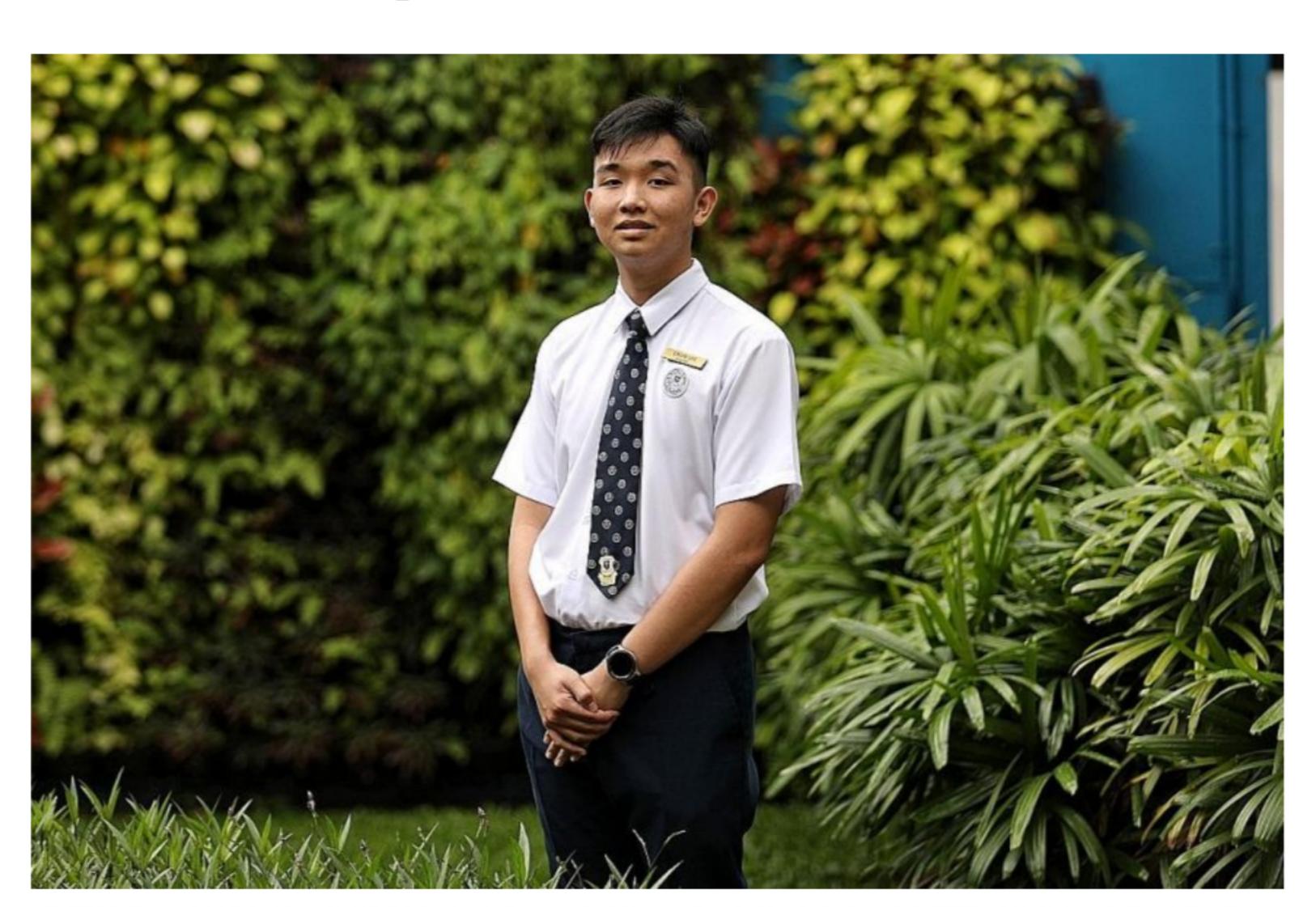
## He missed a year of school but managed to catch up



St Hilda's Secondary School student Caleb Lee was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukaemia in 2018, when he was in Secondary 2. He attained two distinctions out of six subjects for last year's O levels. ST PHOTO: JOEL CHAN

#### Sherlyn Sim

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When Caleb Lee was in Secondary 2 in 2018, he woke up one morning to jolts of pain in his thighs that were so excruciating his mother took him to a polyclinic.

He was referred that same day to KK Women's and Children's Hospital, where he was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukaemia.

The St Hilda's Secondary School student told The Straits Times: "Everything went downhill so fast and I was warded immediately. When the doctor told my mother (the diagnosis), she came out of his office crying.



