



Lent is often described as a "sacred pause"—a time to step away from the noise of the world and enter the "desert" of our own hearts, mirroring Jesus' forty days of solitude.

In the Catholic tradition, the "three pillars" of Lent, Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving, are not isolated tasks, but a singular movement of the heart toward God and neighbour.

Prayer: Lent invites us to move from "knowing about" God to truly "knowing" Him through intimacy. This connection strengthens our spiritual foundation and provides the nourishment required for personal growth.

Fasting: Often called the "soul of prayer," fasting creates a physical hunger that serves as a reminder of our deeper spiritual hunger for God. Beyond giving up food or drink, we might fast from negativity or indifference. By distancing ourselves from our flaws, we create the space necessary to move closer to God.

Almsgiving: As the "lifeblood of fasting," almsgiving ensures our personal sacrifices result in a benefit for others. This is the "gift of self." Through self-reflection, we must ask: Do we give our time to family, friends, or strangers? True almsgiving can be found in the act of listening and in the small acts of kindness we show those we encounter daily.

On Ash Wednesday, we received an outward sign of our faith with the cross of ashes. Now, as we approach the midpoint of Lent, we must ask: How have these three pillars strengthened our relationship with God? Would others recognise Christ in our actions? Use this time to pause, reset, and view the journey toward Easter through a fresh lens.



*"Do you wish your prayer to fly toward God?
Make for it two wings: fasting and almsgiving."*

St. Augustine of Hippo

School Insurance

Schools are advised that the Catholic Church has an agreed arrangement in place with Allianz PLC to provide insurance to boards of management of Catholic primary schools nationwide. Therefore, it is not open to schools to engage with other providers albeit they may offer more competitive quotes.

Credit Card Applications

Schools wishing to seek Patron Approval for Credit Card Applications are required to complete the **St Senan's Approval Application Form** using the following link: [SSEO Credit Card Application Approval Form](#)

You will note that the St Senan's Application form has a maximum limit of €2000. The primary purpose of the credit card is to facilitate online purchases and payments for goods or services from companies that do not offer traditional invoicing. Balances must be paid in full every month to avoid interest charges. For any expenditure exceeding €2,000, schools must continue to use the traditional invoicing and payment process.



Renewal of Licences with 3rd Party Operators for the 2026/27 School Year

The time has come to consider renewing any occupancy licences which may be in place between your BOM and 3rd party operators who are using part of your school premises for the duration of the school year to run a childcare/pre-school service, or an activity/class outside of school hours.

If you have not already submitted your request to renew the licence for the school year 2026/27, you are kindly asked to do so by **Friday 27th March 2026** please, so that these renewal requests can be processed by our office over the Easter holidays whilst the schools are closed.

The Board of Management is asked to confirm that it is in receipt of the documents listed below and that they are valid for school year 2026/2027:

1. A letter of indemnity from the operator's insurers showing that the operator has public liability insurance to a minimum value of €6,500,000. Please note, a copy of the operator's insurance policy or insurance cover note will not suffice here. It is a letter of indemnity which states that the school/Board are indemnified against any issue that may arise with the childcare service that must be obtained from the operator.
2. Verification via ROS that the operator's Tax Clearance Certificate has issued.
3. Written assurance from the operators/organisers that all staff/volunteers have been vetted in accordance with current Garda Vetting requirements and the vetting does not contain any disclosure/specified information which would render that staff/volunteer unsuitable to carry out relevant work/activities with children/vulnerable adults. (Please note, the school/Board is not required to review the Garda Vetting disclosure/specified information, neither should the school keep any such documentation on file. It is a written assurance from the operator in the terms outlined in this paragraph that is required. This written assurance should be kept by the school/Board.

If you have any queries regarding the above requirements, please contact either Gwen or Linda.

Child Protection Training for All BOM Members

Training for all BOM members in the revised "Child Protection Procedures for Schools 2025" will continue at the following venues over the coming weeks:

Wednesday 18th March: Castletroy Park Hotel, Limerick

Thursday 19th March: Brehon Hotel, Killarney

Tuesday 24th March: Inn @ Dromoland, Ennis

Thursday 26th March: Anner Hotel, Thurles

Tuesday 14th April: Woodlands Hotel, Adare

Places are still available at the Anner Hotel only. You can register for this session at the following link: [Anner Hotel – Thurles](#)

Notification of Vacancies for 2026/27 School Year

The primary staffing schedule will be available on the Department of Education & Youth website in the coming weeks. You will be aware that all schools are required to notify panel operators of their vacancies (permanent and fixed term) for the 2026/27 school year. When the staffing schedule issues, if your school has a post, either permanent/provisional or fixed term, you are required to notify this office without delay.

You are reminded that boards of management are not permitted to commence a recruitment process to fill a permanent or fixed term teaching vacancy in any other manner until the Department is satisfied that vacant positions are not required for redeployment of any remaining permanent /CID holding teachers on a main panel. The timing of when teaching vacancies can be filled in any other manner will depend on how quickly permanent/CID holding teachers are redeployed into vacancies.

We will provide further updates on **Redeployment Arrangements at Primary Level for Surplus Permanent and CID Holding Teachers** over the coming days.

