



July 2022

## *What a surprise -- My Summer Holiday in March!*

The government announced the closure of schools at the start of the fifth wave of the Covid pandemic in February. This was done to protect the health of students. As a result, the summer break for school children in Hong Kong started four months earlier than usual.

One of the reasons for this arrangement was the intention to use at least 400 schools as Covid testing centres. School finally resumed after the Easter holidays, with the academic year ending on 12<sup>th</sup> August.



The unexpected early summer break disrupted the plans of some working parents who had wanted to take a few weeks off in July and August to spend time with their children during the holiday. Many were unable to apply for leave in March and April, so they needed to find others to take care of their children during the daytime.



Some kindergarten teachers were worried that the early summer break would hinder the learning ability of preschoolers as kindergarten children need opportunities for social interaction in order to train their language skills and build up their basic knowledge. The same concern was shared by secondary school teachers as they believed that online learning was not the most ideal way for students to learn since students were stuck behind a screen at home.

Form 6 students who were due to take the HKDSE in mid-March suffered from more stress as the public exam was postponed to late April. The school suspension made it impossible for them to get face-to-face help from their teachers, thus affecting their exam preparations.

How did students at STSS feel about the early summer break? Here are some of their thoughts.

## *4A Ng Rosie*

This year the EDB announced that our summer holiday would start early in March. I was shocked when I heard the announcement on TV. For many Hong Kong students, it would be a double-edged sword. They could make good use of the time to rest and avoid the risk of getting infected during the pandemic. However, some thought it was meaningless to be trapped indoors during the ‘special summer holiday’. In my opinion, whether it was good or bad depended on how we made use of our early summer holiday.

I made a timetable for every day to maintain a healthy life for myself. Reading books was one of the better ways to kill time. I found that I could finish reading a 300-plus-page book within 4 days! I also did some exercise like stretching and weightlifting to stay healthy as I was sitting for too long on the sofa every day. Doing exercise helps the body release endorphins. This chemical will make us feel happy. It’s why exercise can improve both our physical and mental health.



The exam would start soon after this special summer holiday. So you should start preparation early! I made some exam notes for myself and did some revision during the holiday so that I wouldn’t forget all the things my teachers had taught me before. Doing revision regularly was important, but I did not forget to save some time for my family. This special holiday served as a rare opportunity to do something with my family since we all had to stay home safe.

## *4A Yu Natalie Yanling*

Due to the worsening situation of the pandemic, the summer holiday fell in March this year. I thought that it was unnecessary, and it messed up my usual plans for the normal summer holiday. Nevertheless, it also benefited me as it allowed me to relax and take a break from school.

It was important that we carefully planned how we made good use of the early summer holiday. To kill time, we could pick up a new hobby or skill such as reading or cooking. It was also a good chance

to bond with our family as we were all staying at home and had more free time. We could chat with them more and do some activities together like playing games and watching TV. It was also crucial to pay attention to our health. We had to exercise regularly and keep a healthy diet.

My goal of the holiday was to utilize the time to catch up with school work and revise the things we learnt during the first term, so that I understand the materials that are being taught now better. I also wanted to finish homework early so that I wouldn't have to worry about submitting them late when school resumed.



I usually woke up at around 9 in the morning. After having breakfast, I would surf the Internet on my phone or watch TV. Sometimes, I would make some art before lunch. After lunch, I did some revision and school work. Occasionally, I would do stretches and strengthening exercises before I took a shower. I think it is important to exercise regularly. I wanted to keep my body in shape so that I was able to keep up with the training when my sports activities resumed. At night, I usually spent the time with my family. We would watch TV together and chat. I also spent some time reading with my brother. Although I tried to keep my routine consistent, on some days, I would sleep a little longer or have a long nap in the afternoon. I didn't get as much done on those days.

During the holiday, I was in charge of preparing the meals and some of the housework as my family was busy with work. I looked after myself more. Sometimes, when I had been lazy for a few days, I would remind myself that I should not forget about my responsibilities as a student and that I should not just put my studies aside. I would pick up my studies and try to do a bit of school work.



I believed that I would have accomplished my goals by the end of the holiday. Even though I think that I could have done more, I am satisfied as I feel that I went back to school with a fresh mind.

### *5A He Annie Tsz Yan*

I think the early summer holiday was good, even though it was not necessary, because the

long-term online lessons and the pandemic have already caused lots of stress to students. Students' stress has risen to worrying levels during the pandemic. An early summer break may have helped reduce their stress and allowed them to prepare better for the upcoming school exams. Also, students could have more time to plan their studies and have more time for revision.



Although the early summer holiday could be a buffer for students to stay away from stressful school work, some students thought the early summer holiday was too long, and they may forget what teachers had taught them before. This would then affect their studies. I was actually worried that the usual summer holiday from mid-July to August would be cancelled. That would mean we might have to go straight to the next academic year without a break.

No matter if I liked the early summer holiday or not, I had no choice but to enjoy it at home. During the early summer holiday, I reviewed what teachers taught me before and I did more revision exercises. For example, I did Mathematics exercises every day, memorised Chinese notes, read some English books, and listened to some podcasts to improve my English. Also, I worked out every day to prevent myself from becoming fat.



