



Position Statement
Head of School

New Horizon School

Irvine, California
Start Date: July 1, 2026



NEW HORIZON
AN INDEPENDENT ISLAMIC SCHOOL
IRVINE / CALIFORNIA





Overview

Every school has its own history and culture and is unique in its own way, but some institutions are truly distinctive and impressive. New Horizon School (NHS) in Irvine, CA is one such institution. The school is a progressive, coeducational, Islamic independent school enrolling 450 students in preschool through grade 8 on two campuses in Southern California's Orange County. Its mission and ethos focus on fostering a positive American Muslim identity and providing an exceptional educational environment for students and their families.

Following a time of leadership transitions and currently being led by a steady and dedicated Interim Head, New Horizon now seeks a new Head of School at an important time in the school's development. The school's faculty and staff are competent and loyal, the administrative team is unequalled, the

community of families deeply care about the school and its people, the governing board of trustees are deeply committed to the mission, vision, and philosophy of the growing school, and the students, a cadre of spirited young people guided by principles of Generosity, Justice, Compassion, and Gratitude, are the heart of the school.

The two campuses are located in Irvine, a thriving master-planned city in central Orange County. Irvine is home to a number of technology and semi-conductor businesses and many national and international headquartered corporations. Irvine is also home to a number of higher education institutions, including the University of California-Irvine, Concordia University, Irvine Valley College and campuses of the University of La Verne and Pepperdine University.

Mission and Vision

New Horizon School is authentic and intentional in design and practice. Its mission is clear:

“New Horizon offers exemplary academics and community programs in a progressive Islamic environment and fosters a positive American Muslim identity by preparing students with the knowledge to succeed, confidence to lead, and compassion to serve in an ever-changing world.”

The school’s vision offers clarity and aspiration for its present and future:

“New Horizon will be recognized nationally as the model independent Islamic school integrating Quranic principles with cutting-edge technology and creativity to make meaningful contributions to the broader community.”

The school emphasizes small class sizes, a strong sense of community and connections, and a child-centered approach to education, in addition to its heralded Islamic curriculum. New Horizon operates with a one-school, two-campus model, where the Head of School has overall responsibility for the entire operation, supported by collaborative division leaders overseeing each campus and department. What sets New Horizon School apart from mosque-based Islamic schools is its ability to attract families who may have reservations about academic rigor and degree of religiosity. New Horizon offers the “best of both worlds,” by hiring highly qualified and talented teachers and staff who promote an inclusive and progressive approach to religion. Additionally, New Horizon takes pride in its commitment to diversity, with a faculty and staff that reflect a range of racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds.



History

New Horizon was established by the Islamic Center of Southern California (ICSC). The first New Horizon School opened in Pasadena, CA followed by campuses in Los Angeles, West Los Angeles, and Irvine. Each campus has grown through grassroots efforts and the generosity from its respective local constituency. In September 2001, New Horizon, Irvine, inaugurated its 1.7-acre Lower School Campus. In 2011, the school embarked on an ambitious strategic planning process that included paying off a \$2 million construction debt, building a new Upper School Campus to include 7th and 8th grades, enhancing its educational program, solidifying its position as an independent Islamic school, providing ongoing professional development of all faculty and staff, and refining a visionary and strategic governing board. In 2018, the school expanded with the opening of its 4-acre Upper School Campus, which now serves students in grades 3-8. The Lower School Campus continues to serve the growing early childhood program through 2nd grade students.

Through competent and effective leadership and community collaboration, New Horizon continues to achieve remarkable milestones:

- Raised \$25 million in Capital Campaign donations.
- Successfully built, opened, and fully furnished both floors of the Upper School Campus and completed the outdoor equipment and contiguous playfields on both campuses.
- Established and secured a \$10 million endowment.
- Experienced continuous enrollment growth, despite Covid and increased competition.
- Secured all school accreditation and licensing requirements for Preschool through Grade 8 from the California Association of Independent Schools, the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, and the State of California Department of Social Services, and is recognized by the Department of Education as an Exemplary High Performing National Blue Ribbon School.
- Developed a new Strategic Plan to guide the school into its future.

Program

New Horizon is a mission-driven school that integrates curricular and co-curricular programs to provide a comprehensive and well-designed education that prepares students for success. It offers a rich and balanced preschool through grade 8 experience that is grounded in its unique and purposeful American Muslim identity, practices, and protocols. The entire academic program is enriched by a focus on Islamic studies in both the Lower and Upper School.

The Preschool program follows a developmentally appropriate curriculum that serves as a foundation for the elementary program and beyond. It incorporates religious studies, an introduction to Arabic, the Leader in Me Program, and the Positive Discipline approach. Faculty and staff are well versed and skilled in early childhood practices, creating a nurturing and caring environment throughout the classroom, play areas, and instructional spaces.

