

Terms & Conditions of Working at Eden

Work Contract

Welcome to Eden

Thank you, most sincerely, for choosing to volunteer or do an internship at Eden. Your help is greatly appreciated.

I hope that your time at Eden is enjoyable and life transforming for you. If there is anything I can do to make your time here happier, or more beneficial to you, please do not hesitate to let me know.

If you have a specific goal in your life that you are hoping to meet whilst at Eden (for example better knowledge about human-animal relations, sustainable living, veganism, animal rights, vegan education, animal sentience, or skills and experience) please take time to discuss this with me so that I can tailor your experience to best meet your goals.

If you have a problem or a difficulty please speak to me. There are few problems that cannot be sorted out over a cup of tea and a chat. Please be patient if the needs of the sanctuary are such that you have to wait for an opportune time to speak to me.

From time to time the events in the lives of the residents at Eden are very sad. If you find this difficult please do not hesitate to talk to me. There are always healthy ways for us to process our emotions to better enable us to care for them.

Most interns and volunteers already live in ways that mean they have no problem adhering to the terms and conditions of living at Eden. The following list is designed to ensure that you have accurate expectations of life at a sanctuary and to help maintain good communication between us. Please speak to me if there is anything you are unsure about.

Life at Eden

Our working day is long but interns and volunteers have time off during the course of the day. Many people like to spend their time off with the sanctuary residents, walking in the grounds adjacent to the sanctuary, reading or catching up with friends, as well as immersing themselves in animal rights education. We often watch films and chat about animal rights issues and sanctuary work in our free time.

Broadband internet connection is available at your accommodation.

Eden is in a very rural, isolated area. The nearest town is 8 miles away and we are not on a public transport route.

It is usually possible to give you a lift to the nearest town to buy supplies once a week, but please do not depend on this as I do not always have access to transport. Transport to and from Eden and for socialization on your day's off are your responsibility and not guaranteed by Eden. Please pay if you receive a lift to or from Eden as otherwise the fee to the driver is left owing from the animal residents' resources after your departure. A taxi service can be ordered to Eden and it is very reliable but costs between €15 and €20 one way to the nearest town.

There are nice walks through fields and forests on the land adjoining Eden. However, it is very quiet. A car or bicycle for the enthusiastic cyclist are essential to get to the nearest shop. Please ensure that this type of lifestyle that is very quiet and involves almost full time dedication to the residents and to animal rights issues, suits you prior to accepting a place at Eden.

Accommodation is in a mobile home. Unfortunately it is not in a very scenic area and it is not luxurious but it is adequate. There is a bedroom with double bed, and a living area that sleeps one or two close friends. There is a kitchen and bathroom with shower. There is a solid fuel stove for heat and the shower is electric. The kitchen contains a toaster, microwave, single induction hob, fridge, and kettle. The kitchen is not equipped for cooking anything but the most basic of meals.

You must be willing to share the mobile home with other interns/volunteers (own sleeping quarters, shared kitchen and bathroom area). Some people express a strong preference not to share. If that is your preference please contact Eden to ask about single vacancies and I will do my best to accommodate you.

Sufficient food is provided for two self-catering meals per day (breakfast and evening meal). The main meal of the day is usually cooked for you and we eat together at midday. At times of emergency it may not be possible to cook a main meal but there will be sufficient food such as soup and sandwiches or the opportunity to cater for yourself so that no one is hungry. If you require a detailed list of the food provided at Eden please do not hesitate to ask. If you have any difficulty preparing vegan meals for yourself please do not panic. I am more than happy to help out until you get the hang of cooking delicious, cruelty free food.

The Irish weather is frequently wet and the sanctuary gets very muddy. It can get cold in winter with temperatures reaching well below zero, and on occasion temperatures at Eden have reached as low as -17C. Sanctuary work can be difficult when temperatures are extreme. The mobile home is cold on winter mornings when the stove has gone out. Summers can be very pleasant with temperatures averaging in the mid 20's C. This is the nicest time of year for the sanctuary residents. However, on occasion we have had heavy rainfall throughout the summer. Please bring suitable attire including warm indoor clothing, rain gear, wellingtons, hats, warm, waterproof work gloves, and sturdy, waterproof boots. Eden cannot provide work clothing.

