



Vegan Inclusive Education



What is veganism?

Ethical veganism is a protected belief under the Equalities Act 2010¹.

Veganism is a philosophy and way of living which seeks to exclude – as far as is possible and practicable – all forms of exploitation of, and cruelty to, animals for food, clothing or any other purpose; and by extension, promotes the development and use of animal-free alternatives for the benefit of humans, animals and the environment.

THE VEGAN SOCIETY²

So from a school's perspective, a vegan pupil:

AVOIDS:

- dissection
- animals in captivity e.g. hatching projects and trips to zoos, farms and aquariums
- wool clothing and shoes made with leather or animal-based glues

NEEDS:

- vegan school meals
- learning approaches that are vegan-inclusive
- to know they are protected by the school's anti-bullying policy

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If you have time to do just one thing right now, there is a win-win option you can jump to on page 15.

Images on cover and opposite on page 1 by Freepik.com

¹ Judge Robin Postle ruled in a short summary judgment that ethical veganism satisfied the tests required for it to be a philosophical belief protected under the Equality Act 2010.

² <https://www.vegansociety.com/go-vegan/definition-veganism>

Welcome

Veganism is growing in the UK and this trend is set to continue. We are here to help you make your school vegan-inclusive for your current and future pupils.

WHY IS VEGAN-INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IMPORTANT?

1 It's a legal requirement

Ethical veganism is a protected belief under the Equalities Act 2010³, and is afforded the same legal protection as age, disability, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation. Schools have a duty under the law to make reasonable changes to ensure vegan pupils are not inadvertently or intentionally discriminated against.

2 You have a duty of care

Schools have a duty of care to all children under their supervision, to ensure everyone has access to belief-appropriate nutritious food.

3 Bullying can have severe consequences

Bullying of vegans is a serious issue but is often not treated with the severity it deserves. It includes assault⁴ and can result in children taking their own lives⁵.

4 Pupils need to feel safe to learn effectively

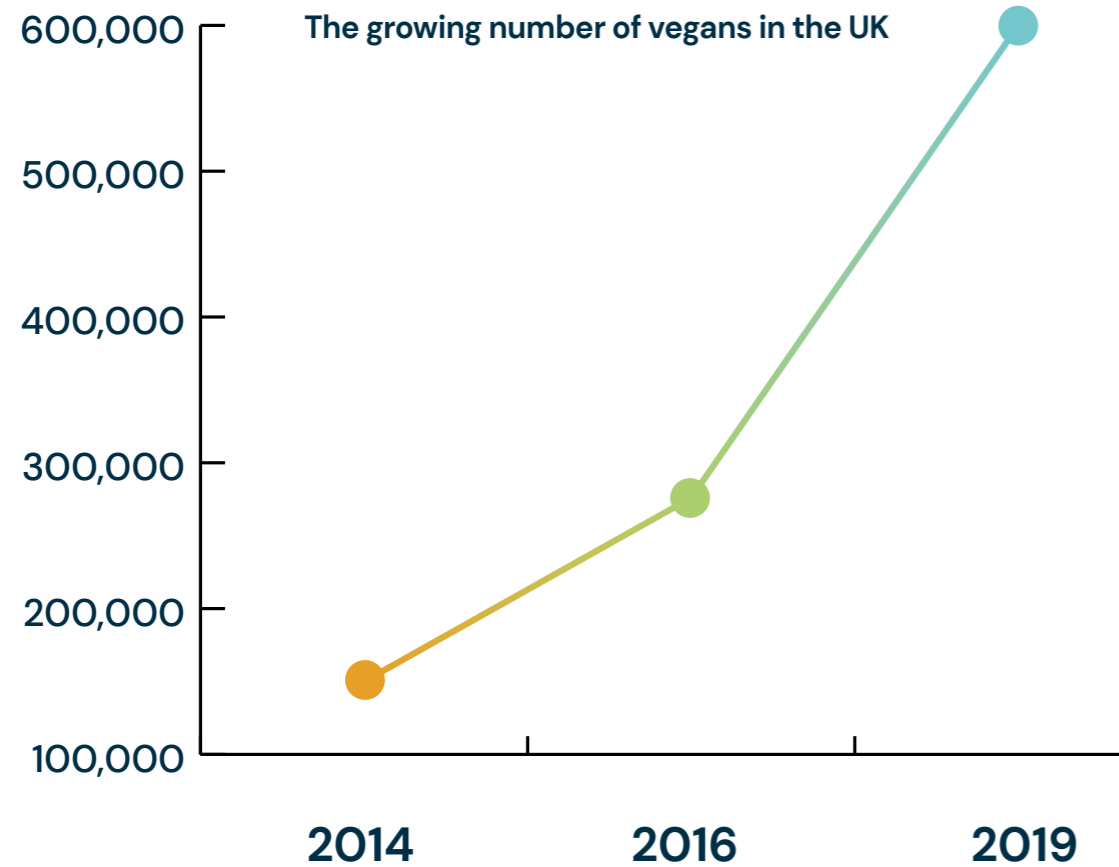
Education that is not vegan-inclusive can be inadvertently distressing to vegan pupils, and a distressed pupil cannot learn as effectively, and will feel less secure in their school setting.



