KNOWLEDGE BASE ARTICLE

Following Boards and Topics: Subscriptions and Digest Frequency

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Overview

A forum is only useful if people come back to it. Discussions lets every member decide how: follow a whole board to hear about every new topic, follow a single topic to hear about its replies, and choose for each subscription whether the news should arrive immediately, once a day or once a week. Authors are subscribed to their own topics automatically, and one click is enough to stop following anything.

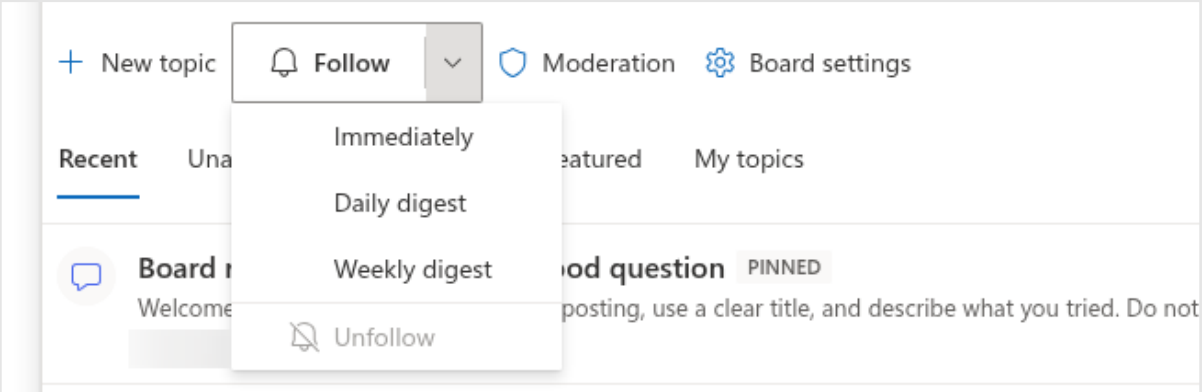
Subscriptions replace the classic **SharePoint Alerts** that the old Discussion Board relied on — a mechanism that Microsoft is retiring in July 2026 and that never offered per-topic subscriptions or digests. The web part keeps the subscriptions in a list on your site; the email itself is sent by a Power Automate flow configured by the site owner.

The Follow button

The **Follow** button with a bell icon appears in two places:

- in the command bar of the board, next to **New topic** — this follows the **board**;
- in the header of an open topic, next to **Back to topics** — this follows that **topic**.

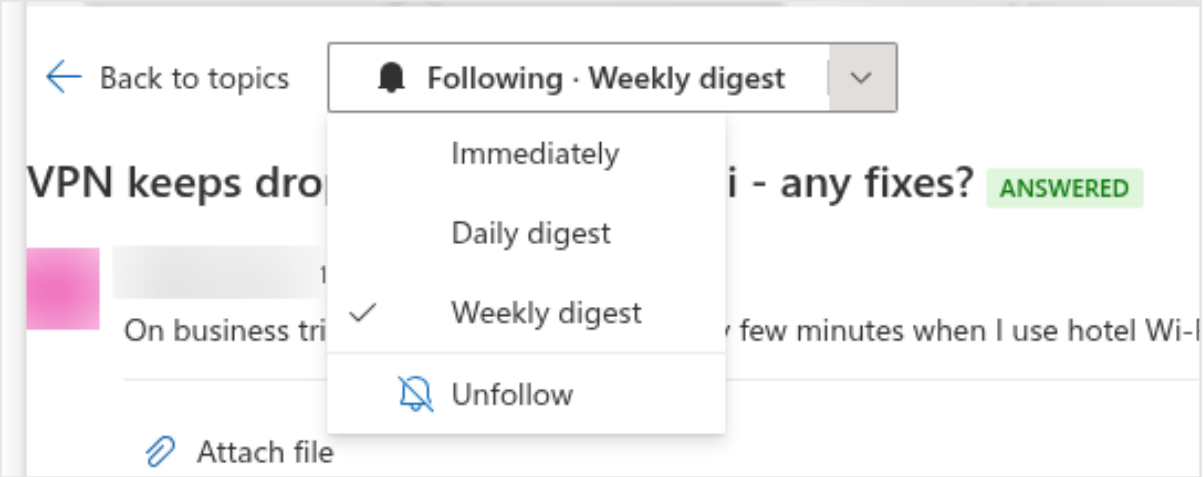
The button is a split button. Clicking its main part follows the board or topic with the **Immediately** frequency; clicking the arrow opens a menu with the three frequencies and **Unfollow**.