In the Elementary program, high standards are set and core competencies in Reading and Writing, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science and Engineering, Arabic, Performing Arts, Visual Arts and Physical Education are emphasized. The program is founded on the belief that children must have meaningful experiences to learn deeply, taking into account students' developmental stages and individual learning paces. Instruction is differentiated whenever possible, and lessons incorporate multiple modalities, social-emotional learning, and themes of social justice and equity.

The Middle School program is characterized by fostering friendships, encouraging creativity, and supporting students' quest to establish independence and identity. Administration, Faculty, and Staff have recently embarked on improving all facets of the middle school program, including, but not limited to curricular cohesion, field experiences, enhancement of core studies, and preparation for high school transition. Students delve into integrated Reading and Writing, Social Studies, Mathematics, and Science and Engineering. Students have the opportunity to study foreign languages such as Arabic, Spanish, or French, and select from a wide variety of electives. The program provides social and emotional learning experiences, through supportive advisory groups and class meetings. This energetic and socially important



period for students recognizes that emotions drive learning and motivations. Classroom, studio, laboratory, stage, community outreach, experiential learning, and field experiences cultivate intellectual curiosities, inventiveness, self-reliance, and self-confidence.

New Horizon places importance on physical activity and physical education, offering classes both indoors and outdoors. Students participate in competitive interscholastic athletics, including soccer, volleyball, basketball, and flag football.

For a more detailed description of the instructional and co-curricular program from preschool through grade 8, please review the school's website at <https://newhorizonirvine.org>



the faculty and staff form kind relationships with students and parents.

Faculty and staff are uniquely aware of their promise to support student well-being and the development of self-awareness and self-reflection. Each embraces the school's progressive pedagogy, confident that it uniquely prepares students to thrive in the world.

Families

Families select New Horizon School because of its premier reputation of its academic program, its commitment to diversity, its Islamic programming, its commitment to diversity, equity and justice, and its enduring and faithful commitment to the health, safety, well-being, and attentiveness for quality teaching and learning. Families choose to live and relocate to Orange County, CA and Irvine because of the presence of this distinctive Islamic school and its close constituent support. In addition, many parents make a personal sacrifice for the cost of independent education and also devote volunteer commitments to the school.

Parents and guardians at New Horizon are continually informed of students' well-being and the school as a whole. Without exception, they treasure the warm, kind, and thoughtful relationships they and their children form with teachers, administrators, and other families at the school. They also appreciate that the school supports students' safety, well-being, and personal development.

Its People

Board of Trustees

The 13-member volunteer Board of Trustees is exceptionally strong and high functioning. Their effective stewardship of New Horizon School is apparent in the board's unwavering commitment to the importance of strategic, rather than operational, initiatives. Each trustee safeguards the mission and vision of the school, is truly supportive of the Head of School, and forms an enthusiastic cadre of ambassadors for New Horizon School and its constituents.

Administration

New Horizon retains a lean, but talented and dedicated administrative team. The Interim Head of School is supported by a collaborative and dedicated team including division directors who are pedagogical leaders for each of the divisions, early childhood, elementary and middle, a finance officer, an admissions director, a director of advancement, a curriculum director, and a Marketing and Communications Specialist.

Faculty and Staff

Led by seasoned division directors, New Horizon teachers are encouraged to bring their lifelong skills, experiences, and passions into the school's innovative and collaborative curricular framework, PK-8. Faculty and staff actively engage in task forces, work groups, and committees, fostering cross-divisional interactions, improving student learning outcomes, are cognizant of the school's curriculum and instructional design, and each appreciates student differences. Without exception, each member of





The parent body is enhanced by the New Horizon Parent Association, a volunteer association responsible for school events, fundraisers, and activities that clearly reflect that New Horizon parents are dedicated to making each child's early childhood, elementary and middle school experience rich and substantial. From Teacher Appreciation Week, Thanks a Latte, the Bookfair, Dinners Out, the Annual Gala, to the myriad of support and organization for parent education and activity, there is no mistake this is an active, engaged and connected group!

Students

New Horizon School currently serves 450 students, preschool through grade 8, many of whom arrive as energetic and curious early childhood learners and leave as confident and prepared adolescents ready to join rigorous high schools in the Orange County area with strong preparation in their academic, cognitive, spiritual, ethical, social, physical and personal development and maturity.

Every student is known, respected and understood, and stands as an individual with a variety of aptitudes, motivations and personalities. With a current low student-teacher ratio throughout all grade levels, students receive utmost care, support, mentoring and understanding that each requires.

Alumni and alumni families often return to New Horizon and validate the rich preparations and

experiences gained. In addition, achievements of New Horizon alumni are significant. While successful in their academic pursuits and accomplishments, there are common moral and ethical threads that characterize a New Horizon graduate.