³ Robin Postle ruled in a short summary judgment that ethical veganism satisfied the tests required for it to be a philosophical belief protected under the Equality Act 2010.

⁴ <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/vegan-schoolboy-headbutted-punched-bully-13905710>

⁵ <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/09/29/boy-12-hangs-bullies-throw-meat-vegan/>



5 There are more and more vegans in schools every year

More than one in a hundred people in the UK are now vegan⁶ and the proportion has quadrupled in the last five years.

Numbers are set to continue to rise. By investing time reviewing vegan-inclusion now you are making your school ready for growing numbers of vegan pupils in years to come.

6 Ethical veganism is a belief that needs to be protected just like others

Making up 1.1% of the UK population, vegans are now more common in the UK than those identifying as Jewish or Buddhist or Sikh.⁷

7 Ethical veganism is a belief that can be adopted at any life stage

Any of your pupils can adopt ethical veganism at any time, so as well as catering to current vegan pupils it is important to make sure the whole school curriculum is vegan-inclusive to ensure appropriate provision for newly vegan pupils in any year group.

⁶ Ipsos Mori surveys, commissioned by The Vegan Society, 2016 and 2019, and The Food & You surveys, organised by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and the National Centre for Social Science Research (Natcen).

⁷ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/religion/articles/religioninenglandandwales2011/2012-12-11#measuring-religion>

Experiences

To start to understand your vegan pupils' perspective, read some of their experiences here:

"I was bullied for being vegan, but the teachers did nothing about it because they agreed with the bullies. I had a music teacher tell me that they couldn't believe my parents would let me be so unhealthy. This really upset me because 1) it's not unhealthy!! 2) going vegan majorly impacted my relationship with my parents, and I didn't need reminding how disappointing I was to them (they still don't support me being vegan). My school offered no vegan options in the cafe. Not even a sandwich or pasta. So I had to bring a packed lunch every day."

H, 15, WEST LONDON

"I am an international fencer for Northern Ireland. As an elite vegan athlete, my diet is crucial to my performance. I face a regular challenge to manage my nutrition because my school choices are pasta or chips. I chose a vegan diet because of my concern for animal welfare, the environment, and my health. I hope support will be provided to schools to help them accommodate the increasing number of vegan students."

FINN MCMULLAN, AGE 18, NORTHERN IRELAND

"I felt upset when I heard they were going to do a chick hatching project. I worried the chicks would be sad without their mummy."

A, 5, EAST LONDON:

"Throughout sixth-form there were two vegans out of 400 students, myself included. The cafeteria never guaranteed that there would be a vegan option, and when they did one it would usually just be soup, which was not very filling especially at the crucial growing age of 16-18 years old. I remember once we had a meeting with the deputy head where anyone was free to offer suggestions on how to make the school more inclusive. I asked that there could be guaranteed vegan options for me to eat, to which some students laughed and the deputy head didn't do anything to make this happen. While other students were able to rely on there being a hot, filling meal for them every day, I was forced to bring in my own food which opened the door to social exclusion."

W, 18, NEWHAM

"It's really hard being the only vegan in my school. Even though they were nice enough to allow the 'Animal Aid' charity to come and talk to the students, it seems like the staff still don't understand our beliefs. I've recently stopped doing Outdoor Pursuits, as the teacher insists on doing a BBQ at the end of every session, and is cooking pig sausages. I really love pigs, they are one of my fave animals, so this disturbs me. My science teacher recently told the class how nice it was to eat turkeys on Thanksgiving and Christmas. This really upset me and I had to walk out the class. I know they're not doing this on purpose, but they just don't understand empathy and compassion for animals. I hope this project will spread the awareness needed for schools!"

LUCAS COMPTON, 14, EXETER

Ask your students for their experiences

Activism

Activism is part of veganism and encompasses outreach on streets, hunt monitoring, online activism, attending the annual animal rights march, and work with Animal Rebellion (a sister group to Extinction Rebellion).

Occasionally when considering the activism of their pupils, schools may consider **the Prevent Duty**, which requires schools to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”. The guidance notes: “It is important to emphasise that the Prevent duty is not intended to stop pupils debating controversial issues. ‘Extremism’ is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.”⁸

It is important to remember that ethical veganism is a protected belief under the Equalities Act 2010 (not extremism), and that vegan activism is a social justice movement.



Safeguarding & life outside of the school environment

Some families will not agree with or support children and young people’s vegan lifestyle. Be mindful of children and young people who might experience emotional trauma at home, be forced to eat non-vegan food, be provided with very little food, and so on. See veganism as intertwined with one’s identity, which can cause tensions outside of school that then have an impact on what happens at school.