The main residence dates from the 1800's and is in very poor repair. Keeping the rooms we use warm, dry and clean is a hard work. You may be asked to contribute to household tasks such as keeping commonly used areas such the kitchen clean, cleaning up in areas of the house where sanctuary residents live, picking and washing fruit and vegetables from the garden etc.

A deposit of €100 is requested from you prior to your arrival at Eden to cover damage or costs to the sanctuary. This will be refunded to you at the end of your stay if no costs have been incurred by you.

Rules & Regulations:

No one likes Rules and Regulations. On the whole, despite the very serious nature of the work, the sanctuary is a very happy and relaxed place to work. I cherish interns and volunteers who help to care for the sanctuary residents and I endeavour to make your stay at Eden as enjoyable and productive as possible for you. However, past experience has determined that it is better to make expectations of life at Eden explicit at the outset. If you find any of the rules and regulations outlined in this document objectionable, it might be an indication to you that Eden is not the ideal placement for you. .

If you are not already vegan it is a requirement of an internship/volunteer placement that you have an interest in and intention to learn more about living ethically without causing harm to other sentient life.

It is essential to respect the animal residents at the sanctuary and for their sake to respect sanctuary rules. What may appear to be an irrational rule to people who are new to sanctuary work (e.g. always close gates behind you) is there for the reason that it can cost them their lives if it is not respected.

Eden is a Not for Profit Organisation. I ask that Interns and volunteers be respectful of resources and only use what is necessary. Whilst I am very grateful to have help, it may help you to understand that food and accommodation costs are only partly funded by the small amount asked from Interns and the balance is funded from the sanctuary residents' resources. I endeavour to provide you with everything you need to have an enjoyable experience here but Eden depends entirely on the funding and generosity of others and its resources are constantly stretched.

Water is supplied by the rain: please be careful with it and do not stay in the shower for long periods.

You are responsible for refilling the water tank attached to the mobile home; you will be given instruction on how to do this. If you hear a loud noise whilst in the shower turn it off immediately. It is an indication that there is no water in the tank and continued usage will damage the shower.

Sufficient electricity is supplied for basic kitchen appliances such as toaster and kettle, for electric blankets on the bed during cold nights, and showers. Usage in excess of the weekly allowance must be paid for by interns.

It is essential that you keep the mobile home clean and tidy throughout your stay and that you leave it in a habitable condition for the next intern or volunteer. If the mobile home requires cleaning after your departure, the fee for cleaning it will be deducted from your deposit.

All food at Eden is vegan. Dinner is eaten at 1pm in the main house (outdoors in good weather in Summer). All other meals are self-catering in the mobile home. If there is anything you need to cater for yourself please do not hesitate to ask and I will do my best to help you.

During sanctuary emergencies there may be times when I am unable to cook dinner at midday. I ask volunteers to be flexible at these times. There is a single ring induction hob in the mobile home which can be used on these occasions.

It is not always possible to pay for organic food which is very expensive in Ireland.

I regret that it is not possible to accommodate special diets such as gluten free or raw vegan.

You are welcome to provide your own food as long as it is 100% plant based.

Please do not bring any animal products to Eden and please refrain from exploiting other animals through your purchase of animal foods or other animal products whilst working at Eden, including during your time off. You will be asked to leave Eden if you use animal foods during your stay.

Please bring your own toiletries/personal care items, making sure that they have not been tested on animals and do not contain animal products. If you have difficulty knowing which products are tested on other animals, or in ascertaining which foods are vegan, please ask and I will be happy to advise you.

Please bring your own sleeping bag and towels. If you are travelling a long distance to Eden and this is difficult for you, please let me know in advance and bed linen and towels will be provided. At the end of your stay please bring all linen that requires washing to the main house.

