

Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) and Parent Teacher and Friends Associations (PTFAs):

WHY AND HOW TO BE VEGAN-INCLUSIVE



PTA and PTFA volunteers are the heart of school communities, giving their time to create enriching experiences for all learners.

By embracing vegan-inclusive practices, school volunteers ensure every child feels valued and included, making school events a true celebration of kindness and community.

WHY SHOULD PTAs AND PTFAs BE VEGAN-INCLUSIVE?

Promoting Inclusivity: The principles of inclusion concern all learners. Veganism is also protected under human rights law and ethical veganism is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. Discrimination against vegans is prohibited and schools must take reasonable steps to accommodate the needs of vegan learners. By adopting a vegan-inclusive approach, PTAs and PTFAs encourage a culture of inclusivity, showing that everyone is valued.

Examples:

- Fundraisers with vegan food options allow all families to participate.
- Craft activities with plant-based materials ensure everyone can join in.
- Disco stalls with vegan sweets and drinks make the fun accessible to all.

Reflecting Diverse Values: Many families choose veganism for ethical, health or environmental reasons. Recognising these choices through inclusive practices ensures no learner feels marginalised or excluded.

“

Seeing our school embrace inclusivity has boosted my child's confidence and happiness. – Martin, Father of Lois, Year 6

“

Our PTA's vegan pancakes created lasting memories of inclusion. – Dana, Mother of Jacob, Year 46

HOW CAN PTAs AND PTFAs BE VEGAN-INCLUSIVE?

Offer Vegan-Friendly Options

Examples:

- Host bake-sale fundraisers with vegan cakes or biscuits so everyone can take part.
- Offer plant-based mince pies and hot chocolate at Christmas fairs to include all families.
- Serve vegan burgers, sausages and iced treats at summer BBQs to ensure no one is left out.

Supporting Healthier Choices: Studies show that plant-based diets support health and well-being. Barnard et al. (2019) found they improve cardiovascular health and body composition, with lower body mass linked to better outcomes. The latest **UK National Diet and Nutrition Survey (NDNS)** reports children's diets are not meeting fibre recommendations, impacting long-term health. More plant-based options can help increase fruit, veg and pulse intake. Providing these options at events benefits everyone, not just vegans.

Examples:

- Serve plant-based snacks at meetings and fairs so everyone can enjoy a healthy option.
- Offer vegan hot meals, such as vegetable curry, to ensure all attendees are catered for.
- Encourage fruit instead of sweets for celebrations to support healthier choices for all.

Avoid the Use of Live Animals: Using live animals at events—such as mobile farms, reptile displays, or donkey and reindeer visits—can exclude vegan learners and raise welfare concerns. Opt for activities that promote kindness and inclusion without involving other animals.

Examples:

- Set up a wildlife-themed treasure hunt or quiz trail using images and facts about animals.
- Offer a “create your own animal” craft station using sustainable, vegan-friendly materials.
- Use plush toys or themed props to create seasonal displays, such as for Easter or winter celebrations.

Encouraging Environmental Responsibility: Schools are expected to encourage learners to think about how they can lessen their impact on the environment, especially since the launch of the Sustainability and Climate Change strategy for schools and children’s services (2022). According to Poore and Nemecek (2018), plant-based foods have a significantly lower environmental impact compared to animal-based foods. By choosing vegan-friendly practices, volunteers can actively demonstrate a commitment to sustainability.

Examples:

- Switch to plant-based catering to help reduce the environmental impact of events.
- Choose sustainable decorations to minimise waste and encourage responsible choices.
- Involve the Eco-Team in event planning to empower learners and promote sustainability.

Consider Vegan-Friendly Materials

Examples:

- Use synthetic glue instead of gelatine-based glue to ensure activities are suitable for all.
- Choose faux feathers for crafts to keep materials animal-free and accessible.
- Provide wooden eggs for Easter decorating to offer a reusable, inclusive alternative.

Engage with the School Community

Examples:

- Talk with parents and guardians about dietary needs.
- Include vegan perspectives in event planning.
- Invite vegan parents and guardians to join the PTA or PTFA.

Partner with Relevant Organisations

Examples:

- Use educational materials from The Vegan Society to support inclusive learning.
- Arrange workshops or talks with representatives to enrich school events.
- Access free resources designed for schools to enhance understanding and engagement.

By embracing vegan inclusivity, PTAs and PTFAs would ensure all learners feel welcomed, included and supported, while promoting school events that are healthier, more inclusive and environmentally sustainable.

For resources and support, visit The Vegan Society's website at vegansociety.com or email education@vegansociety.com.

Legal References: Equality Act 2010, c. 15. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>.

Department for Education, *Sustainability and Climate Change: A Strategy for the Education and Children's Services Systems*. London: Department for Education, 2022. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sustainability-and-climate-change-strategy>.

Scientific Studies: Barnard, Neal D., Hana Kahleova, Susan E. Levin, and James C. Harder. "The Effects of a Plant-Based Diet on Plasma Lipids." *American Journal of Lifestyle Medicine* 13, no. 3 (2019): 298–307. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1559827619832024>.

Poore, Joseph, and Thomas Nemecek. "Reducing Food's Environmental Impacts Through Producers and Consumers." *Science* 360, no. 6392 (2018): 987–992. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aag0216>.

Public Health England. *National Diet and Nutrition Survey: Rolling Programme Years 9 to 11 (2016/2017 to 2018/2019)*. London: Public Health England, 2020. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/ndns-results-from-years-9-to-11-2016-to-2019>.