⁸ The Prevent Duty: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/439598/prevent-duty-departmental-advice-v6.pdf

CHECKLIST OF STEPS FOR VEGAN-INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

STEP	RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUAL	DATE DUE	DONE
Adopt policies and procedures that are vegan inclusive (see page 13)			✓
Ensure your uniform policy doesn't require wool or leather			✓
Ensure vegan school meals are offered alongside others (see example menus from other schools on our website)			✓
Review school trips			✓
Review learning materials (see page 11 for free resources)			✓
Review teaching methods (see page 6 for examples of good practice)			✓
Review your library for vegan-inclusive books, and invest in new books as necessary (see page 12)			✓
Let your staff know veganism is a protected belief, and that they should be sensitive to it in the same way as to religion			✓
Discuss use of language with staff, e.g. vegans <i>choose</i> not to eat animal products (rather than <i>can't</i> eat them); don't say here is the vegan option and contrast that with a 'normal' version (label the milk as dairy or soy, or the nuggets as chicken or vegetable).			✓
Students are taught about veganism as a protected belief, understand the animal, environment and health reasons why people may choose vegan diets, and that as a protected belief mocking those following it would fall under the school's bullying policy.			✓
Meet with your school's inclusion officer to discuss how to take this work forward			✓

Good practice

To see how different aspects of school can be felt as vegan-inclusive or exclusive, read some examples of good and bad practice here. More examples can be found on our website:

Food

GOOD PRACTICE

- Plant-based vegan options included in the menu as standard **Example 1**
- Make sure vegan pupils are fully included in celebratory meals **Example 2**

EG 1

BAD PRACTICE

- No options available
- Vegan options available but poor and lacking variety
- Vegan options not on par with others e.g. no guaranteed dessert

NOTES

Taking a first step, and implementing plant-based menu options can be the biggest win-win in your vegan-inclusion journey, catering for multiple needs, reducing climate impact and promoting good health. **See page 15** for more information.

BEGINNING 28 SEPTEMBER 2020

WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Vegetarian / Vegan option Vegetarian burrito	Vegan/ Vegetarian option Sweet potato, spinach and chickpea curry with pilau rice	Vegetarian / Vegan option Flamin' nacho burger in a bun
Dish of the day Lamb burrito	Dish of the day Chicken fillet with pilau and lentil rice	Dish of the day Fillet cod fish finger
Sides Sweet potato fries	Sides Naan bread	Sides Chunky chips Garden peas
Snack Fruit Yoghurt	Snack Fruit Yoghurt	Snack Jelly pot Fruit

Available Daily: Fresh Fruit

CHRISTMAS LUNCH

Vegan Plant Chicken Tender (ve), Sausage (ve), roast potatoes, vegetable medley and gravy.

Christmas chocolate fudge cake

Mince pie & ice-cream

Apple juice or orange juice

KS1: 17th DECEMBER

KS2: 18th DECEMBER

Slips must be returned to the school by Friday 4th December

EG 2

Grapes are not equivalent to Easter eggs!

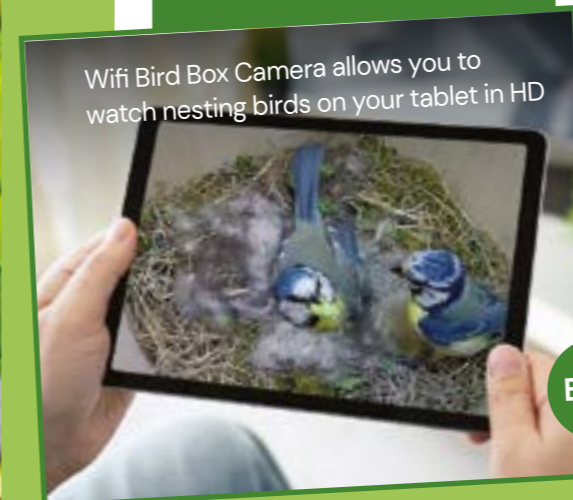
Supermarkets and shops like Holland & Barrett all carry free from ranges, so whenever you are giving children a treat, make sure you give your vegan child a proper treat to match

Animals

EG 4

GOOD PRACTICE

- Introducing alternatives to chick hatching projects **Example 3**



EG 3

BAD PRACTICE

- Chick hatching projects
- Farm topic work ignoring animal suffering
- Ignoring sensitivity around captivity: 'Do animals belong in the zoo or the farm?' **Example 4**
- Keeping school animals such as pigs, chickens and bees



NOTES

The RSPCA opposes the use of all animals in schools including school breeding programmes. You can read their guide to animal-friendly schools below⁹

Nutrition

GOOD PRACTICE

- Accurate information based on macro and micro nutrients **Example 5**

BENEFITS	VITAMIN A	SOURCES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> energy production nerve function immune function red blood cell formation (B12) reduces birth defects (folate) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> butternut squash carrots kale liver mango spinach sweet potatoes
BENEFITS	VITAMIN B	SOURCES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> vision reproduction immune function growth 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> butternut squash carrots kale liver mango spinach sweet potatoes
BENEFITS	VITAMIN C	SOURCES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> antioxidant collagen formation iron absorption 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> bell pepper Brussels sprouts citrus fruits kale tomato
BENEFITS	VITAMIN D	SOURCES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> bone mineralisation 		

