WESTTOWN SCHOOL

Alerts, RSS and iCal feeds

Alerts and feeds are both methods of keeping current on site content that changes or updates frequently. The primary difference between them is that Alerts are active: whenever an update is made to site content, if you've subscribed to alerts for that content you'll automatically receive an email or text message about the change. Feeds are not as immediate and are not actively broadcast to users. You still have to take action – such as launching an RSS or calendar application, or visiting a webpage – to view feed content. The upshot is that you can integrate feeds from many different websites or pieces of content, and then use just a single app or web location to keep up with all of them.

Feeds come in two varieties: RSS (which stands for "really simple syndication") is for web content such as blog posts or News announcements. iCal feeds are very similar to RSS feeds, but are focused exclusively on calendar information. You can use RSS with calendars if you wish; if you already use a program like Outlook or the iCal software on your iPhone to handle your appointments though, you can easily integrate iCal feeds to get school events to appear on your existing calendar(s). This document will explain when and how Alerts, RSS feeds and iCal feeds are used on your school's site. We'll also cover how to add your cell phone number to your account profile so that you can receive alerts via text message
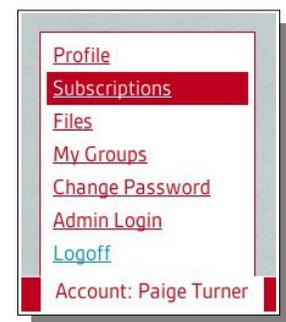
Alerts

Alerts automatically let you know when a particular piece of web content has been updated. You can use alerts in conjunction with Athletics team events, school Calendars, News categories, blog posts, discussion forums, or any other web page that features changing content. To begin receiving updates for a calendar, blog, etc., you must subscribe to that content to sign up for alerts.
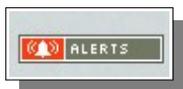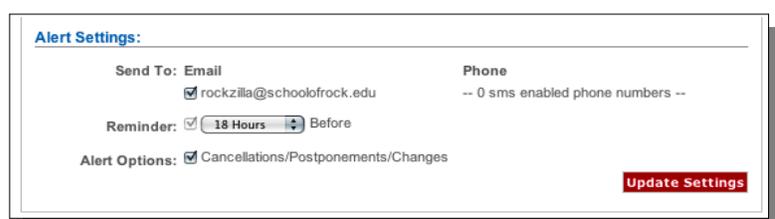
On a Calendar page, Athletic Events page, blog page or discussion forum page, you'll see the Alerts icon, pictured at left. Click on it to open up a Subscriptions window where you can subscribe to new alerts from this page.

Profile
Subscriptions
Files
My Groups
Change Password
Admin Login
Logoff
Account: Paige Turner

(You can also edit all of your Alert subscriptions collectively through the account bar – click on your name on the lower left, and in the menu that pops up, select "Subscriptions.")In this window, you can see all of the Alerts that you've setup previously, as well as mailing list subscriptions and Calendar event reminders.

Some Alerts give you unique options for customizing the messages you receive. Calendar events, for instance, allow you to set how far in

Alert Settings:

Send To:	Email		Phone
	☑ rockzilla@schoolofrock.edu		-- 0 sms enabled phone numbers --
Reminder:	☑ 18 Hours ⇕ Before		
Alert Options:	☑ Cancellations/Postponements/Changes		

Update Settings

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advance you'd like to get a reminder for an event. You can also opt into receiving Cancellation, Postponement and schedule change alerts (if applicable).

Athletics event alerts offer those same advance-warning features, as well as the option to receive a subsequent alert when the score and results are posted for that event.
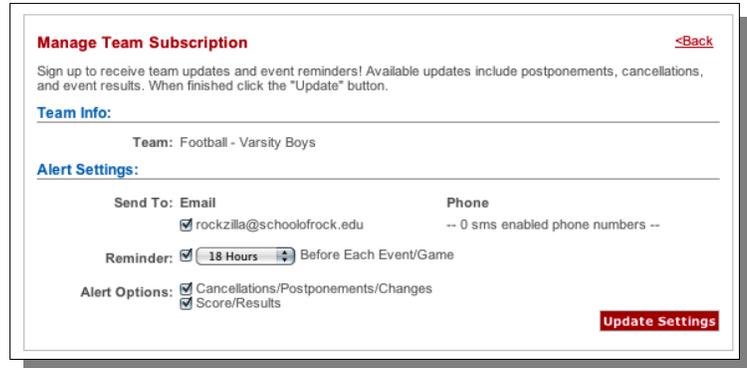
Manage Team Subscription   <Back

Sign up to receive team updates and event reminders! Available updates include postponements, cancellations, and event results. When finished click the "Update" button.

Team Info:

Team: Football - Varsity Boys

Alert Settings:

Send To: Email   Phone
☑ rockzilla@schoolofrock.edu   -- 0 sms enabled phone numbers --

Reminder: ☑ [18 Hours ▼] Before Each Event/Game

Alert Options: ☑ Cancellations/Postponements/Changes
☑ Score/Results

Update Settings

You can also subscribe to receive alerts whenever News items are posted. News items are sorted by category, and you can elect to subscribe to some categories but not others. Click on the Alerts icon on a News page to bring up the Manage News Alerts window. From here, you'll be able to select which categories you wish to follow, and whether you'd like to receive text message or email alerts for each.