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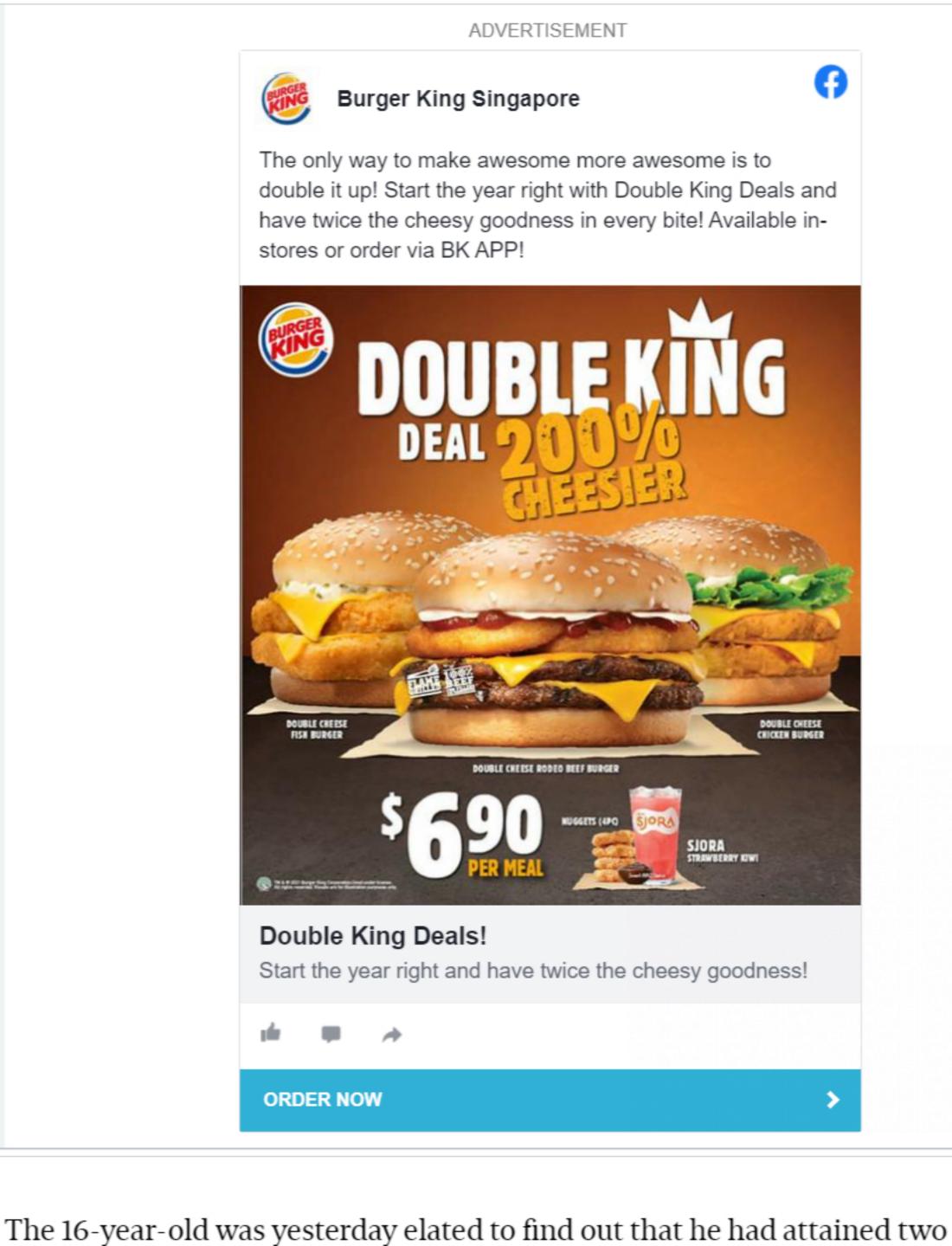
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not much I could do to change my condition."

Chemotherapy was intense, and he was out of school for a year.

"I thought: 'What did I do to deserve this?' I was also crestfallen because there was

He returned to join his classmates in Secondary 3, and with the help of his teachers and the extra lessons they provided, was promoted to Secondary 4 last year.



distinctions out of six subjects.

"I am very happy with my results and grateful to everyone who has supported me in

my journey," he said.

Caleb was hospitalised four to five days a week during the most intensive period of

his treatment.
"(Before the diagnosis), I was actively participating in the student council. When I

could not attend school for a year, I was lonely because I saw pictures of my friends

in school on social media, but I was at the hospital or home," said Caleb, who has a

His family, teachers and friends supported him throughout his recovery.

### This experier

19-year-old sister.

# This experience has also made me stronger and taught me to live my life with no regrets. CALEB LEE, whose cancer has been in remission for the past four months.

**99** 

His teachers regularly organised home visits and sent him worksheets to help him catch up with his studies.

Caleb was also determined to take the O-level exams with his classmates.

He also received extra help by attending the Children's Cancer Foundation's

His cancer has been in remission for the past four months. He now hopes to follow

schooling programme, Place for Academic Learning and Support.

in his mother's footsteps and become an accountant.

Caleb has secured a place in the Diploma in Accountancy and Finance programme at Temasek Polytechnic through the Early Admissions Exercise.

On what kept him motivated, he said: "Even though the journey was long and

arduous, I always tried to be positive and know that this is part of life, which is full of ups and downs.

regrets."

A version of this article appeared in the print edition of The Straits Times on January 12, 2021, with the headline 'He

"This experience has also made me stronger and taught me to live my life with no

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