

Community Guidelines

In short

- **Go after the content, not the person.** You may disagree here as fiercely as you like. What is not allowed is belittling someone instead of refuting them.
- **Put no one in danger.** No threats, no calls to violence, no private information about others.
- **Be honest about who you are.** A pseudonym is fine. Passing yourself off as someone else is not.
- **Say where you got it from.** If you make a factual claim, add how you know it.
- See something that doesn't belong here? **Report it** — you can also do so **without an account**.
- If something goes wrong with your own post, you'll hear what was decided and why, and you can **file a complaint against the decision**.

What these guidelines are about

In brief: about everything others can see of you on Debaty. Private messages fall under them only if someone reports them.

These guidelines apply to bubbles, debates, replies, stories, your profile, your name and the images you post. In short: everything another person gets to see.

We do not read along with private messages. A conversation between you and someone else stays private, and no human and no computer looks into it. If the recipient reports a message, a moderator can view that message — with the messages immediately around it as context, not the whole conversation — and then the same rules as above apply. Exactly how that is delineated is set out in the **moderation policy**.

This page says **what** the agreements are. The **moderation policy** says **how** we apply them. The **terms of use** are the contract around them.

The distinction that matters here

In brief: an attack on an argument may do anything. An attack on a person may do nothing. The difference lies not in how fierce you are, but in what you attack.

This is the most important rule of Debaty, and also the hardest. That's why there is no definition here but examples. On the left, each time, is something that is allowed — however sharp. On the right is the version that is not allowed, on the same topic, with the same intensity.

This is allowed

This is not allowed

"This study is no good: the sample is 40 people and there is no control group."	"Only an idiot cites this study."
"You've read the figures wrong — table 3 says the opposite."	"You clearly can't read."
"I find this policy cruel and I think those who support it don't grasp the consequences."	"Anyone who supports this is a monster and doesn't belong here."
"Your previous point contradicted this. Which of the two do you mean?"	"You're lying, as always."
"I believe your experience, but one experience is not a pattern."	"You're making this up for attention."
"This religion has doctrines that I find reprehensible, and this is why."	"People of this religion are no good."

Do you see the pattern? On the left, each time, a **claim, a line of reasoning or a choice** is attacked. On the right, the **person** is attacked: their mind, their honesty, their right to be here.

Three things that follow from this, and that often go wrong:

- **Fierce is not the same as over the line.** "This is demonstrably untrue and it's the third time you've repeated it" is fine. Anger is allowed.
- **Polite is not the same as within the line.** "I genuinely wonder whether someone with your background can even understand this" is politely phrased and yet an attack on a person.
- **A group is also a person.** A faith, a party or a theory you may tear apart. The people who fall under them, you may not — and certainly not for something they can do nothing about.

Respect

In brief: you may demolish someone's idea. You may not belittle them, hurl abuse at them or frighten them.

This belongs here:

- A counterargument, even a devastating one.
- Pointing out factually that someone is mistaken, and where.
- Deeply disagreeing about politics, science, faith or morality.
- Asking someone to substantiate their point.

This does not belong here:

- Hurling abuse, mocking or being condescending about a person.
- Following someone around the site: showing up under their posts again and again to drive them away.
- Sowing hatred against people for who they are — their origin, skin colour, faith, sex, sexual orientation, disability or age.

- Threatening. "Jokes" about harming someone count too, and "I didn't mean it that way" afterwards changes nothing about that.
- Making sexual advances to someone who hasn't asked for them.

Safety

In brief: nothing on Debaty may lead to something happening to someone outside Debaty.

This belongs here:

- Discussing heavy topics: violence, war, abuse, suicide. Seriously, and with care for those reading along.
- Sharing your own experience, even a painful one.
- Telling people where help can be found.

This does not belong here:

- Calling for violence, cheering violence on, or singling someone out as a target.
- Encouraging someone to harm themselves, or explaining how.
- Posting someone else's address, phone number, work address or other private information — even if you found it somewhere. That is called doxing, and it is always wrong here.
- Photos or videos of someone in a private situation without that person wanting it, and images of a sexual nature without consent.
- Anything that harms children. Child sexual abuse material we report to the police and remove immediately.

If it concerns acute danger — to you or to someone else — then call the emergency number. We are not an emergency service and cannot be fast enough.