I think I could stick to the timetable I set and I achieved some targets. I am glad that I did not waste my time and did my best in my studies. I hope I can see my classmates after this summer holiday as it has been months since we had face-to-face lessons at school.

#### *4A Oriana Chow On Yuet*

As the pandemic here in Hong Kong was spreading rapidly, the government decided to bring forward the summer holiday. I think this measure was unnecessary because we had already started to have online lessons for two months and we could continue this mode of learning. Maybe online lessons are not as effective as face-to-face lessons as we may not have enough time to cover all the content of the subjects. However, we could delay the exams and have tutorials after school resumes.

To make good use of this holiday, I planned a timetable to finish my homework and do revision. Also, I would spare time practising for upcoming competitions so that I could receive a better result. I also joined a programme organised by the University of Hong Kong. I learnt a lot from it. For instance, knowledge of pharmacy helped me to learn that a self-test has four possible outcomes and some pills are not supposed to be cut into parts.



In addition, chatting with friends was such a good way to improve our mental health as staying at home was quite boring. Online puzzles were good too because they not only improved our way of thinking, but also gave us some challenges. Online puzzles like Sudoku, Number Match and Blockudoku are relaxing games. To improve our physical health, we could exercise regularly. I think the duration of the exercise can be short. Exercises can be simple, even stretching exercises can improve our flexibility.

#### *4B Lai Tsz Kwan Maria*

I think it was necessary to have our summer holiday earlier because of the COVID-19 pandemic. In this summer holiday, I planned to do some revision and exercises at home. I thought this summer holiday was a chance for me to release my study pressure. Also, I could have some time to revise what I had learnt before moving on to my studies for the coming half year. I could organise the notes I had taken during lessons. To be honest, I did not pay enough attention in lessons when we had them online. So, I always missed important points that my teachers mentioned. This short holiday came at the right time as I could have time to sort my notes and clarify things I felt confused about.

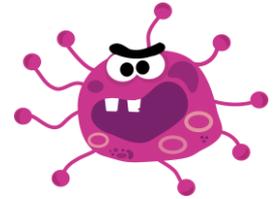
Staying at home doing nothing every day can make us put on weight quickly. I suggest we can do some yoga to kill time. Exercise also helps to cheer ourselves up and stay healthy. Doing yoga could help me relieve some of the pressure for a period. Also, it could help me to sleep better at night. I hope I am well prepared for my studies when lessons resume in late April.



## 4B *Gigi Chan*

This summer holiday came earlier than usual. Because of the virus, the government decided to let student have an early summer holiday. When I heard the news, I was so excited, yet disappointed at the same time.

I think this arrangement wasn't that necessary at first since it could affect our learning progress. However, I think it was the best policy after all. The government hoped to protect students from becoming infected with the COVID-19 virus, especially when the number of infected cases was increasing at an alarming rate.



I had planned to enjoy myself during the holiday, and not to waste time. During the week, I would allocate three days for my free time, two days for watching videos about how to exercise indoors, and do a bit of homework. Then I would spend time doing revision. I could use my quality time for my favourite hobbies, like playing games, watching documentary videos – to know what's happening around the world – and finding new songs that interested me.

I hoped that when this holiday ended, we could go back to school with a normal schedule. I also wanted to see those faces again at school that I have missed.

## 5A *Hong Ní Na, Bonnie*

It was surprising to me when we were told we would be having the summer holiday in March. It would be the longest holiday before the DSE for Form 5 students like me. Therefore, having good time management was important. I did not want to waste my time when teachers were not around to push us to work harder.

The following is a typical study day. We would have tutorial classes on most days in the morning. After the tutorial, I would take a rest and have my lunch. At around 1p.m., it was time to work.



The first thing to do was to plan the to-do list for the day. It made me work more efficiently. I would do some homework: one difficult assignment and two easier ones before starting my revision. Then I revised two to three subjects. After doing revision in the daytime, I would read a chapter of a book or an interesting passage in either English or Chinese in the evening. I learnt quite a lot of vocabulary and sentence structures using this learning method. Also, it helped me have a better sleep too!

Here are a few tips for effective revision. First of all, make a to-do list. It makes clear what you need to do. It reminds you of how many tasks you need to complete. Besides a list, clear your desk and stay away from the bed. Only put the books and stationery you need on your desk. You may also have some drinking water on your desk to keep your brain working and to reduce the number of times you leave your desk. Last but not least, try to put away your entertainment devices, especially your phone. As students, we must use our time to work harder so that we can achieve our goals!



### *5A Sheung Hau Tung Ann*

My first cold summer holiday!

It was unbelievable when my friend told me the breaking news that the Chief Executive had announced



that the summer holiday would start on 7 March! I was wondering if the news was true and whether it was just a rumour. However, I realised that my friend was right after watching the live news on TV. I felt different from most other people; I actually didn't feel furious, but I was worried since the early summer

holiday might disrupt my study plans for the DSE next year. Therefore, I quickly planned a to-do list for this unique summer holiday so as not to waste time. Eventually, I aimed to review

and revise the topics that I had learnt in Form 4 and in the first term of Form 5.

During the holiday, I was busy with a tight tutorial lesson schedule arranged by my school, and with my own study schedule. Apart from my studies, I did a simple



workout every day and watched dramas in my leisure time. Although the early summer holiday was unexpected, I could use my time wisely and have a productive holiday.