

RESPONDING TO BULLYING FOR MANAGERS



Government of South Australia

Office of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment

Receive a report from an employee who feels bullied.

- Treat the report seriously. Listen respectfully, without bias, and offer support.
- Ask them what support they need from you.
- Talk about confidentiality requirements and that you may need to formalise the matter because of the risks to health and safety in the workplace.
- Keep a diary record of all conversations and meetings in relation to the matter.

Is this behaviour likely to be bullying because it is repeated, unreasonable and a risk to health or safety?

YES

- Explain options for responding to bullying – provide the agency bullying policy or CPSE guideline and time to consider what option they want to follow (may need a follow up meeting).
- Check their wellbeing, including whether temporary working arrangements are needed.
- Support them to lodge a WHS incident report or offer to lodge one on their behalf. The report does not need to mention names.

NO

Is it other inappropriate behaviour such as harassment (including sexual harassment) or misconduct?

Alternatively, the behaviour may be:

- Appropriate management action
- Miscommunication
- Poor team behaviour

Discuss with HR to determine appropriate response.

OPTIONS

Confirm the option the employee wants to follow. Sometimes an employee just wants to flag a concern but take no further action. In this case, ensure you have documented the conversation and kept a record of it appropriately.

External escalation

- Office for Public Integrity
- Safework SA
- Equal Opportunity SA

Resolve through direct conversation

- Employee to raise issue directly with person behaving inappropriately if safe to do so.
- Referral for counselling or coaching assertiveness.

Alternatively, if appropriate the manager can speak directly to the alleged bully about the behaviour.

Escalate complaint (HR to be involved)

Facilitated resolution

Internal: Facilitated conversation (by HR and/or manager).

External: Facilitated by mediator.

Formal complaint process

Employee lodges a formal complaint through the Agency complaints process, or an investigation (misconduct or WHS) is initiated by the Agency.

Matter is investigated in line with natural justice principles and procedural fairness.

HR will oversee the investigation process.

Principles for dealing with bullying matters

- Treat all matters seriously
- Act promptly
- Protect parties from victimisation
- Support all parties
- Be neutral
- Communicate the process and outcome
- Maintain confidentiality
- Document everything
- Report in WHS system