Fake IDs: Risky ticket to vice for underaged

By Nur Amira Abdul Karim

Jonathan got the student pass from a friend named Melissa, who churns them out at $40 to $70 a pop. Jonathan, a 17-year-old media studies student, knows he is taking a risk each time he flashes the fake pass made by Melissa.

He does not "go to the same shops to buy alcohol or cigarettes more than twice". But he uses his fake pass to buy beer for his friends who are under 18 — for a small fee.

"Bouncers look out for kids who use other people's identification cards. They don't really check if the cards are real," he says.

Yet, clubs YouthInk spoke to say that they rarely come across forged identity cards. Instances of underage clubbers using forged identity cards are few and far between, according to Zouk marketing manager Tracy Phillips.

She said: "There are periods or seasons when we see a few forged cards. But all it takes is one person to get caught and the entire group gets scared and stops using them." But a slight fray in the corner of his card gave him away. The wary bouncer peeled apart the torn lamination and found an ez-link card beneath.

Shahril was reported to the police and sent to a boys' home for three months, where he was counselled and made to perform community service.

The law here says that anyone who forges or tampers with the national identification card or is in possession of or makes use of a forged NRIC is guilty of an offence under the National Registrations Act. If convicted, he or she can be fined up to $10,000 or jailed for a term not exceeding 10 years, or both.

Minors, however, are usually given a lighter sentence. Police spokesman Stanley Norbert said: "Anyone who uses or produces forged student passes or other forms of identity cards may be charged with forgery, which is an offence under the law." Shahril is relieved that he got away with just doing this offence in my records now. I shouldn't have been so childish.

Jonathan's, his pass had his real name and photo. But a slight fray in the corner of his card gave him away.

"It's bad enough I have ruined my life if I was jailed or given a huge fine. But I shouldn't have been so childish."