



Cedarwood School

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Cedarwood School Lightning Policy

This policy must be read in conjunction with the POPIA Manual

The purpose of this policy

To make staff and pupils aware of what to do and not to do during possible and actual lightning occurrences while on the property of Cedarwood School.

The best defence is to **avoid lightning**. Staff and pupils must also avoid thinking about lightning as simply being 'below' a storm cloud. Lightning may well start in the storm cloud but can travel many tens of kilometres from that cloud before striking the earth. This is precisely why good lightning warning systems give the alert well before the storm is overhead and wait to give all clear until the storm has passed over – or until it is far enough away from the area.

Here are some outdoor safety measures that can help avoid individuals from being struck:

Do the following:

- **Be aware – Thunderstorms are automatically associated with lightning**
Check the weather forecast before participating in outdoor activities. Most cell phones are equipped with a weather forecast app. If the forecast calls for thunderstorms, postpone your trip or activity, or make sure adequate safe shelter is readily available. Be on alert for the lightning warning siren. One long blast means there is a lightning warning within a 10km radius of the school. And two shorter blasts means the "all clear".
- **Go indoors immediately**
Remember the phrase, "**When thunder roars, go indoors.**" Find a safe, enclosed shelter when you hear thunder or the warning siren. Safe shelters are brick buildings that include classrooms, offices, school reception areas, and hard-top vehicles with the windows rolled up and not carports or waiting area shelters. If on the school field with large numbers of pupils, go to the school hall.
- **Seek shelter immediately even if caught out in the open**
If you are caught in an open area, act quickly to find adequate shelter. The most important action is to remove staff and pupils from danger. Crouching or getting low to the ground can reduce the chances of being struck but does not remove individuals from danger.
- **Separate from each other**
If an individual is in a group during a thunderstorm, they have to separate from each other. This will reduce the number of injuries if lightning strikes the ground.

- **If staff or pupils are caught outside with no safe shelter nearby, the following actions may reduce individuals' risk:**
 - Immediately get off the sports field or playground area.
 - Immediately get off elevated areas such as hills, mountain ridges, or peaks.
 - Crouch down in a ball-like position with individuals' head tucked and hands over your ears so that they are down low with minimal contact with the ground. Don't lie flat on the ground.
 - Never shelter under an isolated tree.
 - Immediately get out of and away from the pool, and other bodies of water.
 - Stay away from objects that conduct electricity (electric fences, power lines, etc.).

Don't do the following:

- **Stay in open vehicles, structures, and spaces**
During a thunderstorm, avoid open vehicles. Be sure to avoid open structures such as verandas, lapas, gazebos, and sport stands. And stay away from open spaces.

- **Go near water.**

Do NOT touch taps or tap water from taps to drink, use outdoor drinking fountains or have any other contact with water during a thunderstorm because lightning can travel through a building's plumbing.

- **Go near electronic equipment.**

Do NOT use your computers, laptops, game systems, washing machines, dryers, stoves, or anything connected to an electrical outlet. Lightning can travel through electrical systems, radio and television reception systems, and any metal wires or bars in concrete walls or flooring. Avoid corded phones. Corded phones are NOT safe to use during a thunderstorm. Do NOT use them. However, it is safe to use cellular phones during a storm.

- **Go near windows, doors, porches, and concrete.**

Do NOT lie on concrete floors during a thunderstorm. Also, avoid leaning on concrete walls. Lightning can travel through any metal wires or bars in concrete walls or flooring. Stay away from windows that could break during a storm.

- **Risk your own life when somebody has been struck by lightning. The school management and First Aiders have to be alerted immediately.**

As a First Aider, follow these four steps immediately to help save the life of a lightning strike victim:

Giving first aid to lightning strike victims while waiting for professional medical attention can save their lives. It is safe to touch a lightning-strike victim. People struck by lightning DO NOT carry a charge.

1. Call for Help

Call an ambulance immediately. Give directions to your location and information about the strike victim(s). It is safe to use a cell phone during a storm.

2. Assess the situation.

- How many victims are there?
- Where was the victim struck?
- Is the storm still continuing?

Safety is a priority. Be aware of the continuing lightning danger to both the victim and rescuer. If the area where the victim is located is high risk (e.g., an isolated tree or open field), the victim and rescuer could both be in danger. If necessary, move the victim to a safer location. It is unusual for a victim who survives a strike to have any major broken bones that would cause paralysis or major bleeding complications unless the person suffered a fall or was thrown a long distance. Therefore, it may be safe to move the victim to minimize possible further exposure to lightning. If the area is cold and wet, putting a protective layer between the victim and the ground may help decrease hypothermia (abnormally low body temperature).

3. Respond

Lightning often causes a heart attack. Check to see if the victim is breathing and has a heartbeat. The best place to check for a pulse is the carotid artery which is found on your neck directly below your jaw.

4. Resuscitate

If the victim is not breathing, immediately begin mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. If the victim does not have a pulse, start cardiac compressions as well (CPR). Continue resuscitation efforts until help arrives.

Lightning warning system:

The lightning warning system is linked to international weather patterns and warnings are issued based on a large network of data. This is deemed to be accurate and therefore warning systems are to be trusted. The system installed by the school sends email, SMS and siren warnings when a lightning strike occurs within a 10 km radius of the school and will issue an all-clear signal once no lightning has been experienced within 10 minutes.

This system will be monitored and tested by the health and safety committee to ensure it is in good working order.

RECORD OF CHANGES

<u>Date</u>	<u>Page no, heading, brief description of changes</u>	<u>Entered by</u>
13 Sept 21	New	Management
30/11/ 2022	None	Management
10/11/2023	Included lightning siren	M. Ellis