



26th February 2026

Dear Parent/Carers

RE: Important Safety Message for Students – Recent Incident in Local Area

Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue are writing to all the local schools in the area to make you aware of a recent incident that occurred in an abandoned building, the old Valley School site, which required a large-scale multi-agency response.

HFRS attended the incident alongside colleagues from the Police, Air Ambulance and Ambulance services. Thankfully, no injuries were reported, but the scale of the response highlights the significant risks associated with entering derelict or unsecured buildings and Urban Exploring.

Urban exploring might look exciting on social media, but places like abandoned buildings, rooftops, construction sites and disused factories are *extremely dangerous*. As firefighters, we see first-hand what can go wrong — and how quickly a “fun adventure” can turn into a life-threatening emergency.

⚠️ A Message About the Dangers of Urban Exploring – from Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue

Here’s what you need to know:

🔥 Hidden Fire Hazards

Old buildings often contain damaged wiring, flammable materials, and unsafe heating systems. A small spark can start a fire that spreads rapidly, filling the building with toxic smoke long before flames are visible. Smoke can make it impossible to see or breathe within seconds.

⚡ Electrical and Chemical Risks

You can’t always spot dangers like:

- Live, exposed electrical cables
- Sharp metal and broken glass
- Chemicals, asbestos and toxic dust

Even touching or disturbing these hazards can cause serious injury, poisoning or long-term illness.

🏠 Unsafe Floors, Roofs and Structures

Floors, ladders, roofs and staircases in abandoned places can collapse without warning. Firefighters have rescued people who have:

- Fallen through rotten floors
- Become trapped in basements
- Slipped from heights with life-changing injuries

Once you’re stuck, it can be incredibly difficult — and dangerous — for us to reach you.

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🚒 Strain on Emergency Services

When someone becomes trapped or injured, it often requires:

- Specialist rescue teams
- Cutting equipment
- Height or confined-space crews

These rescues put both you and our firefighters at risk. They also prevent us from reaching other emergencies where lives may depend on us being available.

🚫 It's Not Worth the Risk

We know urban exploring can seem exciting or like a chance to take cool photos — but no picture or adventure is worth:

- A serious injury
- Permanent disability
- A criminal charge for trespassing
- Putting your life, or a firefighter's life, in danger

Yours sincerely

T Skeggs

TERESA SKEGGS

Executive Headteacher.