I ask that Interns do not use alcohol, drugs or tobacco during their placement. It is essential not to smoke at Eden. Many of the residents suffer from respiratory illnesses as a result of selective breeding and poor living conditions prior to rescue. It is unacceptable to volunteer at Eden if you have a current substance abuse problem or if you use mood altering drugs including marijuana. This is in the interests of the resident's safety. If you wish to consume alcohol on your time off please do so very moderately so that you are alert and aware when you return to work alongside very vulnerable animals. There are occasional emergencies at night time and the animals get ill or can have accidents at weekends, on our nights off, on Christmas day etc. It is vital for them that we are

sober and able to care for them. If you do not adhere to these conditions you will be asked to leave Eden.

You must have insurance in order to secure a placement at Eden. Evidence of your policy is required upon application.

Unfortunately, I cannot accommodate your companion animal.

If you become aware that a sanctuary resident is ill, hurt, or distressed, please inform me immediately.

If you have contributed to their harm by accident or an act of omission, please be honest with me. The more I know about how a resident has become ill or injured, the better I can care for them.

Always close both external and internal gates when entering and leaving the sanctuary.

The main house is also home to some of the sanctuary residents, some of whom live there because they have special needs and are ill. Always close both external and internal doors tightly shut when entering and leaving a room. You may need to slam the back door to make sure it is tightly closed.

Always close the mobile home doors when you are not there.

If you open the windows in the mobile home please make sure they are secure so that they do not slam shut in the wind or on a cat entering the mobile home through the window.

We recycle everything at Eden and do not have a refuse/garbage collection service. Please segregate your refuse into compost, paper, tin and ash. Please ask and I will show you where to dispose of it.

Most of the heating fuel is provided by the forests at Eden. Before it gets to the stove hard human labour has been invested in growing and thinning trees and in chopping wood. The supply of fuel is limited. Therefore, please be careful about your use of it. It is usually only necessary to light the stove an hour before you return to the mobile home at the end of your day's work. Once the stove has lit please close the vents so that the fire burns slowly. This will keep the mobile home surprisingly warm. You are responsible for collecting your own fuel from the fuel store and for lighting the stove and emptying the ashes on a daily basis.

The washing machine is in the main house. Please ask if you wish to use it. As water is in short supply I ask that you do not use it more than once a week.

Please be aware that if water runs out we have none for the sanctuary residents or for our own personal use. During periods of summer drought it is essential to be respectful of this resource.

Please keep the mobile home clean and tidy. Please do not wear outdoor shoes indoors. Wash delph and clean kitchen after meals and keep the mobile home tidy during the day. Do not leave food lying around as it attracts mice and rats.

Please respect your host's privacy and do not open rooms or cupboards that are private. This includes the cupboard to the right of the mobile home bedroom and the room to the left of the mobile home bathroom.

Please respect the privacy of the main house.

Please do not take food, delph, towels, bedding, clothing, books, DVDs or anything else from the main house. If you wish to borrow something or if you are short of anything or if there is something you specifically require please do not hesitate to ask and I will do my best to provide.

Please use your own bedlinen and towels unless you have made a prior arrangement with your host. At the end of your stay please bring all linen that requires washing to the main house.

Please ensure that your host has a copy of your insurance document and that your next of kin contact details are up to date.

It is essential to have a mobile phone on at all times during your working day so that you are contactable in case of emergency. If necessary a sanctuary mobile phone can be given to Interns in Animal Care positions. This phone is a means of contact between sanctuary staff only: it is not permitted to use it to make personal calls.

Work hours are from daylight to daybreak. You are entitled to two days off work per week but I ask that you be flexible at times when we have emergencies or a lot of work to do.

Please feel free to take photographs of the residents and sanctuary but please also run them by me prior to posting them in public places such as Facebook. It is important that any photographs taken include the name of the resident so that their identity is preserved.

