holidays should be shortened so that children are not left unsupervised – cutting youth crime and raising education standards.

More frequent breaks benefit students and teachers, improving working relationships. Looming deadlines, large projects and big end-of-term tests can be stressful for everyone, whereas the more regular assessments of all-year-round schooling offer more opportunities to relax. All-year-round school has many academic advantages for our students. They will learn more effectively.

On a practical level, there will be further details soon regarding sports fixtures planned against other schools, national summer camp programmes and extra-curricular activities. Meanwhile, our teacher–parent association is planning an extra meeting to discuss the challenge of childcare for any parents who rely on the school to provide care for their children during the working day and/or who have other children in more traditional schools in the area.

Yours faithfully,
R. Laz

Text B: Coping with long school holidays

This text is an online blog written by a parent of young children.

I've been talking with friends about the school holidays – some of them have run out of ideas, money and patience!

The holidays aren't all swings, games and happy faces. There's a lot of boredom to deal with too, because the summer break is long. Really long!

It's an interesting topic for my family because I have a husband who's a teacher. When I asked him if school holidays were too long, I got the big N.O. And while it might seem like the obvious answer from a teacher, I wondered if his opinion might have changed given that he's now become primary caregiver for our kids during the holidays while I've been off working. Being a freelance radio announcer there's a lot of work for me over the summer. I've been working six days a week recently.

I thought maybe he'd be craving some routine again, instead of thinking 'what are we going to do today?' every day.

For my little guys, activities have included riding bikes, spending time with grandparents, paint-with-water books, trips to the park, zoo, pony riding and 'Science Adventure' (expensive, but worth it apparently).

A survey of my friends suggested six weeks for school summer holidays was about right. They said they loved sleep-ins and not having to rush to get ready in the mornings or iron school uniforms. They valued spending quality time as a family. One made a good point that it would be cruel to send children to school in the extreme heat. When your kids are old enough to catch a bus to the beach or be dropped off at the movies, I imagine school holidays are easier.

But others, mostly parents who worked full-time, thought the summer break was too long, especially given they themselves only had four weeks off annually. School holidays involved much strategic manoeuvring, calling in favours so their kids were looked after. These parents were looking forward to getting back to their 'usual routine'.

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