

Horizon Association: Constitution



Context

The Horizon Association was formed in 1992 in order to further the ideal of international citizenship. The foundation members were drawn from schools in England, Wales, Spain, Italy, Russia, Germany and the Netherlands.

Each year, the Association brings together students and staff from the participating organisations to work on projects and festivals that rely on deep collaboration and the building of international understanding.

The Association seeks to be true to its original ideals while responding to changes affecting education across Europe and beyond.

A majority of the foundation schools are still active members. The range of countries represented was expanded in 2009 to include Estonia.

Horizon: Membership

The current (2016) members of the Horizon Association are:

Longsands Academy, St Neots, England
Ernulf Academy, St Neots, England
Pärnu Ülejõe Gümnaasi, Pärnu, Estonia
Gymnasium Bethel, Bielefeld, Germany
Liceo Ginnasio Luigi Galvani, Bologna, Italy
Liceo Scientifico Galileo Galilei, Verona, Italy
Coornhert Lyceum, Haarlem, Netherlands
Harlemmemer Lyceum, Netherlands
No 1215 Romain Rolland, Moscow, Russia
Instituto José de Ribera, Xàtiva, Spain
Gystadmarka ungdomsskole, Jessheim, Norway

1. Principles

The following principles have been agreed as fundamental to the philosophy and practice of the Association:

- belief in the value of international citizenship and the importance of promoting and developing it among young people;
- equality in terms of voting rights and access to activities among all members;
- the use of English as the principal medium of communication;
- collaborative decision making including measures to ensure that decisions reflect the majority consensus.

In all matters affecting the Association as a whole, the Headteacher and Co-ordinator Group is the key decision-making body.

2. Objectives

Key objectives of the Association are to:

- promote high quality interaction between young people who are students in the Association's member schools and the staff who teach and guide them;
- sustain a programme of activities, exchanges and international communication;
- develop more regular contact between member schools through use of modern technology;
- offer mutual support between member schools including staff training, the development of linguistic skills and the sharing of best practice.

3. Membership

3.1 Membership of the Horizon Association is by invitation agreed in advance by the Headteacher and Co-ordinator Group. Expressions of interest in membership should be circulated at least three months in advance of any meeting at which membership will be considered.

3.2 Potential members will be invited to the next available Annual Conference. They may participate in all sessions of that Conference with the exception of the formal vote required in 3.3 below.

3.3 Existing members will take decisions about membership as part of the final meeting at each Annual Conference. Members will take into account the need to maintain the broad balance between countries already represented within the current membership and the need to uphold the Association's core principles and practices. The decision of the members is final.

3.4 There is no obligation on the part of members to subsidise the cost of any Horizon activity it organises unless the school itself freely decides this.

3.5 Any association member may leave on the basis of a letter of resignation.

3.6 In the absence of representation at two consecutive Annual Headteacher and Co-ordinator Conferences, membership of the Association of the school concerned will be suspended by letter from the President to the Headteacher. A final decision on continuation or otherwise of membership will be made at the next Headteacher and Co-ordinator Conference, with a presumption that, in the absence of strong reasons in favour of continuation, the school's membership will be terminated.

4. Organisation

- 4.1 The Headteacher and Co-ordinator Group will **meet at an Annual Conference**. (Virtual meetings may also be arranged but matters affecting the constitution and fundamental working of the Association will be decided or confirmed only at the Annual Conference.)
- 4.2 **Wherever possible, the President and Vice President will be Headteachers and the Secretary will be a Co-ordinator. The Headteacher and Co-ordinator Group will elect a Vice President from among the Headteachers and Co-ordinators present at the Conference. The Vice President will become President after the President's term of office is concluded or if the President is no longer able to fulfil the role, eg through illness.**
- 4.3 **The President will invite a Co-ordinator to act as Secretary.**
- 4.4 The term of office of the posts in 4.2 will be two years, with a presumption against renewal of tenure of office except after an interval of two years.
- 4.5 The President and Vice President will lead and manage the Association. In the absence of the President, the Vice President will perform the presidential role. The Headteacher and Co-ordinator Group may appoint an Acting Vice President should circumstances indicate the need for additional support.
- 4.6 The President will summon the Headteacher and Co-ordinator Group to an Annual Conference, with the time and place of the next such Conference agreed at the previous Conference. (Should a firm decision not be possible, alternative arrangements may be made with every effort being given to a notice period of at least 60 days.)
- 4.7 A Conference shall be quorate when at least **half** of those eligible to present are present.
- 4.8 Decisions of the Conference will be made on the basis of a simple majority of the votes of those present except in the following cases when a two thirds majority (rounded down) is required:
- changes to the constitution;
 - termination of a school membership other than by request of that school;
 - termination of the Association.
- 4.9 Voting will be on the basis of one vote per school cast by the Headteachers. (Headteachers with responsibility for more than one school will nevertheless have just one vote.) In the absence of the Headteacher, the Co-ordinator may cast the vote on behalf of his/her school.

4.10 The Secretary will record in writing significant matters discussed at the Conference including a note of decisions, together with the number of votes cast for each motion. He/she will circulate those notes within 10 days of the Conference.

5. **Association: Disbandment**

5.1 The Association may be disbanded in accordance with a proposal circulated at least six months in advance of an Annual Conference, and by a two thirds majority of those indicating their stance. In this situation only, the President must seek the views of absent members and arrange for a proxy vote to be cast as part of the final decision making.

5.2 The Association will also cease to exist if the number of member schools falls to four or below. In that case, the remaining members may form an Association under a different name.

6. **Executive Action**

In the event of the need for urgent action in circumstances that could not reasonably be foreseen, the President may make decisions on behalf of the Association that would normally be taken at the Annual Conference. However, he/she must make every effort to seek out the opinions of members and must have the agreement of at least four of: past Presidents; current or past Vice Presidents; current Co-ordinators.

The above action must be rare and exceptional.