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Yeovil College - Our Commitment to a Better College

Over the last two years the students and staff at Yeovil College have taken a number of important steps to develop a more healthy college. The Student Council have worked with the Senior Management Team in creating, 'our Commitment to a Better College' campaign with a focus on creating a clean, healthy, safe and respectful College.

Using the National Healthy School Standards as a template, there have been a number of developments. The tutorial programme has included presentations on drugs awareness, the effects of alcohol and smoking, safe driving and stress to name but a few. The Student Council organised a very successful Freshers' Fair which had exhibitors from a diverse range of health and care organisations.

The College has won a number of awards over the past few years for the success its extensive support network. The use of learning support assistants, counsellors, a faith advisor, a mental health co-ordinator, the College nurse and a behavioural support worker has contributed greatly to the emotional health and well being of the student body.

There can be a dilemma in any organisation when attempts are made to reconcile the desire to introduce healthy eating with those of maintaining a profitable student canteen. This was overcome by allowing the Student Council to work with the 'Megabyte' manager in coming up with menu items that would meet the healthy eating criteria while still proving popular with students. The introduction of special menus for events such as Fair-trade fortnight, Eating Disorders Awareness week, World Vegan Day, Burn's night and Diwali have

helped to raise cultural and dietary awareness.

Enrichment programme

The college has an outstanding reputation for sporting success, twelve students having gained international recognition in 2006-07 and 300 students competing regularly in an extensive enrichment programme. However, there is an equal emphasis in encouraging students to become more active. The Fitness Centre offers membership to students at hugely discounted rates. Like all other local authorities, the South Somerset District Council (SSDC) has been tasked with increasing the participation rates of the 16-21 age group. In partnership with the College, SSDC have supported the enrichment programme by providing free staff and facilities, offering such activities as hip hop dance and jazz dance. College staff can also join the Fitness Centre at reduced membership rates and there have been programmes of lunchtime fitness and pilates sessions. During every staff development day there are a number of popular health related options. A healthy college can help contribute to the Every Child Matters (ECM) agenda so the tutorial programme is being mapped against the ECM criteria. The plan is to support all staff so their schemes of work can be cross referenced in the same way.

The move to a healthy college cannot be achieved without the commitment of everyone. There is a lot of work to do in developing a better awareness of healthy issues among staff and students, but there is a real enthusiasm at the moment which has resulted in developments which can only go to benefit those who are involved.