

	SCHOOL SEEK SHARE
	General
	GUIDELINES FOR OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY: LIGHTNING & SAFETY GUIDELINES

A. PREAMBLE AND PRINCIPLES

1. Bellavista School seeks to take serious and reasonable precautions to minimise the risk of damage to property, and of injury or death, on the campus. A lightning strike is defined in insurance terms as an 'Act of God' and while Bellavista School has no control over how a lightning bolt will strike the campus, responsibility is undertaken to put preventative measures in place and to educate Bellavista School community about the dangers of lightning. Bellavista School cannot provide guarantees against injury, death or damage to property and there are therefore limitations to liability.
2. The purpose of this procedure is to outline the reasonable precautions taken and the expected behaviour of Bellavista School staff, students and parents; and visitors to the campus.
3. Everyone is expected to act reasonably and in the interests of their own safety and that of others in their care during a storm with lightning activity.
4. Bellavista School aims to provide sufficient warning regarding the status of a prevailing storm and lightning danger, and to require those who are outdoors to take shelter.
5. Whilst these guidelines are primarily for the campus, whenever staff or students participate in school-based activities off campus, these guidelines will apply so far as is reasonably practicable/possible within the environment they are in.

B. SYSTEM

1. Bellavista School's early warning lightning detection system is linked to the service provider Africa Weather, who have partnered with the South African Weather Service for real-time lightning data.
2. The warning system is operational between 06:00 and 21:00 Monday to Friday all year round.
3. The system is structured such that it warns of actual grounded lightning activity within a 16km radius of Bellavista School.

4. It operates on an automatic warning system with SMSs sent to the weather station on campus, the relevant and designated Managers, Staff, Sports Directors and various Sports Coaches, warning of storm and lightning events within our specified area of observation.
5. To alert to lightning danger, the warning alarm sounds a single long airhorn siren. The 'all clear' is signalled by a cycle of two short airhorn sirens, once the lightning danger has passed. The minimum amount of time between a warning siren and an all-clear siren sounding is 30 minutes. However, should there still be lightning activity in the area after the 30 minutes has expired, the warning siren will sound again, with a further 30 minutes added to the time before the all-clear siren will sound.
6. The system cannot be operated manually by any member of staff on campus. Africa Weather have a 24-hour number that can be called in the event of a problem with the system.

C. CHAIN OF COMMAND

1. All instructions and decisions are taken by the Executive Principal of the School or, in her absence, her designated staff member
2. The Executive Principal of the School or, in her absence, her designated staff member, will activate the BV_Lightning Whatsapp chat and instructions placed there should be followed directly.
3. All staff are expected to comply to these instructions.
4. Staff who have children off site (tennis, golf, EAGALA etc) must heed alerts delivered and comply with the instructions
5. The Principal of the School or, *in her absence*, her designated staff member, will SMS all parents if the lightning alert interrupts the normal flow of school to home transitions, and keep them updated every 10-15 minutes of the children are held back

D. PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW

1. When the warning siren sounds it indicates that there is imminent danger from lightning.
2. All outdoor activities are to be stopped immediately and all persons are required to seek appropriate shelter as quickly as possible.
3. School buildings (constructed of brick) are the most suitable shelter.

4. Any competitive game so stopped by the threat of lightning shall be considered a game suspended due to poor weather.
5. As far as is practically possible, any external users of Bellavista School facilities will be informed of this Procedure and the necessary importance of observing it. Failure to comply may result in future use of the facilities being reconsidered.
6. When the all-clear siren sounds, external outdoor activities may resume.

E. MOVEMENT

1. Should the siren to alert for lightning activate – all staff should respond even if no communication is received immediately.
2. All children and coaches must leave *the field* immediately and take shelter under cover of the *nearest* building.
3. All equipment must be left on the field or in the open area and only collected when instructed by the Principal of the School.
4. Coaches and teachers on duty must occupy/ organise the children in the hall if the event happens during sport times.
5. Children and staff in the school building must remain indoors, within the confines of the room (i.e. no balconies or corridors)
6. Children will be released in batches when dismissed.
7. Taking shelter applies to adult staff as much as to the children.

F. IMPORTANT NOTE

1. Parents are to please take note that staff are expected to keep students, so far as this is reasonably possible, under shelter during the period that the lightning alarm siren is active.
2. Any parents who so choose to go against this Procedure and to remove their child from a safe zone do so at their own risk and assume responsibility for their actions.
3. Failure to comply with this Procedure by any employee or registered student of Bellavista School may result in disciplinary action.

G. GENERAL SAFETY GUIDELINES

The following general guidelines are to be observed in the event of the lightning alarm siren being activated.

Do Not:

1. Wait to be told to take shelter when the siren sounds – _take shelter immediately;
2. Stand under any small, unprotected shelter - preferably seek shelter in a building as quickly as possible;
3. Touch anything metal and stay away from glass - this applies if you are inside a building, under the entrance grandstand shelter, in a car or bus, etc.
4. Touch anything that conducts electricity, such as corded phones, wiring, plumbing, and anything connected to these;
5. Stand under or touch trees or high isolated objects;
6. Stand in water -puddles, swimming pools, baths, showers, etc.;
7. Go barefoot -put shoes on immediately once you have taken shelter;
8. Stand in open fields or on hilltops;
9. Stand in groups- spread out;
10. Put yourself in danger by running onto fields, etc. to warn others to take shelter. Rather use a loud hailer or shout to them from a place of safety.
11. Lie on the ground as this increases the area where lightning that has been grounded could go through your body. The suggested professional advice is to crouch down as low to the ground as you can with your feet together. Do not be near or under trees. The idea is to not be the tallest object around.

Prepared by A Scott for the OHAS Committee: 23 January 2020 to be included in the general policy for Occupational Health and Safety for Bellavista School