**Parents struggling to cope after girls die from lightning strike over stormy weekend [South Africa]**

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Police in Mlungisi, near Queenstown in the Eastern Cape, have described the deaths by lightning of two local girls as a tragedy.

A group of four children, two girls and two boys all between the ages of 11 and 15, had been on their way home on Sunday at around 14:00 when they were caught in rain storm and struck by lightning.

Captain Namhla Mdleleni, local police spokesperson, says two of the boys and one of the girls are siblings. The three siblings had presumably fetched the other girl to visit them at their house.

“A sudden storm broke out and the group of children was hit by lightning. The two girls were fatally injured,” Mdleleni says.

She adds the boys are in a critical condition in a nearby hospital.

The children’s parents are heartbroken.

“You can only imagine what it must feel like to answer the phone and the person on the other side tells you your child is dead.

“It’s a tragic incident and the parents are still trying to come to terms with the shock,” Mdleleni says.

Heavy rains and storms occurred in large parts of the country this past weekend.

Queenstown received more than 15mm rain in a 24-hour cycle since Sunday, according to the South African Weather Service.