The Follow menu on a board

Once you follow, the button changes to **Following** with a filled bell and shows the chosen frequency — for example **Following · Daily digest**. From then on:

- clicking the main part of the button **unfollows**;
- picking another frequency in the menu changes it in place, without creating a second subscription;
- **Unfollow** in the menu does the same as the main button.



A followed topic with the weekly digest selected

The button is shown to users who can post on the board (the **Add items** permission); readers cannot follow. It is hidden when the `Discussions Subscriptions` list is missing on the site — see **Where subscriptions are stored**.

Frequencies

Frequency	What you receive
Immediately	One email for each event, sent when it happens
Daily digest	One email per day summarizing the items that had activity during the day
Weekly digest	One email per week summarizing the items that had activity during the week

The frequency belongs to each subscription separately: you can follow the board weekly and a hot topic immediately. There is no global "mute" switch — to stop all emails from a board, unfollow the board and the topics you follow in it. Mentions are independent of all of this: a person who is @mentioned is notified regardless of their subscriptions (see KB10403. Using @Mentions in Discussions).

Automatic subscriptions

When you create a topic, the web part subscribes you to it with the **Immediately** frequency, so you learn about answers to your own question without doing anything. Open the topic and use the **Following** button to switch to a digest or to unfollow. Replying to a topic does **not** subscribe you to it; follow it explicitly if you want to see

how the thread continues.

Note

Topics imported from a classic Discussion Board do not receive automatic subscriptions, and classic SharePoint alerts on the old list are not converted. Ask the members of a migrated board to follow it once; the alerts on the old list can then be removed.

What each subscription delivers

The notification contract of Discussions defines which subscribers are addressed by which event:

Event	Who is notified
A new topic is published on the board (or approved by a moderator)	Followers of the **board**
A new reply is published in a topic (or approved)	Followers of the **topic** and followers of the **board**; the author of the reply is skipped
A reply is marked as the best answer	The author of that reply and the followers of the topic
Somebody is @mentioned	The mentioned people, whatever they follow
A post is waiting for approval	The site owners

Only approved content triggers notifications: on a board that requires approval, a topic or reply is announced when the moderator approves it, not when it is submitted. Each email links to the topic through the `?topic=<Id>` parameter of the page that hosts the web part, so the recipient lands directly in the thread — see KB10407. Sharing a Link to a Topic in Discussions (Deep Links).

Warning

The web part records subscriptions and mentions; it does **not** send email itself and requests no mail permissions. Delivery is the job of a **Power Automate** flow that the site owner deploys on the site. The flow template is not shipped with the 26.10.2 preview yet: subscriptions you make today are stored and will be honoured as soon as the flow is in place, but no email arrives until then. The contract the flow implements is described in KB10414. How Notifications Work in Discussions: Subscriptions, Mentions and Power Automate.

Where subscriptions are stored

Every subscription is one item in the `Discussions Subscriptions` list of the site — one row per user and per followed object:

Column	Content
User	The follower
Target type	`Board` or `Topic`
Target id	The id of the board in `Discussions Boards` or of the topic in `Discussions Topics`
Frequency	`Immediate`, `Daily` or `Weekly`
Board	A lookup to the board, so that the flow can read all subscriptions of one board in a single query

Following creates the row, changing the frequency updates it and unfollowing deletes it. The list is created together with the other Discussions lists; on a site where the board was set up by the first preview build, a site owner adds it by opening the page in edit mode once. Like all Discussions lists it inherits the permissions of the site, so members can technically open it in **Site contents** and see who follows what; a site owner who prefers to keep that private can give the list unique permissions — the web part reads and writes it in the name of the current user and only needs that user to add, edit and delete their own rows.

Tip

A subscription is the lightest way to keep a community alive: suggest the **Weekly digest** to occasional members and **Immediately** to the experts who answer. The data model behind all five lists is documented in KB10426. Discussions Lists and Columns Reference; where the data lives and what never leaves the tenant is in KB10411. Where Discussions Stores Your Data: Lists, Columns and Privacy.