

# Policy on minors

## In short

- Debaty is for **everyone aged 16 and over**. If you are under 16, you cannot have an account here.
- When you sign up, we ask for your date of birth, solely to work out whether you are old enough. **We do not store that date** — only the fact that you are 16 or over, and when we established this.
- **We do not really verify your age**, and we say so here in as many words. We do not ask for proof of identity and we do not use software that estimates your age.
- No one here receives behaviourally targeted advertising, and no profile is built of anyone — so not of young people either.
- Do you think an account belongs to someone under 16? **Report it**. We then first ask for confirmation before anything happens.
- Are you a parent, carer or teacher with a question? See **contact**.

## Why 16 years

**In brief:** that is the age at which, in the Netherlands, you may use an online service that processes your data without a parent's consent.

Privacy law governs the age from which you can give consent yourself for the use of your data by an online service. European law sets that limit between 13 and 16 years and lets each country choose for itself; **the Netherlands has chosen 16** (AVG article 8, elaborated in the Dutch UAVG). Debaty is a Dutch service, so 16 is our lower limit.

There is also a substantive reason not to go lower. Debaty is a place for public debate: what you write here stays there, can be found, and is about topics that make people angry. That is already uncomfortable for adults. We have no separate, safer version for children, and we would not be able to make one good enough.

## What we ask when you sign up

**In brief:** your date of birth, once, to do a calculation. After that we throw it away and keep only the fact that you are old enough.

When creating an account you enter your date of birth. Exactly one thing is done with it: we work out whether you are 16 or over.

- If you are **16 or over**, we store the fact that you are, and when we established it. **The date itself is not stored.**
- If you are **younger**, the account is not created.

That the date of birth is not retained is a deliberate choice and not a detail: privacy law requires no more data to be stored than necessary (AVG article 5), and for this question "yes, checked" is enough. It also means there is no list of dates of birth that could ever leak.

After a refused sign-up, your browser remembers for six months that it was refused, so that it is not immediately tried again with a different date. That is a cookie with no content about you; it is listed in the [cookie policy](#).

## What we cannot do, and therefore do not promise

**In brief:** this is an age question, not an age check. Anyone who enters a different date gets through. We know this, and we do not pretend otherwise.

This chapter is here because the alternative — suggesting that we verify age — would be a promise we do not keep.

**We do not ask for proof of identity.** Not at sign-up and not later. We have no copy of your passport and do not want one.

**We do not estimate your age.** No software is running that infers from your face, your language use or your behaviour how old you are. That would mean we have to know much more about everyone than we know now, and that is the wrong trade-off.

**So:** someone who is 15 and enters 2005 gets through. That is a real limitation and not a theoretical one.

**Why we do it this way anyway.** The law requires of a service like this a \*reasonable effort\*, in proportion to the risk and to the size of the service — not a watertight identity check. What we set against that: a clear limit, a question you have to answer deliberately, a service that does not target children, no profiling of anyone whatsoever, and a reporting route by which an account can still be removed. If we did want to verify, then everyone — including every adult — would have to show proof of identity in order to take part. We consider that a heavier intervention than the problem it solves.

If the law changes, or if this proves not to work in practice, this chapter will change accordingly.

## What everyone is protected against, and therefore young people too

**In brief:** we build no profile of anyone and show no one behaviourally targeted advertising. That is the strongest protection we can give, precisely because we do not know who is young.

Because we store only the fact that someone is 16 or over, we do not know exactly how old anyone is. We therefore cannot treat young people separately — and that is not necessary either, because the protective part applies to everyone:

- **No advertising profile.** No record is kept of what anyone is interested in in order to tailor advertisements to it.
- **No behaviourally targeted advertising.** Which advertisement you see depends on the topic, the language and the country of the page you are reading. Never on who you are or what you did before. See [how Debaty makes money](#).

- **No sale of data.** To no one, ever.
- **No tracking across sites.** There are no tracking cookies and no scripts from other companies on Debaty; see the [cookie policy](#).

There is moreover an explicit prohibition on advertising to minors on the basis of profiling in the Digital Services Act (article 28). We do not even get to that point, because we do not reach anyone in that way in any case.

**What we cannot take away:** Debaty is public. What you post can be read by anyone, including outside Debaty. What you do have in your own hands — who may reply, who may send you messages, who sees your profile — is found in your [settings](#).

