Mt St PATRICK PARISH PRIMARY SCHOOL FORUM
CONSTITUTION

1. The Charter
1.1 Preamble
The Mt St Patrick Primary Parish School Forum is aligned to the approved Model Charter for Parish Schools Forums as outlined by the Catholic Education Office, Diocese of Lismore.

2. Name
2.1 The name of this organisation is Mt St Patrick Primary Parish School Forum.

2.2 The Parish School Forum is established with the approval of the parish priest.

2.3 The Parish School Forum is established through the authority of the parish priest with the approval of the Director of Catholic Schools through the Diocesan Education Board. Upon the parish priest accepting the purpose, goals and key principles of the Parish School Forum, the Diocesan Education Board strongly recommends that the whole of the purpose, goals and key principles of the Parish School Forum be implemented.

3. Purpose of the Parish School Forum
The Parish School Forum provides a structure to enable parent, teachers, students, school leaders and parish members to meet their ecclesial and educational responsibilities for partnership and community.

4. Goals
In the achievement of this purpose the Parish School Forum commits itself to:
4.1 enriching families through support and education in the religious and educational development of their children, so that they may more fully become “domestic Church”;

4.2 developing understanding and commitment to the parish school’s Catholic identity and mission by all parish school community members;

4.3 enhancing the communication and partnership between parish, school and family;

4.4 collaborating with the Lismore Diocesan Education Board;

4.5 consulting all members of the parish school community in decision affecting the ethos, culture and curriculum of parish school life.
5. Values
The following values from the Gospels and in the Catholic tradition underpin the Parish School Forum:

5.1 Service: leading through listening and placing others before self;

5.2 Unity: seeking to bring people together in the unity of Christ;

5.3 Freedom: every person’s life is enriched by his or her experiences in the parish faith community and drawn closer to Christ and the Spirit;

5.4 Mutuality: bearing one another’s burdens and appreciating one another’s gifts;

5.5 Reconciliation: seeking first to understand others, as well as being willing to learn and move on from hurts and differences.

6. Functions
The functions of the Parish School Forum are to:

6.1 listen to families and seek ways to serve their authentic needs through appropriate support and education;

6.2 provide a network to disseminate and exchange information within the school community;

6.3 ensure that Catholic Church teaching on collaboration, partnership, co-responsibility, common good, solidarity and subsidiarity, are practiced in the life of the parish school community;

6.4 implement church teaching by promoting a co-operative partnership between parents, teachers, students, administrators, clergy and the wider community;

6.5 provide leadership training at appropriate levels of parish School forum participation to ensure all members work towards the Catholic identity and mission of the parish school;

6.6 discern and advise the principal and parish priest regarding the views of the parish school community on Catholic identity and mission, policy, finance, building and maintenance, curriculum and communication.

6.7 provide appropriate nominations for parish and local community groups as needed;

6.8 nurture the spiritual lives of all those involved in the Parish School Forum.

7. Authority
In the fulfillment of these functions it is understood that:

7.1 the Parish School Forum has no control over the management and administration of the parish school;

7.2 the parish priest has ultimate authority and the principal has the delegated authority for management of the school;

7.3 all members of the parish school community have co-responsibility for educational excellence and the promotion of the Catholic identity and mission.
8. Structure
The Parish School Forum is an advisory body through the principal to the parish priest. The parish priest has an unencumbered right to attend and take part in the Parish School Forum team or any committees thereof but is not obliged to do so.

9. Parent Reps
The Mt St Patrick Primary School Parish Forum meetings are open to all parents of existing students of the school to attend.

9.1 All class Parent Reps are encouraged to attend the 1st parish School Forum meeting for the year. For other Forum meetings at least one Parent Rep from each class is encouraged to attend.

9.2 In Kinder – at least one Parent Rep must be a new parent to the school.

10. Office Bearers
10.1 At the first meeting of each year the Parish School Forum team chooses a Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer. The principal and staff members are excluded from the role of Chairperson – these Office Bearers are appointed for two years.

10.2 An executive committee consists of the Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, parish priest or his nominee, principal and other appropriate members from the Parish School Forum team if deemed necessary by the Parish School Forum team.

10.3 The tasks of the Parish School Forum team executive committee are:

10.3.1 to prepare for the meetings of the Parish School Forum team;
10.3.2 to draw up the agenda for the meetings of the Parish School Forum team;
10.3.3 to ensure the decisions of the Parish School Forum team are implemented, conditional upon the approval of the parish priest
10.3.4 to fulfil any other appropriate tasks.

10.4 A member of the parish School Forum executive committee may resign provided that such resignation is given in writing to the chairperson of the parish School Forum team.

11. Meetings
11.1 The parish School Forum team is to meet once a term.

11.2 Other meetings may be held as often as necessary. The Chairperson will call meetings after consulting the Parish School Forum executive committee.

11.3 When the Chairperson is absent, members shall elect an acting Chairperson.

11.4 Resolutions should reflect the discernment of a true consensus of those present. However, should such a consensus be regrettably unattainable in regard to a particular matter, it may be advisable to take a vote so that the principal and parish priest are more clearly guided as to the views of the community.