With Blog and Discussion Forum posts, you can simply sign up to receive an alert when new posts are created.
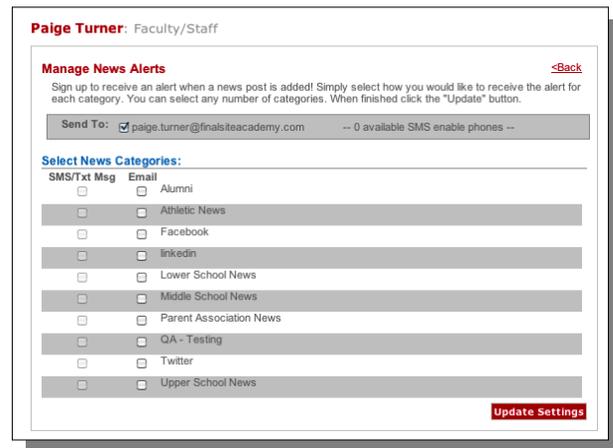
Paige Turner: Faculty/Staff

Manage News Alerts   <Back

Sign up to receive an alert when a news post is added! Simply select how you would like to receive the alert for each category. You can select any number of categories. When finished click the "Update" button.

Send To: ☑ paige.turner@finalsiteacademy.com   -- 0 available SMS enable phones --

Select News Categories:

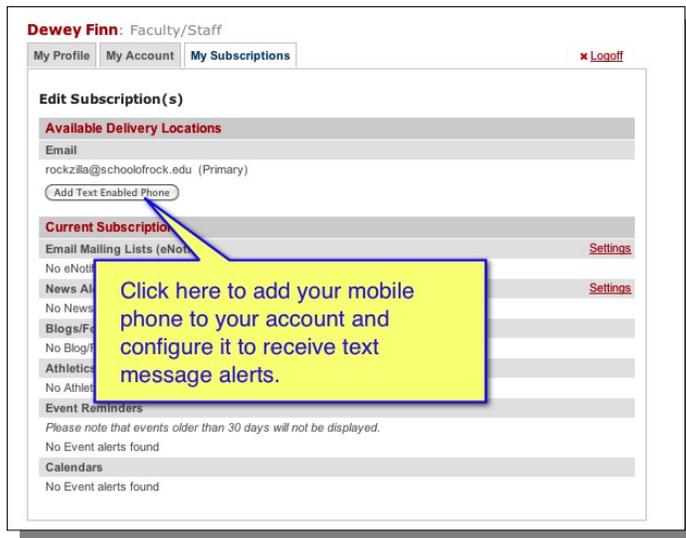| SMS/Txt Msg	Email	
☐	☐	Alumni
☐	☐	Athletic News
☐	☐	Facebook
☐	☐	linkedin
☐	☐	Lower School News
☐	☐	Middle School News
☐	☐	Parent Association News
☐	☐	QA - Testing
☐	☐	Twitter
☐	☐	Upper School News

Update Settings

To activate SMS alerts

If you have not added a mobile phone number to your account, you will not be able to receive text message alerts, only email alerts. You can activate text message alert subscriptions by adding your mobile phone number to your website account.

To add a mobile phone to your account:

1. Login to the site, then click your username in Account Bar at the lower-left of the screen
2. Click the "Subscriptions" option on the fly-out menu
3. Click "Add Text Enabled Phone"
4. Click "OK" on the popup window (at right)

The page at https://demo.finalsite.com says:

Text messaging should only be enabled for phones that support this feature.

If your phone supports text messaging click OK. Enter your phone number with the area code and select your wireless carrier. Then click the UPDATE button, which will send a verification code to your text-enabled phone. When you receive the verification alert, enter the supplied 6-digit code in the confirm box. Please note that you will not receive any alerts to this contact until you have entered this code.

[Cancel]   [OK]

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5. Click on the "Add Text Enabled Phone" button:

6. Enter your phone number and cell service provider (or use the "Enter existing phone number" radio button, and select a phone number that is already associated with your site account)

7. Click "Update" to send a 6-digit verification code to your phone via text message

8. When you receive the 6-digit code, click on the "Verify" link and enter that code into the website

9. When the confirmation code is accepted, your cell phone will be activated to receive SMS alerts
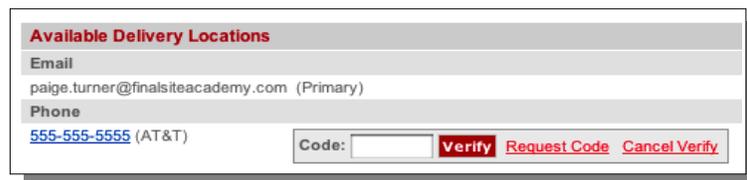
After activating a phone, when you next subscribe to an alert you'll have the option of choosing email and/or text message delivery.