## If someone turns out to be under 16 after all

**In brief:** report it. We first ask the member themselves for confirmation, and only if this is not forthcoming does the account go.

If you suspect that an account belongs to someone under 16, report it with the reason "**Suspected minor**" — with an account via the menu next to the content, without an account via the [reporting point](#).

Such a notice takes a different route than an ordinary one, because it is not about what is stated but about who posted it:

- **We ask the member for confirmation**, via a message or e-mail: confirm within **14 days** that you are 16 or over.
- **If that confirmation is not forthcoming, we suspend the account.**
- **After that we delete it**, including the personal data, via the same AVG deletion procedure as for every other deleted account. An administrator confirms the definitive deletion.

**Why not removed immediately?** Because a suspicion is not a finding. An anonymous notice by which you could make someone's account disappear would be an attractive weapon in a heated discussion — and those are precisely the discussions here. The 14 days are there to keep those two cases apart.

The procedural side is set out in the [moderation policy](#).

## Are you yourself under 16?

**In brief:** then you cannot take part here, and that is not a judgement about you.

If you are under 16, you may not have an account here. If you do have one, you can close it yourself via [Settings > Account](#) — that is quicker and more pleasant than waiting until someone reports it.

If something unpleasant has happened on Debaty and you do not know what to do: tell someone you trust, and also report it to us via the [reporting point](#). Even if you should not really have been here, we will help you.

And you are welcome as soon as you turn 16.

## For parents, carers and teachers

**In brief:** get in touch. What we can do for you depends on whether you can demonstrate that it concerns your child.

If you are worried about an account that you think belongs to your child, please [contact](#) us.

**What we can do:** take the "suspected minor" notice into handling, and start the procedure above. If it concerns your own child under 16, you can also directly ask for the account to be deleted; we will then ask you to make it plausible that you are the parent or carer.

**What we cannot do:** tell you whether a particular account belongs to your child, or let you look into someone else's messages. We cannot do that — we usually do not know ourselves — and it is also not permitted: that would violate the privacy of the user of that account, even if that user is a minor.

**Would you like to know how it works here?** The [guidelines](#) say what is and is not allowed, the [moderation policy](#) how we enforce that, and the [privacy statement](#) which data we store about someone.

## About this policy

**In brief:** it changes along with the law and with the service; the date at the bottom says when it last did.

If the age limit in the law changes, or what we can do technically changes, this page will change accordingly. We announce important changes in advance.

Questions about this page go via [contact](#).

## Version and changes

**In brief:** this is version 1.0 of this document, adopted on 23 July 2026.

- **v1.0 — 23 July 2026.** First adopted, complete version of this document.

## Where to take a complaint

**In brief:** come to us first. If that does not resolve it, the choice is yours: our Dutch supervisory authority, or the one in your own country.

We are a Dutch company. Our own supervisory authorities are therefore the **Autoriteit Persoonsgegevens** (the Dutch data protection authority) and the **Autoriteit Consument & Markt** (the Dutch authority for digital services). You can turn to either one, wherever you live.

If you live in the EU or the EEA, you do not have to come to the Netherlands for that. You can lodge your complaint with the supervisory authority of the country where you live or work, in your own language. That authority handles it

or passes it on, and remains your point of contact. The data protection authorities are listed by the European Data Protection Board ([edpb.europa.eu](https://edpb.europa.eu)); the Digital Services Coordinators are listed by the European Commission.

If you live outside the EU and the EEA, you can still turn to our Dutch supervisory authorities. On top of that, the law of your own country may give you an authority of your own; a complaint that reaches us through such an authority is handled in exactly the same way.

**Why no foreign authority is named here.** The language you are reading this in does not say which country you live in. Which supervisory authority is yours depends on where you live, not on the language you read — and sending you to the wrong desk costs you the very time a complaint does not leave you.

And the courts are always open. If you live in the EU, that may be the court in your own country, where consumer law there allows you to do so.

## Language and validity

**In brief:** the version you read is the one that applies to you — a translation included.

This document is available on Debaty in fourteen languages. **The version in your language applies to you, and it binds us too.** Where a translation differs from the Dutch text, the reading that is most favourable to you applies: we cannot hold our own translation error against you.

Dutch is the language in which we write changes and against which we check translations. That is a working arrangement inside our company, not a ranking between readers. If a translation lags behind the Dutch text, we say so at the top of the page, with both dates.

Wherever you live, the mandatory consumer law of your own country continues to apply, whatever else is written here.