Finances

New Horizon School has made sound decisions that have significant financial impact since its founding. The school operates on a tight, but balanced annual budget of \$10.5 million. Annual tuition costs range from \$11,500 for part-time preschool to \$24,530 for middle school. Annual tuition is below the median for California independent schools. The school is fortunate to have a robust financial assistance program, serving approximately 35% of the school families that constitutes approximately 22% of the school's revenue.

Along with skilled financial management, New Horizon has a solid record of fundraising. The Annual Fund is robust each year, generating approximately \$500,000, the endowment campaign has garnered over \$10 million, and the school's capital campaigns for land acquisition, site construction, renovation and continual refurbishment have been extremely successful, given the school's size and young age.

Strengths, Challenges and Opportunities

New Horizon is a progressive Islamic independent school with formidable strengths and exceptional vitality. It leverages its extraordinary history, encompassing a clear and compelling mission and vision, an impressive growth trajectory, national recognition as a Blue Ribbon School, and prestigious accolades and long termed accreditations. The school takes pride in its graduates, who consistently thrive in their academic pursuits, professional careers, and personal lives. It demonstrates an unparalleled commitment to the Islamic faith that serves as the moral foundation and guiding principle for Muslims, encouraging righteous conduct and actions aligned with God's teachings. New Horizon radiates familial warmth and is often described as "more than a school," and "a second home," by students, parents, alumni and the broader community it serves.

New Horizon faces challenges that are common among high-performing and well-recognized PK-8 schools today: maintaining a safe, secure, welcoming, child-friendly, and effective student environment; ensuring complete program alignment to drive success and sustain strong educational metrics and successful high school placements, addressing evolving demographics, and managing rising costs and fiscal challenges.

Opportunities abound for a savvy, energetic, and distinguished Muslim school leader. The next Head of School will aptly recognize and acknowledge the rapid changes in Orange County, California, our nation, and our world and the tremendous impact on the school. Mission and vision adherence, leadership competence, community outreach and involvement, and social justice will be critical to the school's future sustainability, viability and growth.



Qualifications and Qualities of the Next Head of School

- Experience with and passion for the best in progressive Islamic programming for preschool, elementary, and middle school environments, including comprehensive and up-to-date knowledge of PK-8 pedagogy, curriculum, including latest educational research and best practices.
- Energetic and compelling communication skills, with the unique ability to captivate others with the school's history, story, mission, and proficiency in being the chief marketer of the school.
- Eagerness to embrace the socioeconomic, cultural, and religious diversity of the community, as well as the multicultural and multigenerational composition of the school's faculty and staff.
- A proven track record of inclusively attracting, motivating, evaluating, supporting, and retaining a competent faculty and staff.
- A visionary leader with on-the-ground engagement and experience in classroom teaching.
- Ability to lead the school constituents while valuing and working with differences of opinions and positions.
- Ability to lead the school community through strategic planning and accreditation.
- Ability to strike the right balance between warm, compassionate, approachable demeanor and clear, honest, firm, and decisive judgement and actions.
- Astute and trusted Muslim school leader with a proven record of fiscal management and financial acumen.
- Long term commitment to ensuring the realization of collaborative and successful planning, improved fundraising, selection and retention of effective faculty/staff, and continued enhancement of strong academic, extracurricular, and supplemental offerings.
- Familiarity with and willingness to be an active and present leader in all development/advancement/public relations/programming at the school.
- Visibility, accessibility, approachable presence and active involvement in all school events, activities, programming, and community relationships.
- A sense of humor coupled with the energy, dedication, and optimism necessary to find joy in the leadership of an exceptional PK-8 educational community.



As one middle schooler clearly states, *“We want a leader who will work hard and BE A STAND OUT among educators as OUR REAL LEADER. We also need a leader who is fun, someone who shines inside and out, and a leader who knows and understands us.”*

To Apply

New Horizon School has engaged the services of Doreen Oleson, Ed.D. from Resource Group 175, to lead the search. Interested candidates are required to apply online at <https://rg175.com/candidate/signup> and submit application materials, including a cover letter expressing interest in the position, a current resume, a personal statement, and five references.

The application deadline is **September 20, 2025**, for a start date no later than **July 1, 2026**.

Compensation: The school expects to offer the new Head of School an annual salary in the range of \$180,000 – \$225,000, commensurate with qualifications and experience.

For an initial inquiry to nominate a potential candidate for this exciting leadership

opportunity, please contact Doreen Oleson, Ed.D., doreenoleson@gmail.com and/or 626-676-5203.

New Horizon School, Irvine, holds accreditation from the California Association of Independent Schools and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. It is recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence by the United States Department of Education. Additionally, it has achieved certification as a Leader in Me Lighthouse School (one of 673 schools worldwide and the only Islamic school with this distinction). The school is a member of the National Association of Independent Schools and is licensed by the State of California, Department of Social Services.