EG 5

BAD PRACTICE

- Inaccurate information **Example 6**
- Exclusive assumptions about foods eaten

EG 6

9

<https://education.rspca.org.uk/documents/1494931/0/Animal+Friendly+Schools+Guidance+%285%29.pdf/c7c5fe97-e5a6-fa47-6205-8d22d45cf7c2?t=1558518337650>

Dissection

GOOD PRACTICE

- Provision of alternatives
Example 7

EG 7



NOTES

Studies show that students taught using non-animal methods:

- score as well as or better than those using animals
- learn more efficiently, as each body system can be virtually dissected repeatedly until students are confident with the material
- prefer these alternatives and find them more enjoyable

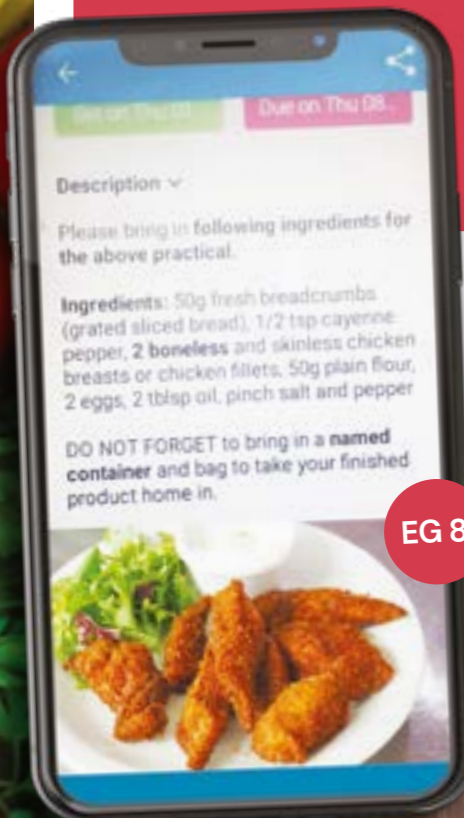
Non-animal methods substantially lower the cost and time of anatomy classes.

Home economics

BAD PRACTICE

- Making no accommodation of veganism
Example 8

EG 8



RE

BAD PRACTICE

- Gratitude practices that ignore the suffering of others
Example 9



Curriculum areas to review

FOR VEGAN-INCLUSIVE APPROACHES

Area	EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE	INADVERTENT VEGAN EXCLUSION
Animals	Use of nest boxes with cameras as an alternative to hatching projects	Class pets; hatching projects (The RSPCA opposes the use of all animals in schools including school breeding programmes ¹⁰); classification of animals as either zoo or farm animals
Art	Provision of vegan art materials as standard	Use of real feathers, wool or silk
Biology	Use of physical and computer models as dissection alternatives. Alternatively asking pupils to opt in to dissection, rather than opt out (which can place undue pressure on a child)	Dissection
Birthdays	Let parents know dietary requirements for their child's class so that they can bring in suitable treats	Not sharing class dietary requirements (which can also exclude other groups including those those with allergies or Jewish, Muslim or Hindu faiths)
Cooking	Making all recipes suitable for vegans means no separate supplies are needed, and everyone feels included. Making sure treats given to children are suitable for vegans	Cooking with meat, dairy, eggs and honey
Environment	Include the impact of adopting a vegan diet when discussing climate change, land use and water use. While meat and dairy provide just 18% of calories and 37% of protein, it uses the vast majority – 83% – of farmland and produces 60% of agriculture's greenhouse gas emissions. "A vegan diet is probably the single biggest way to reduce your impact on planet Earth, not just greenhouse gases, but global acidification, eutrophication, land use and water use," Joseph Poore, at the University of Oxford. ¹¹	Suggesting the biggest things an individual can do to reduce climate change are not drive a car, not fly, recycle (all of those are good, but adopting a vegan diet makes a bigger difference ¹²).
Fairs	Vegan food available and cooked separately to any meat	School fairs with animals present (sadness at confinement, inappropriate environment); BBQs (revulsion at strong meat smell)

¹⁰ <https://education.rspca.org.uk/documents/1494931/O/Animal+Friendly+Schools+Guidance+%285%29.pdf/c7c5fe97-e5a6-fa47-6205-8d22d45cf7c2?t=1558518337650>

¹¹ <https://josephpoore.com/Science%20360%206392%20987%20-%20Accepted%20Manuscript.pdf>

¹² <https://www.greenpeace.org/eu-unit/issues/nature-food/45051/animal-farming-in-eu-worse-for-climate-than-all-cars/>