RSS Feeds

RSS Feeds let you keep track of many individual pieces of dynamic content from multiple websites, and to keep all of that content in one place. Before we discuss how to use RSS feeds on the website, we need to talk about software. You'll need a piece of software called a "feed reader" to take advantage of RSS feeds.

Feed readers come in many different forms, with differing feature sets. They can be standalone apps, they can be plugins to larger apps such as a browser (Firefox, Google Chrome, Microsoft Internet Explorer), or they can simply be webpages that you visit and log into in order to see your feeds. One of the more popular feed readers is Google Reader, which has the benefit of being completely free. It's a website, so there's no additional software to download and keep updated. Simply go to the webpage and sign in with your Google login. You'll be ready to start adding RSS feeds to Google

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Reader right away. If you use an iOS device like an iPad to browse the website and wish to use a feed reader, check the App Store for any number of RSS feed reader apps.

Once you're up and running with a feed reader, you can add as many RSS feeds to it as you like. This is very helpful if you follow a number of blogs and other regularly-updated content across a variety of websites. All of the various content pieces published to each different site can be collected in your feed reader. This way, you can check your feed reader to keep on top of all the new content you're interested in, rather than having to visit each site individually.

In finalsite, RSS feeds are integrated into Athletics team schedules, News Manager, Blog pages, Calendars, and more. You can access an RSS feed for dynamic content wherever you see the RSS icon.
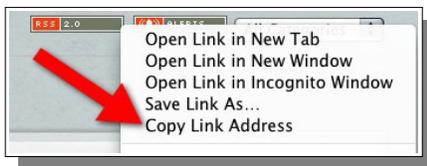
Every RSS feed has a unique online address. This is what you'll use to update your feed reader and prompt it to begin tracking the website content you want to follow. Hover your mouse cursor over the RSS icon and right-click (or Command-click on a Mac). Select the option to "Copy Link Address."

Next, go to your feed reader and find the "Subscribe" command (it's usually a button that's easy to spot). Click it, and paste the feed address that you just copied into the field. Save your change, and your RSS reader will now begin following any updates made to that section of the website. New content will be displayed in your feed reader shortly after it's published to the host website. You'll be able to click on the headline in your reader to jump directly to the source, in this case a page on your school's site. You can repeat this process for as many RSS feeds as you like. Many RSS feed reader apps allow you to create custom categories for your feeds, to make it easy to follow RSS feeds from all sorts of different websites. Look for an RSS icon like the one shown to the right to find RSS feeds on other websites.
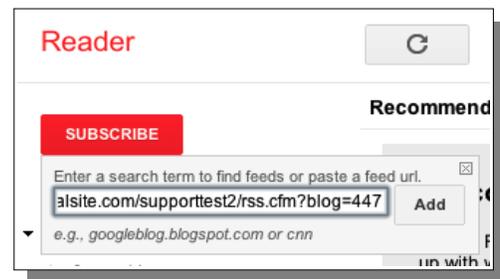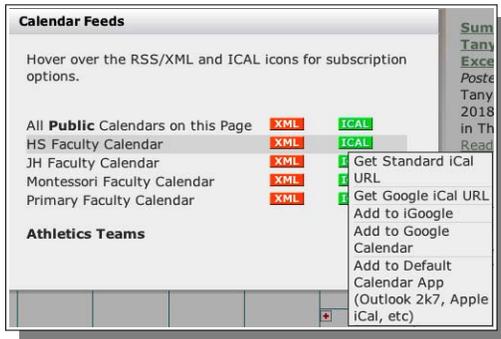
iCal feeds

iCal feeds are similar to RSS feeds – they both allow you to use an external program to keep track of frequently-changing content. In the case of the iCal file though, the content being tracked is calendar data: event start times, end times and other relevant details. Calendar pages will display an iCal feed button (circled in the image at right).
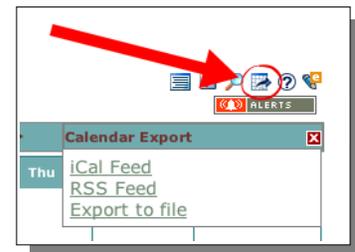
Clicking this will pop open a new menu; you can opt to follow calendars via RSS feed, or via iCal feed. If you already use a calendar-management tool (such as iCal on the Mac/iPhone), select the iCal feed link. Using this option will integrate the online calendar you select with your own calendar system. Selecting iCal will pop open a new window with several

choices.

First, you can opt to subscribe to an iCal feed for a *single* calendar that's displayed on the webpage, or for *all* of the available calendars. Then, when you select the green iCal feed button corresponding to the calendar(s) you want to follow, you'll select which "flavor" of iCal feed to use Choose the one that most closely matches the calendar-management software that you have. (There are slight differences in how various calendar-management software programs handle iCal feeds, which is why you need to make this choice.) Once you've selected the appropriate feed, copy the provided URL into your calendar software.

iCal feeds are generally updated hourly, meaning changes made to the calendar on the website may take up to an hour to reach your own device (there may be an additional delay, depending on how frequently your calendar software checks the iCal feed for updates). After you have selected an iCal feed and added it to your device, you'll see events from that calendar show up within your own software.

Following an iCal feed from a particular calendar will NOT automatically sign you up for alerts for events on that calendar.