

## Vegan Education in Schools

### Vegan Clubs

### Years 7 to 12

## Animal rights guest panels

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### Overview

Animal rights guest panels provide students with the opportunity to learn from experts and leaders who are deeply involved in animal protection. By inviting activists, sanctuary founders, Indigenous leaders, or scientists to discuss ethical perspectives and real-world experiences, students gain valuable insights into animal rights issues and the efforts being made to address them. This interactive activity fosters empathy, critical thinking and motivation to take action.

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### How to organise animal rights guest panels

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#### 1. Identify topics and themes for the panel discussion.

- Choose a focus that resonates with students and aligns with current animal rights concerns:
    - a) **Sanctuary Work:** Highlighting the rescue and rehabilitation of farmed animals.
    - b) **Wildlife Conservation:** Discussing the importance of protecting native species and ecosystems.
    - c) **Indigenous Perspectives:** Exploring traditional relationships with animals and sustainable practices.
    - d) **Advocacy in Action:** Sharing strategies for raising awareness and creating change.
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#### 2. Invite knowledgeable and inspiring guest speakers.

- Reach out to individuals or organisations with expertise in animal rights or conservation:
  - a) Sanctuary founders or caretakers who can share stories of rescued animals.
  - b) Activists or campaign leaders advocating for policy changes or animal protection.
  - c) Indigenous leaders who can provide insights into cultural and ethical approaches to animals.

- d) Scientists or environmentalists working on wildlife protection or ethical research alternatives.
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### 3. Plan the structure and format of the panel discussion.

- Decide on a format that ensures a dynamic and engaging event:
    - a) **Introduction:** Begin with a brief overview of the topic and introduce the panellists.
    - b) **Panellist Presentations:** Allow each speaker 5–10 minutes to share their perspective or story.
    - c) **Moderated Discussion:** Facilitate a conversation between panellists on key questions or themes.
    - d) **Audience Q&A:** Open the floor for students to ask questions and engage directly with the panellists.
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### 4. Prepare the venue and materials for the event.

- Arrange a suitable venue, such as the school hall, library, or outdoor space, with:
    - a) A podium or table for the panellists.
    - b) Audio-visual equipment for presentations or videos.
    - c) Comfortable seating for the audience.
  - Provide name cards for the panellists and printed programmes outlining the schedule and topics.
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### 5. Promote the event to maximise attendance.

- Use posters, announcements and social media to inform students, teachers and parents about the panel:
  - a) Create a compelling tagline, such as *"Voices for Animals: Stories and Solutions from the Frontlines."*
  - b) Highlight the credentials of the panellists to generate excitement.
  - c) Encourage students to prepare questions in advance to engage meaningfully with the discussion.

## 6. Moderate the discussion to ensure a smooth flow.

- Assign a teacher, student leader, or guest as the moderator to:
    - a) Introduce the panellists and outline the event format.
    - b) Keep the discussion on track and ensure equal speaking time for all panellists.
    - c) Encourage respectful dialogue and active listening during the Q&A session.
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## 7. Facilitate audience participation for a deeper connection.

- Allow time for students to ask questions and share their thoughts:
    - a) Encourage open-ended questions that spark dialogue, such as:
      - "What challenges do you face in your work and how can young people help?"
      - "What success stories inspire you to continue advocating for animals?"
    - b) Offer opportunities for small group discussions after the panel to continue exploring the themes.
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## 8. Provide educational materials and follow-up resources.

- Distribute materials related to the topics discussed, such as:
    - a) Pamphlets or brochures from the panellists' organisations.
    - b) Links to documentaries, websites, or campaigns for further learning.
    - c) Suggested actions, such as volunteering, donating, or signing petitions.
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## 9. Reflect on the event with students and panellists.

- Host a feedback session to gather insights and assess the impact of the panel:
  - a) "What did you learn about animal rights that surprised or inspired you?"
  - b) "How did hearing from experts change your perspective on these issues?"
  - c) "What actions would you like to take after this event?"
- Thank the panellists for their participation and acknowledge their contributions publicly.

## 10. Use the panel as a springboard for action and ongoing learning.

- Build on the themes discussed to inspire follow-up projects or activities:
    - a) Start a student-led campaign to support a specific animal rights cause mentioned during the panel.
    - b) Organise a fundraiser for a sanctuary or organisation represented at the event.
    - c) Plan a visit to a sanctuary, wildlife centre, or community project to gain hands-on experience.
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## Outcomes

- **Awareness and education:** Students gain insights into animal protection and ethical perspectives from experienced advocates.
- **Empathy and connection:** Hearing personal stories fosters a deeper emotional connection to animal rights issues.
- **Critical thinking:** The interactive format encourages students to analyse complex topics and explore diverse viewpoints.
- **Inspiration to act:** The event motivates students to take meaningful steps toward supporting animal protection and advocacy.
- **Community building:** The panel creates a space for dialogue and collaboration among students, educators and advocates.