FCE
READING TEST – UNIT 3

Read the article and choose the answer which you think fits best according to the text. Write your answers (A, B, C or D) in the gaps.

The no-tech school that is getting results

These days, it is commonplace to hear about schools investing heavily in technology and even having 'cyber-school' days, when pupils work remotely from home using their computers. But one school has bravely rejected the use of technology for its pupils. At a school in the north of England, pupils aren't allowed to use smartphones or computers and they can't watch TV at home even during the holidays. In the school, there are no iPads, no smartphones and no television screens. Parents who choose to send their children to this fee-paying school have to follow the same strict programme at home, with no television, computers or films, both during term-time and during holidays.

The school opened in 2011. It charges high annual fees so it is only for families with money, and it is taking advantage of recent doubts about how much using technology in schools promotes learning. James Bishop, who is chair of the school board of directors, explained the ban on technology as a way to give children the space to grow. He believes children today can rely too much on technology and television feeding them stimulation rather than learning to create their own activities and entertainment. Therefore, the aim of the school is to encourage creativity so that the children are active creators not passive consumers. In September 2015, a global study found that schools that had spent a lot of money on computers and technology did not have improved results. In fact, the exact opposite was the case.

Another study revealed children are too busy playing games on their tablets to spend time in the sun during holidays, which could have negative effects on their physical health. Other reports highlighted the potentially negative effect of social media, with one finding that nearly a quarter of students were on it at night, thus reducing the hours spent asleep. There is also a concern that allowing students to use mobile phones and iPads in the classroom leads to disruptive behaviour and poor concentration.

The school is against the use of all forms of electronics by small children and only gradual integration in adolescence. Many parents accept that following this edict means an agreement on their part to reduce the use of screen time at home. According to school rules, children are not allowed to watch television at all before they are twelve, when they can watch documentaries that have been viewed and approved by their parents. Films are banned until fourteen and the internet is out of bounds for anyone under sixteen. Following these require great commitment on the part of all concerned.

Ann Springer, whose daughter Isobel, eleven, joined the school two years ago, believes the ban asks a lot of both parents and children. But she has no doubts that it is worth the effort. In her view, reduced exposure to screens has resulted in less social pressure on Isobel to be like other children and behave in certain ways. Isobel, herself, says she was 'a bit annoyed' when she found out about the no-technology rules and that she sometimes finds it difficult when she plays with her friends who go to other schools, which stresses her out. She reports that it can be a problem that she can't share viewing experiences with her friends and can't join in conversations based on what they have seen and heard. But she claims the no-technology rule has resulted in her having a better imagination.

Another parent, Richard Atkins, who works in IT, enrolled his two children in the school after seeing a friend's children do really well at a similar school without new technology. He says both he and his wife completely approve of technology on condition it is age-appropriate as it is detrimental if it is introduced too soon. When asked if he, especially as someone employed in the technology industry, is worried he is taking away the opportunity for his children to learn important skills for a digital future, his response is unconcerned. 'Technology is growing and developing at a huge rate, so the future is likely to see this accelerate even further. Anything we teach our children now will be out of date very soon indeed.'

1. In the first paragraph, what is the writer's main point about the school?

A Its policy on technology is going against a trend.

B Its teachers dislike the use of technology in class.

C Parents should be involved in decisions it makes.

D Students like to conform to its rules.

2. What is James Bishop doing in paragraph 2?

A explaining the effect of too much technology on children

B justifying the school's approach to technology

C describing the school's policy on use of the internet

D illustrating the kind of problems technology can cause

3. What does 'it' refer to in line 35?

A their tablet

B social media

C the study

D disruptive behaviour

4. In paragraph 4, what does the internet is 'out of bounds' mean?

A its use is partially restricted

B it's part of a package of rules

C it's banned completely

D it's a useful tool for some people

5. What do Ann and Isobel disagree on about the ban on technology in paragraph 5?

A It has reduced social pressure to conform.

B It causes problems with friends from other schools.

C It has made her more creative.

D It can be difficult to accept at times.

6. What is Richard's attitude towards the school's policy for his children?

A He regrets his children's lack of technical expertise.

B He is unconvinced that they are benefiting from their general education.

C He is not concerned about the range of general skills they will need in future.

D He understands that technology is moving too quickly for them to keep up.

