

**An open letter to: Kent County Council**  
**Re: Plant based meals and milk in schools**

Dear: Decision Maker

Parents and carers of vegan children across Kent are facing discrimination and immense stress every day as they endure arduous battles to access plant-based meals and milk at their children's schools.

Many more parents and carers of vegan children across Kent are unable to take advantage of free school meals due to the limited plant-based options.

Even worse; some parents and carers who want to give their child a vegan diet decide not to do so because of the problems they anticipate in accessing plant-based meals and milk at school.

These are clearly not the kind of dilemmas anyone would want parents and carers to face when wanting to raise healthy children who enjoy a wide range of foods and who are respectful and tolerant of the differences between us in society.

Vegans have a protected characteristic for the application of the Equality Act 2010, as do individuals who live according to qualifying beliefs regarding the current climate emergency. In the provision of services, local authorities are under a statutory duty to consider the needs of all those who are protected under equality law, to eradicate discrimination by removing disadvantages, and foster good relations between those who a protected characteristic and those who do not. To meet the needs of vegans and all those who eat a plant-based diet for environmental reasons, and to avoid potential unlawful discrimination, it is imperative that good quality, nutritious plant-based food is made available to all schools.

To eradicate the challenges and distress that many parents, carers and pupils are facing and to satisfy the legal requirements outlined above, we implore Kent County Council to update the School Food Regulations 2014 to create a requirement for:

- at least one plant-based lunch option every day, and
- non-dairy milk to be offered as an alternative to dairy milk

There are significant health benefits associated with a balanced vegan diet:

- Nutrient-rich intake
- Reduced risk of cancer and other diseases

- Improved mental health
- Promotes a healthy body weight
- Helps to prevent type 2 diabetes
- Improved skin condition

Furthermore, whilst processed, soy based meat replacements can be more expensive than meat itself, raw fruit and vegetables, beans, lentils, pulses, grains, pasta and rice are all examples of low cost vegan foods that form the basis of a healthy plant-based diet.

Researchers at the University of Oxford found that cutting meat and dairy products from your diet could reduce an individual's carbon footprint from food by up to 73 per cent. As the UK strives to reach its carbon neutrality goal, schools as well as other entities and individuals will have to review their carbon footprint and find ways to reduce it significantly.

The Climate Change Committee, the Government's official climate advisors, in their 6th carbon budget for local authorities, recommend that the Government's healthy eating guidelines are promoted, that local procurement takes place, that a fully plant-based option is offered every day and that public sector catering staff are trained in vegan and vegetarian cooking.


It is World Vegan Day on 1st November and we invite you to commit to updating these changes ahead of this date.






Yours sincerely,

**Plant Powered Pupils**

A collaboration between The Vegan Society, ProVeg UK, Primary Veducation, Vegan Inclusive Education, Animal Aid and Sevenoaks Green Party

**Signed by:**

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