Area	EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE	INADVERTENT VEGAN EXCLUSION
Health	Teaching nutrition based on the required nutrients e.g. calcium is important for strong bones and good sources can be found in soya, beans, almonds, tahini, greens, figs, oranges. Educate children that processed meat is classified as a group 1 carcinogen by the World Health Organisation ¹³ (the same as smoking tobacco and asbestos), and red meat group 2A.	Materials suggesting meat, dairy and eggs are important food groups, or essential for good health (one of the UK's longest-standing organisations that represents dietetics and nutrition, the British Dietetic Association, has affirmed that a well-planned vegan diet can "support healthy living in people of all ages" ¹⁴)
Literacy	Vegan inclusive books are available and read in class (see suggestions on page 12). Books which may offend vegan beliefs are known to staff and they ensure these are not sent home as reading books for vegan children.	Many children's books reference zoo or farm animals as living an idyllic life. For vegan children the contrast between the suffering they know the animals experience and the view presented in the book is distressing. Books focusing on food made from animals will cause distress.
Maths	Ten green bottles hanging on the wall	One, two, three, four, five, once I caught a fish alive (vegan children will understand that the fish is suffocating and suffers pain from the hook)
Music	Twinkle twinkle, Five little ducks	Baa baa black sheep; Old McDonald had a farm; Three blind mice
Open days	Making visiting families aware of vegan inclusive practices e.g. vegan menus available	Leaving dissected hearts out in the biology lab during school tours (giving prospective vegan pupils no choice to avoid seeing them)
RE	Including veganism in education about different beliefs	Egg painting, egg rolling, bringing lambs into school at Easter
School meals	Vegan options included on menus as standard, with parity of nutrition and variety (n.b. a plant-based option can accommodate all dietary requirements, including vegan, vegetarian, halal and kosher, as well as significantly reducing schools' carbon footprints). Catering staff know to retain enough vegan option portions for vegan pupils.	No vegan options available, or when introduced lack variety (e.g. same meals repeated) or parity (e.g. apples offered for pudding instead of dessert). Catering staff not educated about vegan diets, and so mix spoons or make judgemental comments about vegan options (e.g. 'worthy', 'tasteless').
Visits	Natural habitats: woods, rivers, ponds; animal sanctuaries	Zoos; farms; aquariums (all will trigger upset in the vegan child relating to captivity, and the future taking of life – common to regulate population levels in zoos and aquariums & for food production in farms)

¹³ <https://www.who.int/westernpacific/news/q-a-detail/q-a-on-the-carcinogenicity-of-the-consumption-of-red-meat-and-processed-meat>

¹⁴ <https://www.bda.uk.com/resource/british-dietetic-association-confirms-well-planned-vegan-diets-can-support-healthy-living-in-people-of-all-ages.html>

Vegan-inclusive education resources

There are many free educational resources for vegan-inclusive education. We have gathered lots on our website: vieducation.co.uk/schools The headings below give you an idea of the topics and resources you'll find covered:

PRIMARY

- *Animals* – Curriculum linked film presented by Michaela Strachan
- Chick hatching alternatives
- Free worksheets
- CBBC cooking show by 12 year old vegan chef Omari McQueen
- Food colouring plate chart
- RE Humane education pack including 40 lessons and activities

SECONDARY

- Animals
- Biology
- Citizenship, RE, Science KS3
- English – 8 poems on an animal theme
- Food technology resources GCSE
- General Studies
- Geography
- History
- PHSE
- RE
- Science: KS 3 & 4 / sixth form
- Veganism: KS 3 & 4



This guide is suitable for ages 5+. For more information on nutritional guidance for under 5s see *Eating Well: vegan infants and under 5s* from The First Steps Nutrition Trust¹⁵

¹⁵ <https://www.firststepsnutrition.org/eating-well-early-years>

Schools booklist

For teachers, we recommend *Vedicated! An educator's guide for vegan-inclusive teaching* by Laura Chepner, which includes lesson plans and other resources.

As Laura writes: “Your vegan child deserves to look in a library at their school and find vegan literature, not only to see themselves represented in wider society, but also to provide that crucial platform for understanding and acceptance.”

Here are a selection of books you might like to include in your school library:

PRIMARY

- *The BFG* by Roald Dahl
- *Watership Down* by Richard Adams
- *What vegan kids eat!* By Amber Pollock
- *V Is For Vegan: The ABCs of Being Kind* by Ruby Roth (Ages 3 – 7)
- *That's Why We Don't Eat Animals* by Ruby Roth (Ages 6 – 9)
- *Vegan Is Love* by Ruby Roth (Ages 7 – 10)
- *The Vegan Alphabet Book* by Miss E. E. Bertram (Ages 2 – 6)
- *Sprig The Rescue Pig* by Leslie Crawford (Ages 4 – 7)
- *Gwen The Rescue Hen* by Leslie Crawford (Ages 4 – 7)
- *Linus The Vegetarian T-Rex* by Robert Neubecker (4 – 8)
- *The Adventures of Esther The Wonder Pig* by Steve Jenkins, Derek Walter & Caprice Crane (Ages 6 – 9)
- *Just Like Me* by Stanley Foo (Ages 2 – 5)
- *I'm A Super Vegan* by Katie Clark (Ages 1 – 7)
- *We All Love* by Julie Hausen (Ages 1 – 7)
- *Steven The Vegan* by Dan Bodenstien (Ages 4 – 8)
- *That's Not My Momma's Milk* by Julia Barcalow (Ages 0 – 7)
- *Dave Loves Chickens* by Carlos Patino (Ages 2 – 6)
- *Vivi The Super Vegan* by Tina Newman (Ages 5 – 9)
- *Not A Nugget* by Stephanie Dreyer (Ages 2 – 5)
- *Charlie to the Rescue* by Kara Maria (Ages 3 – 7)
- *Santa's First Vegan Christmas* by Robin Raven and Kara Maria
- *I don't wanna eat animals anymore!* by Ruth Greenwood

