

SORRY, NO COFFEE IN THIS COFFEESHOP

Going overseas to further your education or going on an exchange programme? It is truly an exciting chapter in life as you prepare to enter a new phase of learning before contributing back to society. The various sights and sounds that await in the host country will definitely provide endless hours of sharing with friends and loved ones. As more and more young Singaporeans further their education overseas, they are also leaving the relatively sheltered life in this tiny country. They will, for the first time, experience new things that are unheard of or unavailable in Singapore.

While overseas trips are beneficial in gaining out-of-classroom knowledge, they also provide more opportunities to get into contact with undesirable substances like drugs and alcohol. For example, some countries have more relaxed rules with regard to the use of certain substances which are banned in Singapore. As a foreign student in these countries, it may be tempting to try drugs simply because there is little or no enforcement.

In Europe, for instance, there are establishments called 'Coffeshops' where patrons pay to smoke cannabis. Besides the popular coffee-based beverages found in international chain stores, cannabis of different varieties are readily available over the counter. While there is a strong novelty factor, it is vital to remember that abuse of any drug leads to addiction from the first try and serious health problems will soon follow.

WHEN DRUGS TAKE ON A SOFTER LOOK:

- In Southeast Asia, Full Moon Parties are social gatherings where partygoers engage in an all-night celebration. Drugs are also known to be sold and consumed at these parties.
- In some countries, cannabis is added as a topping together with tomato and cheese to pizzas commonly termed 'happy pizzas'. In other parts of the world, cannabis can be found as an ingredient in foods such as chocolate and ice cream. However, mixing drugs in everyday food does not mean that the experience is legal.

It is also useful to note that while overseas, not all laws are universal. Even though some drugs like cannabis (marijuana) may be legal out of Singapore, consuming drugs while overseas is still a punishable offence. Most importantly, your first try could get you hooked and send you on a downward spiral in life.

All Singaporeans / Permanent Residents found to have consumed illegal substances, **EVEN OUTSIDE OF SINGAPORE**, will face the penalty of imprisonment of up to 10 years, fine not exceeding S\$20,000 or both.

MAXIMISE YOUR YOUTH AND ENJOY THE FINER THINGS IN LIFE BUT REMAIN PRUDENT AND MAKE SMART CHOICES WHEN FACED WITH TEMPTATION.

