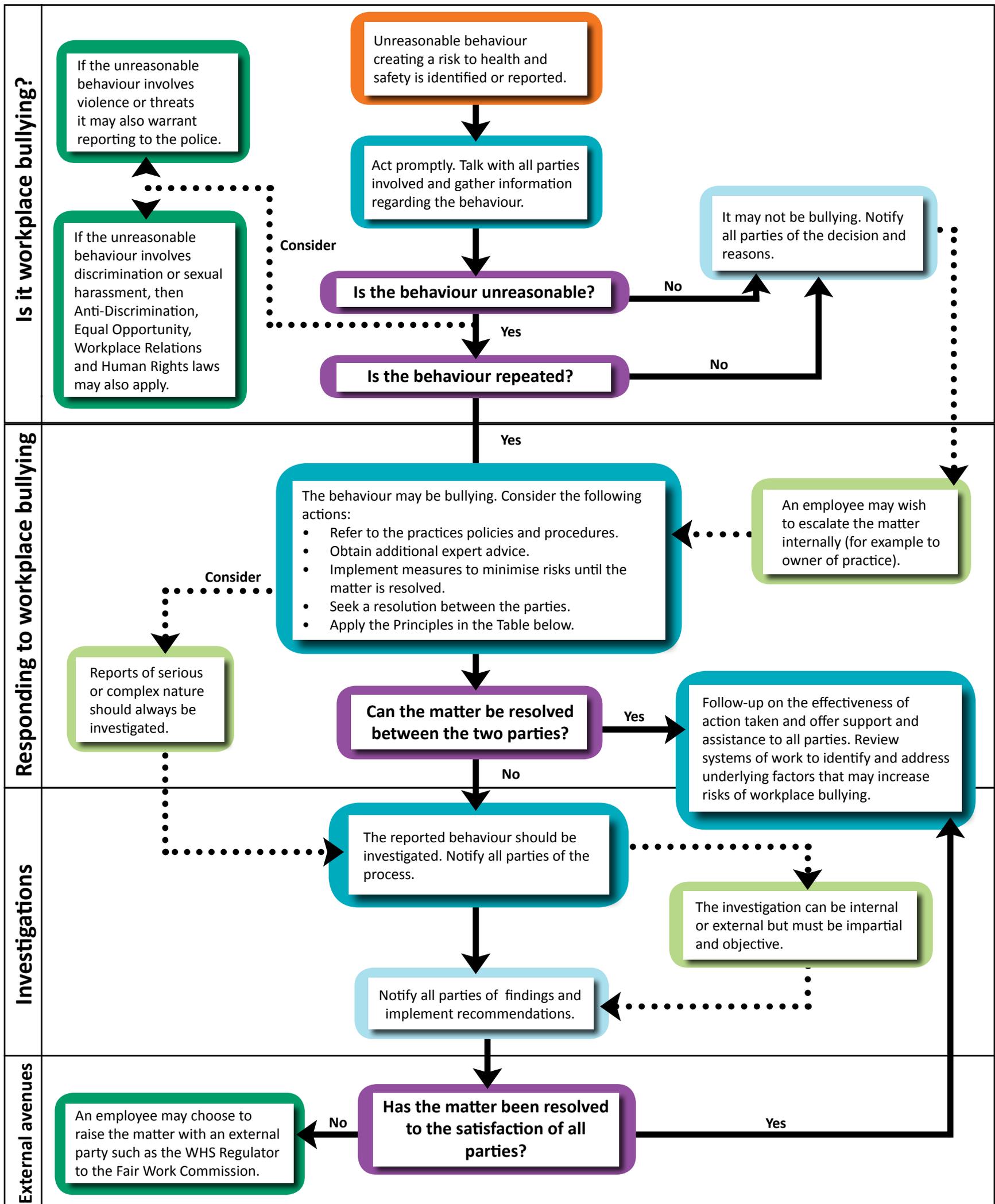


# RESPONDING TO WORKPLACE BULLYING

## Steps for Managers and Supervisors



# PRINCIPLES FOR RESPONDING TO REPORTS OF WORKPLACE BULLYING

Effectively responding to issues when they are raised can stop the situation happening again and reinforce to workers that workplace bullying is treated seriously and consistently by the organisation. The following table sets out the principles that should be applied when handling reports of workplace bullying.

RESPONSE	MEASURE
<b>Act Promptly</b>	Reports should be responded to quickly, reasonably and within established timelines. Relevant parties should be advised of how long it will likely take to respond to the report and should be kept informed of the progress to provide reassurance the report has not been forgotten or ignored.
<b>Treat all Matters Seriously</b>	All reports should be taken seriously and assessed on their merits and facts.
<b>Maintain Confidentiality</b>	The confidentiality of all parties involved should be maintained. Details of the matter should only be known by those directly concerned in the complaint or in resolving it.
<b>Ensure Procedural Fairness</b>	The person who is alleged to have perpetrated the bullying behaviour should be treated as innocent unless the reports are proven to be true. Reports must be put to the person they are made against and that person must be given a chance to explain his or her version of events. The person reporting the bullying should be respectfully listened to and their report treated as credible and reliable unless conclusively proven otherwise. The opportunity to have decisions reviewed should be explained to all parties.
<b>Be Neutral</b>	Impartiality towards everyone involved is critical. This includes the way people are treated throughout the process. The person responding to the report should not have been directly involved and they should also avoid personal or professional bias.
<b>Support All Parties</b>	Once a report has been made, the parties involved should be told what support is available, for example employee assistance programs, and allowed a support person to be present at interviews or meetings, for example, a Health and Safety Representative, union representative or work colleague.
<b>Do Not Victimise</b>	It is important to ensure anyone who reports workplace bullying is not victimised for doing so. The person accused of workplace bullying and witnesses should also be protected from victimisation.
<b>Communicate Process and Outcomes</b>	All parties should be informed of the process, how long it will take and what they can expect will happen during and at the end of the process. Should the process be delayed for any reason, all parties should be made aware of the delay and advised when the process is expected to resume. Finally, reasons for actions that have been taken and in some circumstances not taken should be explained to the parties.
<b>Keep Records</b>	The following should be recorded: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The person who made the report.</li> <li>• When the report was made.</li> <li>• Who the report was made to.</li> <li>• The details of the issue reported.</li> <li>• Action taken to respond to the issue.</li> <li>• Any further action required – what, when and by whom.</li> </ul> Records should also be made of conversations, meetings and interviews detailing who was present and the agreed outcomes.