SECONDARY

- *The Humans* by Matt Haig
- *The Little Book of Vegan Poems* by Benjamin Zephaniah
- *PopCo* by Scarlett Thomas
- *Oryx and Crake* by Margaret Atwood
- *The Bees* by Laline Paull
- *Fire Bringer* by David Clement-Davies
- *Alex As Well* by Alyssa Brugman
- *SCARS: A Black Lesbian Experience In Rural White New England* by A. Breeze Harper
- *Amanda the Teen Activist* by Catherine Kelaher
- *The Adventures of Vivian Sharpe, Vegan Superhero* by Marla Rose
- *GENERATION V: The Complete Guide to Going, Being, and Staying Vegan as a Teenager* by Calire Askew
- *Lily Bowers and the Uninvited Guest* by Jess Lohmann
- *Millennial Vegan – Tips for Navigating Relationships, Wellness, and Everyday Life as a Young Animal Advocate* by Dr. Casey T. Taft
- *Be More Vegan: The Young Person's Guide to a Plant-Based Lifestyle* by Niki Webster

Policies to assist vegan-inclusion in your school

The following policy examples allow you to demonstrate that you are taking this element of inclusion seriously:

- 1 At _____ we believe that each child who identifies as vegan deserves the right to be educated using methods which are inclusive. We aim to make our school as vegan-inclusive as possible, and will endeavour to teach topics and use language deemed appropriate.
- 2 We at _____ understand the trauma triggers that a vegan child experiences and will work towards eliminating these from our daily practice. In doing so, we will avoid topics and language that a vegan child may find upsetting and will instead concentrate our efforts into teaching the key skills necessary through carefully thought out topics, stories, and experiences.
- 3 We here at _____ believe that each child deserves to feel safe and valued; this extends to vegan children also. We understand that vegan children see the world through very different eyes to the majority of the world, but we value their opinion and will work towards creating a fully vegan-inclusive school. Each year we will look at our topics, trips, activities and stories ensuring that they are suitable for the entire class and will not trigger negative thoughts or disrupt the learning potential of the vegan child.
- 4 We at _____ will teach vegan-friendly topics throughout the full year that a vegan child spends in a class. The class teacher in that year will have training and a full understanding of all that “vegan” means in order to be as inclusive as possible. We respect their belief system and will work in accordance with that.

These template policies were drafted by qualified teacher, SENCo and vegan-inclusive education consultant Laura Chepner¹⁶, and are taken from her book *Vedicated! An Educator's Guide for Vegan-Inclusive Teaching*, which includes many additional resources.

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOU HAVE A VEGAN PUPIL?

Examples of good practice:

- > put a question on the school registration form
- > ask school cohort annually
- > include messages on social media e.g. to get in touch if you require a vegan school dinner

Plant-based diets for the environment

Leading environmental organizations and international institutions are urging a shift toward plant-based diets as one of the most important actions the public can take to reduce climate destruction, deforestation, species extinction, and global hunger. In a special report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the United Nations recently declared that plant-based diets have the greatest and most immediate benefit to the climate.¹⁷

11,000 scientists signed a Climate Emergency Declaration imploring governments, policymakers, and consumers to take specific actions to reduce emissions. The scientists urged: “eating mostly plant-based foods while reducing the global consumption of animal products... to improve human health and significantly lower GHG emissions.”¹⁸

Leeds City Council has committed to providing vegetarian and vegan meals at 180 schools as part of its commitment to halve its carbon footprint by 2025

“The one thing we need more than hope is action. Once we start to act, hope is everywhere.”

CLIMATE ACTIVIST GRETA THUNBERG – VEGAN FOR THE CLIMATE

DAILY ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT DIETARY COMPARISON

Plant-based diets use the least land area, 4m² and the lowest amount of fresh water, 400 litres. It also has the lowest carbon footprint of 1.5kg CO₂. Average UK consumption uses over 4 times as much land at 16m² and more water, 620 litres. It also releases 3 times the CO₂ at 4.7kg.¹⁹

	Plant-based diet	Average UK consumption
Land		
Water		
Carbon		

Does your school have an **Eco Council**? Share these statistics with your green group and ask them whether they would like a tasty planet friendly meal option on the school menu every day.

¹⁷ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (United Nations) – IPCC https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2018/02/ipcc_wg3_ar5_chapter11.pdf

¹⁸ BioScience, World Scientists’ Warning of a Climate Emergency <https://academic.oup.com/bioscience/article/70/1/8/5610806>

¹⁹ Calculations based 2100 kcals, not including food waste. Using impact data from *Reducing food’s environmental impacts through producers and consumers* J. Poore, T. Nemecek Science, June 2018

A plant-based school menu option – the biggest win win

Making a change means making an investment of precious time.

Luckily adding a plant-based school menu option comes with plenty of win-wins to maximise the return on your investment, as you take a huge step towards vegan inclusion.

