Dear [Head]

I am writing to ask that you reconsider the trip that has been arranged for [class – pupils] to the [zoo / wildlife park / sea life centre etc]. My child [name] is in class [--].

Veganism is a 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. [Name of child] lives [his/her/their] life according to this moral philosophy. This means that they do not use animals as if they were our resources, including by viewing them in captivity.

Our right to live according to the fundamental conviction that it is wrong to use and kill non-human animals is protected under human rights law and equality law. This means that state schools must not interfere with our right to freedom of conscience. As a vegan parent, I also have the right to have my child educated in accordance with my fundamental convictions. The use of animals for entertainment goes against those convictions.

The school also has a responsibility under the Equality Act 2010 to avoid any discrimination on the grounds of veganism. Organising a trip that necessarily excludes [name of child] is discriminatory. The prohibition against discrimination applies to the entire education process, including trips and excursions. The Equalities and Human Rights Commission provides guidance about this obligation and recommends forward planning to ensure that trips are arranged that are inclusive for all children.

Moreover, as a public entity [name of school] is bound by the Public Sector Equality Duty, which requires them to have due regard for the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equal opportunity and foster good relations, including by taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups. It would be in line with this duty to have a policy against trips that involve animal use and exploitation, to ensure trips are suitable for all.

Viewing animals in captivity is not necessary in order to educate children. Whatever particular educational benefit it is thought that children will gain from this experience can be provided using an alternative that avoids animal use. In any event, the main thing that is conveyed to children by viewing animals in captivity is that other animals are things we use for our own unnecessary purposes. That is not what we should be teaching children about animals.

I hope that you will agree that an alternative activity that is suitable for everyone would be preferable. For example, the children could learn about animals by visiting an animal sanctuary such as [name local vegan sanctuary] where animals are living out their lives and they can learn that they each have a personality, interests and relationships, just as dogs and cats do. Unlike at a zoo, where animals are kept in captivity for our amusement, at a sanctuary they live as much as possible according to their own interests and for no other purpose than their own lives.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

[your name]