



NORTH YORKSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

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Your Ref: **School Leavers**

My Ref: **SL/JUN26**

Dear School Leavers,

Finishing school and moving on to the next stage of your life is an exciting time, bringing more independence, new experiences, and greater freedom. But with that freedom comes responsibility, and we want to help you stay safe while you make the most of it.

Every year, we see incidents involving young people that could have been avoided. To help you make safe decisions, we're sharing some important advice on water safety, wildfires, and road safety.

Open Water Safety

Swimming outdoors might look fun, but open water can be dangerous, even on a hot day. Cold water can shock your body in seconds, and rivers, lakes, and the sea all have hidden risks, such as strong currents and objects beneath the surface.

If you're visiting open water, follow these tips:

- Go with friends - don't go alone.
- Stick to recognised, supervised swimming areas.
- Look out for safety signs and flags.
- If someone is in trouble, call 999 and ask for the Coastguard at the coast, or the Fire and Rescue Service inland.
- Don't jump in to rescue someone, as you could also get into difficulty. Look for nearby safety equipment that you can throw to them.



Wildfires

Spending time outdoors with friends is part of summer, but things like BBQs, campfires, or even a dropped cigarette can start a wildfire very quickly, especially in dry weather.

Wildfires:

- Spread rapidly and unpredictably
- Destroy wildlife and countryside
- Put lives at risk, including emergency service crews
- Take up emergency service resources that may be needed elsewhere

Think about the impact of your actions, not just in the moment, but in the long term.

Road Safety

Young people are among those most at risk on the roads, as drivers, passengers, pedestrians, and cyclists. We often attend serious road traffic collisions where speed, distractions, or mobile phone use are factors, seatbelts were not worn, and passengers felt unsafe but did not speak out.

Protect yourself and your friends:

- Always wear a seatbelt on every journey.
- Never use your phone while driving or crossing the road.
- If you ride a bike, wear a helmet, use lights when needed, and make sure drivers can see you.
- Don't get into a vehicle if the driver is under the influence of drink or drugs or is driving dangerously.
- Speak up - it could save a life.

We want you to enjoy your future, take opportunities, and create great memories, but we also want you to stay safe while doing so.

Most people your age look out for their friends and make smart choices. Be one of them. Just take a moment to think before you act - your decisions now can affect your future and the people around you.

Please look after yourselves, look after each other, and make decisions you'll be proud of.

We wish you every success for the future.

Stay safe.

Kind regards,

North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service