Honest about who you are

In brief: being anonymous is allowed. Pretending to be someone else, or to be more people than you are, is not.

This belongs here:

- A pseudonym. You don't have to use your real name here, and that is a deliberate choice on our part.
- Multiple accounts, for example one for your work and one for everything else.
- A bot, provided it runs through the official channel and is visibly labelled as a bot.
- Writing on behalf of an organisation, if you say so.

This does not belong here:

- Passing yourself off as an existing person, company, media outlet or government authority.
- Using extra accounts to circumvent a block, a muting action or a measure.

- Pretending an opinion is more widely shared than it is: backing yourself up with multiple accounts, or agreeing with a group to all shout the same thing.
- Spam: posting the same advertisement everywhere, or mass-messaging people who didn't ask for it.

Substantiating and staying on topic

In brief: this is the only rule that isn't about behaviour but about quality. Debaty is for the argument, not for the "yes-it-is, no-it-isn't".

This belongs here:

- Adding to a factual claim how you know it. **Adding sources** can be done in a single action.
- Reading someone else's argument in its strongest form first, and only then responding.
- Admitting you were wrong on a point. That is not a loss here.
- Not knowing something and saying so.

This does not belong here:

- Repeating the same point endlessly without engaging with the reply.
- Pasting one message into dozens of conversations.
- Hijacking a conversation: throwing in a different topic again and again until no one gets around to it anymore.
- Provoking for the sake of provoking.
- Making claims that are demonstrably untrue and cause harm — about health, elections or emergencies — and continuing to repeat them after you've been shown the opposite.

This last point calls for precision: **we do not determine what is true**. An opinion may be unwelcome, a theory may deviate from the prevailing one, and being wrong is not a violation. It is about claims that have been factually refuted and cause concrete harm, and that you keep repeating. That is also what the **fact-check** is for: another reader can ask for substantiation without a moderator immediately getting involved.

What the law forbids regardless

In brief: some things are not allowed here because they are allowed nowhere. There is nothing to negotiate about that.

Apart from everything above, you may not post anything that is forbidden by law. Among other things: child sexual abuse material, incitement to hatred or violence, terrorist content, threats, defamation, fraud, and another person's work for which you do not hold the rights.

With this kind of content things move fast and without intermediate steps, and in the most serious cases **we inform the competent authorities**. Authorities have a **dedicated contact point** for that.

What happens if you cross the line

In brief: we choose the lightest measure that works. You'll always hear what was decided and why, and you can always file a complaint against the decision.

This list is the same as in the [terms of use](#); it appears in both places because you must be able to find it in both places.

What is going on	What we do
A one-off misstep	A warning. You'll hear what went wrong and the content stays up.
Content that crosses the line	We take that content down, or we limit who still sees it.
Repetition	A restriction: for a time no posting, no replying or no sending messages.
Serious or persistent	A suspension: your account is temporarily on hold. You can still access it to retrieve your data.
The most severe case	Termination: your account is closed and stays closed.

Four things that always go with this:

- **A human decides.** Software can flag something and, in a very clear-cut case, temporarily hide a message, but removing content or restricting an account is always done by a moderator.
- **You'll hear why.** With every decision you get an explanation: which rule, what we saw, whether software was involved, and how you file a complaint against the decision.
- **You can file a complaint against the decision.** For six months, free of charge, via the [complaints page](#). Someone other than the person who decided will then take a fresh look at it.
- **If your complaint is upheld, we reverse it.** Removed content is restored, a suspension is lifted.

If you see something that doesn't belong here

In brief: report it. You can do so with an account via the menu next to the content, and without an account via the public reporting point.

Next to every post, every reply and every profile there is a menu with "report". If you don't have an account, use the [public reporting point](#). Your notice is confidential: the person it concerns is not told who reported.

You'll hear back from us when your notice has been assessed. What exactly was decided about someone else's account, you won't hear — that is their business, not yours.

Reporting is not the same as solving it yourself. If you simply don't want to see someone anymore, you can **mute** or **block** them; no moderator is involved and it works immediately.

These guidelines evolve too

In brief: they are never finished. We announce important changes in advance.

Situations will arise that are not covered here; then we decide in their spirit and write the rule down as well. We announce important changes in advance, and the date at the bottom shows when this page last changed.

If you think a rule here is no good, say so. That is allowed here too, and the [contact page](#) is there for that.

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); 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.