

September 2026

Briefing Note for Schools to Share with Parents and Carers

Keeping Children Safe: The Dangers of Entering Derelict and Unused Buildings

We are asking schools to share the following safety message with parents, carers and young people:

Important Safety Message

The Local Authority has recently become aware of an increase in reports of children and young people accessing derelict, abandoned and unused buildings. In particular, locations such as The Grand Atlantic Hotel in Weston have attracted attention and may be viewed by some as places to explore or visit.

We understand that social media platforms, including TikTok and other online channels, have popularised activities sometimes referred to as "urban exploring" or "urbex". Whilst these videos can make such locations appear exciting or harmless, the reality is that abandoned buildings present significant dangers and can place children and young people at serious risk of injury.

The Risks and Dangers:

Derelict and disused buildings can contain a wide range of hazards, including:

- Unstable floors, staircases, walls and roofs that may collapse without warning.
- Broken glass, exposed metal and sharp debris that can cause serious injuries.
- Open lift shafts, basements, holes and concealed drops.
- Unsafe structures that have deteriorated over time and have not been maintained.
- Hazardous materials such as asbestos, chemicals, mould, contaminated water or other substances that can cause long-term health issues.
- Fire risks, electrical hazards and unsafe machinery or equipment.
- Areas that may have limited mobile phone signal or restricted access, making it difficult to call for help in an emergency.

Many of these dangers are not immediately visible, meaning that buildings that appear safe from the outside can be extremely unsafe once entered.

Legal Considerations:

Children and young people should also be aware that entering private property without permission may constitute trespassing and, where entry is gained by forcing access or causing damage, may involve criminal offences such as criminal damage or breaking and entering. Such incidents may result in police involvement and can place young people at further risk.

What Parents and Carers Can Do

We encourage parents and carers to:

- Talk openly with their children about the dangers associated with abandoned or derelict buildings.
- Discuss the influence of social media challenges and trends, and remind young people that videos posted online often do not show the real risks involved.
- Encourage children to meet friends and spend time in safe, supervised environments.
- Report concerns to the police or local authority if they become aware of children regularly accessing unsafe sites.
- Remind children that if they see others entering unsafe premises, they should not follow them and should leave the area immediately.

Keeping children safe requires the support of schools, families and the wider community. We ask everyone to reinforce the message that no social media trend, online challenge or exploration activity is worth the risk of serious injury or harm.

Please speak to your child about making safe choices and avoiding derelict, abandoned or unsecured buildings.