

## Vegan Education in Schools

### Vegan Clubs

#### Years 7 to 12

#### Volunteering days at local shelters or sanctuaries

---

##### Overview

Volunteering days at animal shelters, wildlife rescues or sanctuaries offer students a hands-on opportunity to contribute directly to animal rights. These visits allow students to engage with rescued animals, learn about their needs and support the work of organisations dedicated to their care. By participating in tasks such as feeding animals, cleaning enclosures or assisting with outreach efforts, students gain a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by animals and the importance of sanctuaries and shelters.

---

#### How to organise volunteering days at local shelters or sanctuaries

---

##### 1. Partner with a shelter or sanctuary to plan the volunteering day.

- Reach out to local organisations to coordinate a volunteering opportunity. Examples of organisations in Australia include:
    - a) WIRES (wildlife rescue and rehabilitation).
    - b) Edgar's Mission (farmed animal sanctuary).
    - c) Local animal rescue organisations or wildlife rehabilitation centres.
  - Confirm the number of students they can accommodate, the tasks they need help with and any specific requirements.
- 

##### 2. Prepare students with an introduction to the organisation and its mission.

- Share information about the organisation, including:
  - a) The types of animals they care for (e.g., farmed animals, wildlife or companion animals).
  - b) The organisation's goals and the challenges they address.
- Discuss the importance of shelters and sanctuaries in providing refuge for animals in need.

### **3. Assign tasks that are appropriate for the students' age and abilities.**

- Examples of tasks students might perform:
    - a) Feeding animals or preparing their meals.
    - b) Cleaning enclosures or common areas.
    - c) Assisting with simple maintenance tasks, like painting fences or planting gardens.
    - d) Creating enrichment items such as toys for dogs or activity feeders for wildlife.
    - e) Helping with administrative or outreach efforts, like sorting donations or creating promotional materials.
- 

### **4. Provide clear instructions and safety guidelines for the day.**

- Share rules for interacting with animals to ensure their safety and comfort:
    - a) "Approach animals calmly and quietly."
    - b) "Always follow staff instructions when handling or feeding animals."
  - Discuss the importance of respecting the animals' space and understanding their behaviours.
- 

### **5. Include opportunities for students to interact with the animals.**

- Arrange for supervised, hands-on interactions with rescued animals to deepen empathy and connection:
    - a) Example: Petting or grooming animals like dogs, cats or farmed animals.
    - b) Observing wildlife up close while learning about their rehabilitation process.
    - c) Helping staff during feeding times to understand the animals' daily needs.
- 

### **6. Incorporate an educational session led by sanctuary staff.**

- Ask staff members to share stories about the animals and the organisation's work:
  - a) "This is Bella, a pig rescued from animal agriculture. Here's how she's thriving now."
  - b) "These kangaroos were orphaned due to habitat destruction. Here's how we're helping them return to the wild."

- Include a Q&A session where students can ask about the animals and the sanctuary's operations.
- 

## **7. Encourage reflection and discussion after the volunteering experience.**

- Lead a group discussion to help students process what they learned:
    - a) "What surprised you most about the work done at the shelter or sanctuary?"
    - b) "How did interacting with the animals make you feel?"
    - c) "What actions can we take to continue supporting animals in need?"
- 

## **8. Take photos or videos to document the experience.**

- Capture moments of the day to share with the school community, parents and the organisation.
  - Ensure any photos are taken respectfully and with the permission of the sanctuary staff.
- 

## **9. Combine the volunteering day with a fundraising or awareness campaign.**

- Use the experience to launch related initiatives:
    - a) Organise a fundraiser to support the shelter or sanctuary.
    - b) Create awareness posters or social media posts inspired by the volunteering day.
    - c) Plan follow-up visits to maintain the connection with the organisation.
- 

## **10. Recognise students' efforts with certificates or a small celebration.**

- Provide certificates of participation to acknowledge their contribution.
  - Host a reflection session with vegan snacks to celebrate their efforts and discuss future volunteering opportunities.
- 

## **Outcomes**

- **Empathy and connection:** Students develop a personal connection to animals and a deeper understanding of their needs.

- **Hands-on learning:** Volunteering provides practical experience in animal care and sanctuary operations.
- **Inspiration to act:** Students are motivated to continue supporting animals through advocacy, donations or future volunteer work.
- **Community engagement:** Students contribute directly to their community by helping local shelters or sanctuaries.
- **Teamwork and collaboration:** Working together on tasks fosters a sense of shared purpose and builds teamwork skills.