11.5 Meetings are conducted as detailed in the parish School Forum Manual – Catholic Education Office, Diocese of Lismore.
12. Finances
12.1 The purpose of all fundraising is for the benefit of the parish school community within the areas of Catholic identity and mission, Policy, Finance, Building and Maintenance, Curriculum and Communication. Priorities for the disbursement of funds are determined at regular meetings of the Parish School Forum. Any fundraising by Parish School Forum must be notified and approved by the Parish.

12.2 The Parish School Forum team shall ensure that proper accounts and record of the transactions and affairs, including property credits and liabilities, of the Parish School Forum team are kept, as well as any other relevant records, and be able to explain sufficiently its financial operations and financial position.

12.3 Once in each financial year the accountant/auditor approved by the parish priest shall examine the accounts of the Parish School Forum. The auditor/accountant shall certify as to the truth and fairness of the accounts and shall report thereon to the Parish School Forum.

12.4 The Principal reports to the parish priest on all parish school financial matters.

12.5 The final Parish School Forum meeting for the year will set fundraising initiatives for the following school year.

13. Alterations
13.1 The provisions of this Charter are to be adhered to with integrity. However, alterations for grave reasons may be made to the Parish School Forum charter in response to local parish school realities. Such changes need to be approved by the parish priest and, subsequently, by the director of Catholic Schools through the Diocesan Education Board. - refer to Parish School Forum Manual

However, such alterations cannot contravene the integrity of the ecclesial mandate for a Parish School Forum found in the purpose, goals, values and functions.

13.2 If the Bishop of Lismore issues particular norms governing Parish School Forums, they are to be considered as being incorporated into this Charter with overriding effect.

14. Review
14.1 The Parish School Forum charter will be regularly reviewed based upon diocesan consultation. Should the review identify needs for amendment then the Diocesan Education Board will advise the Director of Catholic Schools appropriately.

15. Dissolution
15.1 The Parish School Forum may be dissolved by the parish priest without prior notice after consultation with the Director of Catholic Schools.

16. Canon Law
16.1 With regard to any matters not treated in this Charter, the norm of Canon Law is to be applied except where civil law has precedence.
RESPONSIBILITIES OF OFFICE BEARERS

ROLE OF THE CHAIRPERSON

It is the role of the Chairperson of the Parish School Forum to see that:

- the model Charter for parish School forums within the Diocese of Lismore and the Parish School Forum Manual are adhered to, in spirit and in letter, and that the Parish School Forum functions smoothly and efficiently;

- prayer and spiritual reflection are integral to the Parish School Forum;

- good communications are established and maintained between all present at meetings as well as all individuals and groups interested in Catholic schools;

- meetings are kept moving by making sure the focus is kept on main issues, by helping discussion and by maintaining enough formality to allow for full participation without unnecessary discussion;

- all members take an active part in discussion to ensure that decisions are representative of the views of all members;

- all members respect the opinions and views of others and show, in their deliberations, principles of Christian justice and charity;

- consensus is always aimed at, even though it may not always be achieved. The Chairperson works to build agreement, helps members see where they disagree and ends discussion when it is obvious that consensus cannot be reached;

- no member dominates meetings to the exclusion of the opinions and ideas of others. The opinion and the expression of opposing views are sought.

- harmony and mutual trust are promoted and members are encouraged to respect others' opinions and views;

- problems are recognized and clarified;

- matters raised are dealt with at the appropriate level.
ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL

It is the role of the Principal to:

- ensure Parish School Forum advice is consulted in all areas of appropriate decision making
- in partnership with the executive of the Parish School Forum, ensure that the administrative functions of the Forum are implemented
- inform the Parish School Forum of relevant parish, diocesan or government policies and priorities
- ensure that an annual budget is prepared in line with commonly agreed priorities
- ensure that financial statements are available and audited
- ensure that the Goals, Values and Functions of the Parish School Forum are supported
- maintain close collaboration with the parish priest on all Parish School Forum matters

ROLE OF THE SECRETARY

It is the role of the Secretary of the Parish School Forum to see that:

- in consultation with the Chairperson, the necessary preparations are made for holding meetings, including preparing and circulating agendas and meeting records;
- the meeting records are accurately taken, properly preserved and circulated;
- all information relevant to the operation of the Parish School Forum is shared with all members;
- communications are conveyed to and from the parish School Forum;
- Parish School Forum communications are always stated to be “on behalf of the parish School Forum”;
- The agenda is prepared in consultation with the executive of the Parish School Forum;
- The venue for meetings and catering are arranged where needed
- A newsletter from the Parent Forum is to be published at least once a Term
ROLE OF THE TREASURER

It is the role of the treasurer of the Parish School Forum to see that:

- receipts are written and money is banked;
- accounts are paid;
- financial books are kept up to date;
- financial reporting is carried out appropriately;
- financial records are audited annually by an Independent body;
- Liaise with Class Parent Reps for each School Function to organise ‘Floats’, payment of related accounts, and counting and banking of money.

ROLE OF ASSISTANT TREASURER

It is the role of the Assistant Treasurer of the Parish School Forum to see that:

- to assume the role of Treasurer in their absence;
- to assist with counting money when required by Treasurer.