The triple win of a putting a vegan school meal option on your schools’ day to day menu:

1 MEETING MULTIPLE DIETARY REQUIREMENTS

Plant-based school meals can be suitable for all diets. So one option can be designed to cover all the following dietary requirements:

- Vegan
- Vegetarian
- Kosher
- Ital
- Halal
- Dairy allergies
- Egg allergies
- Nut allergies

all the while also being suitable for anybody who wants to choose it. Updating vegetarian/ meat-free dishes to vegan recipes makes catering inclusively simple.

2 REDUCING GLOBAL WARMING

Plant-based school meals can be a tool to significantly reduce your school’s climate impact. Livestock farming represents a bigger cause of climate change than all transportation combined²⁰. So whether through Meat Free Mondays or even more of the week, more plant-based meals means fewer greenhouse gas emissions. You can mark them with a healthy planet logo on your menu, allowing everyone who cares about our planet’s future to choose the meal with the lowest greenhouse gas emissions.

3 IMPROVING YOUR PUPILS’ HEALTH

By building a menu option that excludes dairy you reduce your pupils’ exposure to the associated health risks, since dairy is the top source of saturated fat contributing to the UK’s leading cause of death: heart disease, as well as type 2 diabetes and Alzheimer’s²¹, in addition to being associated with an increased risk of breast²², ovarian²³ and prostate cancers²⁴. Although most of these diseases are not symptomatic until adulthood, they have their beginnings in childhood.

²⁰ <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2014/12/livestock-climate-changes-forgotten-sector-global-public-opinion-meat-and-dairy-consumption>

²¹ <https://www.pcrm.org/good-nutrition/nutrition-information/health-concerns-about-dairy>

²² <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/02/200225101323.htm#:~:text=Intake%20of%20dairy%20milk%20is,at%20Loma%20Linda%20University%20Health>

²³ <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/15069693/>

²⁴ <https://prostatecanceruk.org/prostate-information/are-you-at-risk/can-i-reduce-my-risk>

By building a menu option that excludes meat you are reducing the risk of cancer for your pupils, since the World Health Organisation has classified red meat as a type 2A carcinogen (likely to cause cancer) and processed red meat – sausages, bacon, hot dogs – as a type 1 carcinogen (definitely causes cancer)²⁵.

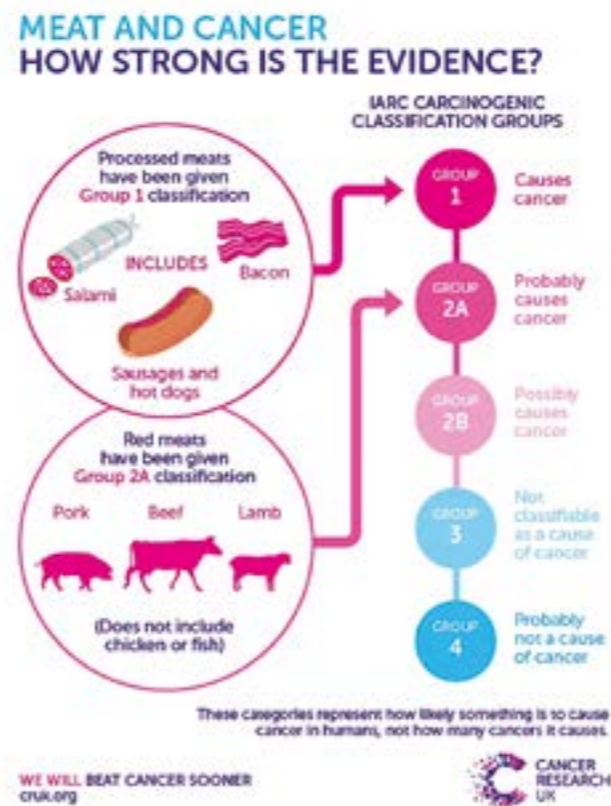
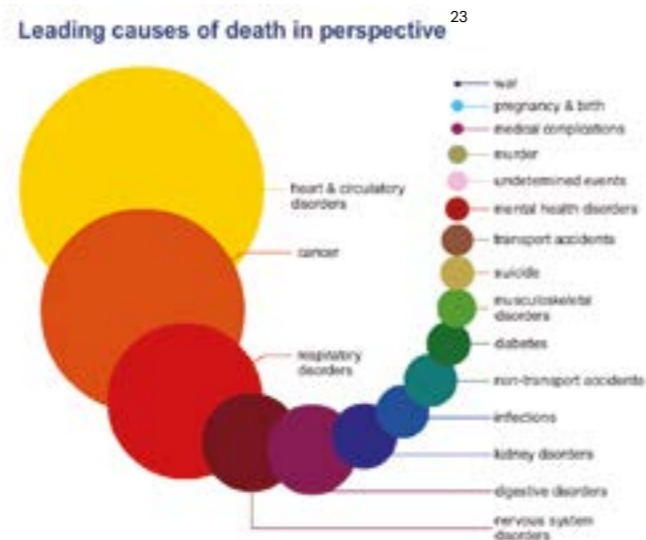
Since fibre is not found in animal products, building menus around whole plant-based foods helps your menus meet your pupils' required fibre intakes:

- Children 5–11 years: **20g**
- Children 11–16 years: **25g**
- Adolescents 16–18 years: **30g**

On average, children and teenagers are only getting around 15g or less of fibre a day. Encouraging them to eat plenty of fruit and vegetables and starchy foods (choosing wholegrain versions and potatoes with the skins on where possible) can help to ensure they are eating enough fibre. There is strong evidence that eating plenty of fibre (commonly referred to as roughage) is associated with a lower risk of heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and bowel cancer.²⁶

Reducing the likelihood of your pupils suffering the two leading causes of death is no mean feat in a menu option!

