I am a parent, what should I do? Spot, listen and act

Supporting your child through bullying and cyberbullying

Parents · families | Primary to high school | Keep it close at hand

Is your child changing, withdrawing, refusing to go to school? Or have they just told you they are being bullied? This sheet helps you spot the warning signs, open a conversation without pressure and take the right steps, in the right order, with the school and support services.

1. Spot the warning signs

In their behaviour

- Withdrawal, sadness, unusual irritability
- Stomach aches or headaches in the morning, sleep or appetite problems
- Refusing to go to school, lateness, repeated absences
- Sudden drop in grades, damaged or "lost" belongings

With screens

- Anxiety at every notification, phone hidden or turned face down
- Suddenly quitting a social network, game or class group chat
- Deleted accounts or new usernames
- Mood worsening after time online, especially in the evening

Remember: a single sign is not enough. It is the build-up and persistence of changes that should alert you.

2. Start the conversation

- **Choose a calm moment**, with no screens or onlookers: a car ride, a walk, bedtime.
- **Listen without interrupting** and ask open questions: "How are things going with the others lately?"
- **Believe and reassure**: "It's not your fault. You did the right thing by telling me."
- **Don't promise total secrecy**: explain that you will act together, never behind their back.
- **Stay calm**: your reaction shapes their trust in you for what comes next.

3. Five steps to take action

1. **Listen and protect**
   Gather the facts (who, what, where, since when) and keep your child safe if needed.

2. **Keep the evidence**
   Full screenshots with date, time and username visible. Do not reply to the bully and do not delete anything.

3. **Alert the school in writing**
   Form tutor, school counsellor (CPE) or head: ask for a prompt meeting and keep a copy of your message.

4. **Call 3018 (France)**
   Single national helpline, free and confidential, 7 days a week from 9 am to 11 pm. It can get online content removed within hours.

5. **File a complaint if necessary**
   Since the law of 2 March 2022, school bullying is a criminal offence in France. Go to the police with your evidence.

4. What the school must do

> **pHARe programme** — Every primary, middle and high school in France has a protocol for handling cases and a trained team. After you report: an interview with your child, protective measures, interviews with the pupils involved and witnesses, information for the family, then follow-up over time. If the response seems insufficient, contact the head teacher, then the bullying referent of the local education authority.

5. The right reflexes

Rather than…	Prefer…
Confiscating the phone or cutting the Internet	Securing accounts together (blocking, reporting, privacy settings): your child must not feel punished.
Contacting the bully or their family	Going through the school, which organises mediation and appropriate measures.
Replying or posting an angry message	Keeping the evidence and reporting content to the platform and to 3018.
Downplaying: “Ignore them, it’ll pass”	Acknowledging their pain and showing that adults are taking action.

6. Take care of your child… and yourself

- **Keep their routines**: activities, friends outside school, family time that rebuilds confidence.
- **Don't stay alone**: family doctor, school nurse or psychologist, specialised associations.
- **Stay attentive over time**: bullying can resume online during the holidays.

Useful numbers in France

3018	**Bullying and cyberbullying** — single helpline, free and confidential. Also by chat and through the 3018 app.
119	**Children at risk helpline** — 24/7, free.
3114	**Suicide prevention** — 24/7, if your child expresses dark thoughts.
17 or 112	**Emergency** — in case of immediate danger.

My useful contacts

Contact	Name	Phone / e-mail
Form tutor		
School counsellor (CPE)		
Head teacher		
School nurse		
Bullying referent		

Going further

Find the sheets "Documenting a bullying case file", "I am a victim, what should I do?" and "I am a witness, what should I do?" on netethic.fr.