Dear Worried,

I am really sorry to learn about your situation. After going through the letter, I can see that you are facing the following problems--- living in a small flat, without privacy, unable to concentrate on your studies, lack of money for entertainment and you want to quit schooling altogether.

Now let me try to sort out your problems for you. Firstly, it is not uncommon to find Hong Kong families living in small flats. If you find it hard to concentrate on your studies while your family members are watching TV, why don’t you discuss this matter with them in a peaceful and friendly way? You may advise them to turn down the volume or shorten their viewing time. You may also explain to them that your academic performance is thus affected. It is not advisable for you to wait until midnight when you begin to attend to your school assignments as this would impair your health and affect your concentration in class. Why don’t you consider going to public libraries or study rooms if TV in your family greatly affects you?

Secondly, it is a pity to find that you can’t enjoy any privacy in the house. If I were you, I would request my parents to install a telephone in my room or allow me to have my own mobile phone. If another telephone is not available and you treasure your privacy, then you have to use the phone when no one is around or simply invite your friends out for a chat.

Thirdly, it is a sensible idea to relieve pressure by going for entertainments. However, not all entertainments need money. Why don’t you choose those inexpensive yet healthy ones? Or simply choose those cost nothing, for example, playing ball games, jogging, swimming, or playing computer games? They are all enjoyable and do not need much money, right?

Lastly, please bear in mind that education is extremely important. There is no need for you to quit schooling at this stage as you are still young and should learn more for your further studies and career. Furthermore, a part-time job may help you out financially but it greatly affects your studies especially when you may not have enough energy to cope with the HKCEE!
To conclude, there is no need to worry too much about your problems and put yourselves under excessive pressure. Talk to your classmates, friends, teachers or parents about your problems and they will give you encouragement and support. It all depends on your attitude, whether you consider schooldays the happiest days of your life. Every day can be a happy day if you look at things positively and optimistically.

Chris