Investing the time to implement a daily vegan menu option is a justifiable source of pride for everyone who wants an inclusive, environmentally-sound and healthy school for their pupils to thrive in.



²⁵ <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-on-the-carcinogenicity-of-the-consumption-of-red-meat-and-processed-meat>

²⁶ <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/how-to-get-more-fibre-into-your-diet/#:~:text=Children%20under%20the%20age%20of,-year%20olds%3A%20need%20about%2025g>

²⁷ UK's National Health Service, Atlas of Risk

Catering for vegans

Some schools prepare their own meals, and many use catering companies or their Local Authorities. Whoever provides your school meals, you can share this guidance with them as they review their menus:

Plant-based food is not just for vegetarians and vegans, it's pretty much suitable for everyone, regardless of faith and dietary requirements. It's the most inclusive diet.

The easiest and cheapest approach for caterers is for all vegetarian/meat-free dishes to be made vegan.

ProVeg UK works with local authorities, schools and caterers, offering a menu support package of completely free services helping schools to achieve more sustainable, healthier, and cheaper menus. ProVeg's services include menu consultancy, recipe ideas, plant-based culinary training, impact evaluation, and media and PR support. Their approach is soft and gentle, focusing on small, easy-to-implement changes, usually in phases. Get in touch with them for a free no-obligation consultation at schools@proveg.com



All schools in the Scottish Council of **West Dunbartonshire** now offer vegan food options

IF YOU WANT TO GET STARTED ON DESIGNING A MENU STRAIGHT AWAY, HERE ARE SOME TOP TIPS:

- Ensure meals contain a vitamin C source.
- Ensure that most meals feature legumes (beans, lentils and peas) as the main source of protein, but add variety by making use of soya mince, tofu and Vegan Quorn too.
- Ensure that fortified plant-based alternatives to milk or yoghurt are available every day.

Vegans don't eat anything that comes from an animal. This includes:

- Meat, including chicken, fish or any kind of shellfish
- Milk from any animal, or products containing milk such as cheese, yoghurt, cream
- Eggs, or products containing eggs such as mayonnaise
- Honey, gelatine or beeswax

Caterers should strive to minimise cross-contamination from non-vegan products as far as is reasonably practicable. This includes keeping vegan and non-vegan foods separate, and using clean equipment.

Menu ideas and recipes are available at vieducation.co.uk/schools

Supporting staff

Your journey towards vegan-inclusion will not be an overnight process. It will take time, and mistakes will be made, but we will support you at each step and answer any questions you may have.

Vegan parents will also be able to help you understand what their children need, supporting a strong home-school bond. There are lots of places ready to help.

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Primary Veducation is a free consultancy service that promotes vegan inclusion within Primary Schools. Schools with vegan children attending are welcome to contact Primary Veducation as part of your CPD and arrange a staff meeting.

<http://primaryveducation.com/>

Primary Veducation is run by Laura Chepner a former primary school teacher with SENCo experience with the aim of promoting vegan awareness and vegan-inclusion in schools.

RESOURCES

Our veducation.co.uk website has dozens of links to useful resources, sorted by subject and key stage, and is regularly updated with new teacher resources, video links, courses and more.

VEGAN STAFF

It's not all about the kids!

Hundreds of UK schools have vegan teachers and staff members. To make sure they feel included, provide them with plant milks and vegan biscuits in the staff room and vegan school staff lunch & breakfast options – and make sure enough of these options are kept back for them. If you're treating your staff, avoid sweets with gelatine, and make sure you offer a vegan version. For schools trips make sure

vegan sandwiches/packed lunches are available, and remember not to require staff to take part in supporting trips that contravene their beliefs such as trips to zoos and aquariums. Understand vegan staff will not want to deliver hatching projects or dissection classes, or use non-vegan art supplies.

Your vegan staff will love you for it!

“I have to say the Head teacher where I work is brilliant. If she brings cakes in for staff there is always a vegan one. The cook in the kitchen makes vegan dishes and brings them for me to taste test. We have award winning vegan sandwiches, vegan cheese etc. I'm a biology teacher and my line manager is fine with me not doing any dissections and is supportive”.

CATHERINE JOHNSON, VEGAN TEACHER

As you make these changes we'd love to share your successes – if you'd like to feature in our examples of good practice, please email them to us at examples@veducation.co.uk

We'd like to thank you for committing to make your school a vegan-inclusive environment. You are creating a space where vegan pupils can feel safe and comfortable to learn, both now and in the future, and it means a great deal to vegan pupils and their families. We truly appreciate your work.