Lastly, the exact location of Eden is confidential. Please do not reveal its location or photographs of its location publicly. This ensures that Eden remains a safe home for its residents.

Please notify me immediately if plans change either before your arrival date or if you wish to leave early. This will allow for adequate time to arrange for another volunteer to avail of a place at Eden and it will give me the opportunity to have someone to take over your work in your absence.

Your attitude will shape your experience: The best volunteers are those who demonstrate a genuine and positive attitude to the ethos and work of Eden and are willing to help wherever needed. Sometimes the place you can be of most service is in cleaning, offering transport, caring for the sanctuary in my absence or in being flexible during an emergency.

Sanctuary life changes constantly according to the needs of the animal residents. Keep an open mind and help where you can.

Be prepared to do physical labour: Running a sanctuary necessitates a lot of physical labour. If you have physical or health restrictions that prevent you from doing strenuous work, often for hours at a time, be honest with your host beforehand. There may be other work available that you can do. It is also important to take care of yourself while volunteering: eat a healthy, well balanced diet; meditate (if this helps you), sleep well; stretch often, drink plenty of water, and be responsible for wearing clothes that are appropriate for the weather and for your own sun protection if you are outside during (rare) hot Irish day.

Your Psychological Health

Many people have come to Eden in the hope of finding a way out of personal psychological distress. If you are suffering in a way that will compromise your work with vulnerable sanctuary residents, it is advisable to wait until you are feeling more stable to apply for a position at Eden.

Whilst compassionate understanding of psychological distress is not restricted to the non-human residents at Eden, the work at Eden is for the other animals and is not specifically designed to address human distress.

Please inform the Director if you have emotional or psychological difficulties so that together we can assess if a placement at Eden best suits both your needs and the needs of the sanctuary residents.

Try to evaluate the level of peace and quiet beforehand: Eden is set in a rural area. It is very quiet. Keep this in mind and make sure that our situation suits your needs. Eden is best suited to someone who does not mind burying themselves in rural life for weeks on end. If you crave an urban social life Eden is not the best volunteering placement for you.

Eden is Not a Holiday: I expect that volunteer's and intern's motivation is primarily to help the animals and contribute to the ethos of the sanctuary which I operate with the minimum impact on the environment and on its limited resources. Although the food at Eden is vegan and healthy, Eden is not a healthy holiday or a language school. Volunteering or Interning at Eden is very hard work.

Take an active interest in learning: A volunteer placement at Eden is a good opportunity to learn about sanctuary and animal rights education work from people who have been engaged in the field for several years. I am still learning and I am happy to share this journey with those who are new to the field.

You should be comfortable working alone: Sometimes the Director or other helpers will be able to work alongside you, but often you will need to work on tasks alone. It is vital that the Director can trust that you will continue to work hard towards the upkeep of the sanctuary, even if left unattended for the majority of the day.

Keep a good sense of humor: A good sense of humour is vital for this kind of work. It will make your experience all the more worthwhile.

Keep your eyes and ears open: The Director greatly appreciates volunteers who take initiative. This is best done by looking for where there is a need on the sanctuary and listening. However, always check with the Director before beginning a job, unless directed to do so. Some work requires supervision and instruction.

Communication: My priority at Eden is that the residents have as happy a life as possible. Eden's volunteers play an important role in the lives of the non-human residents. Your wellbeing is important to me and I want to ensure that you are happy here and that your placement is meeting your needs and goals.

Having an open line of communication is important. If there is something that is bothering you, find an appropriate time to address the issue. If you have a negative experience, try to address this before you leave, if possible, so that you have the opportunity to hear the other side of the story. If you have a positive experience, we are also very glad to hear about it.

Thank you,

Signed: *Sandra Higgins*
Founder & Director
Eden Farmed Animal Sanctuary
& Matilda's Promise, Animal Rights & Vegan Education Centre

I have read and agree to the Terms and Conditions of Working at Eden contained in this document or that may arise in the interests of the resident's wellbeing during my placement at Eden.

Signed: _____

Date: _____