

Sending SMS Messages to Parents and/or Guardians

PARS email facility allows you to send SMS messages to either individual parents or groups of parents for various means for example attendance, behaviour, good news, detentions. You can either free text a message or choose from a bank of pre-defined messages created along with merge fields.

Configuring SMS

To send SMS messages via PARS, you will need to have an account with Text Anywhere, who are the SMS provider we work with. When you set up an account you will receive 50 free SMS messages and you are also eligible for a 15% discount as an education establishment.*

The average cost of a text message is approximately 3 pence and exact pricing can be found on the Text Anywhere website. You only need one account per school.

<https://www.textanywhere.net/>

You then need to link your Text Anywhere account to PARS. To do this, go to:

Main menu > Contact Management > Configure > Configure SMS

You should enter the details of your Text Anywhere account on the configure SMS page. Your client identifier is an alphanumeric code, not an email address.

A screenshot of the Configure SMS page can be found below.

*Correct as of May 2014

Account details
Options

Account details

Client identifier

Client password

*You will have received these details in an email.
If you need to register for an account, please click [here](#).*

TASC authorisation code

Authorisation code

If you do not know this code, please contact sales@tascsoftware.co.uk

The Configure SMS page – you will need to contact us for your authorisation code. Our office number is 01902 824281.

Once you have entered your account details, click the Save button at the top right of the page. You will also see a “Test” button – click this and a box will open where you can enter a mobile number.

The page at develop:1595 says: ×

Please enter a telephone number to send a test message.

Enter your mobile phone number and click OK. If a test text message does not arrive on your phone within 5 minutes, please contact TASC support for advice. The telephone number is found at the top of this page. Alternatively you can contact us using the online helpdesk.

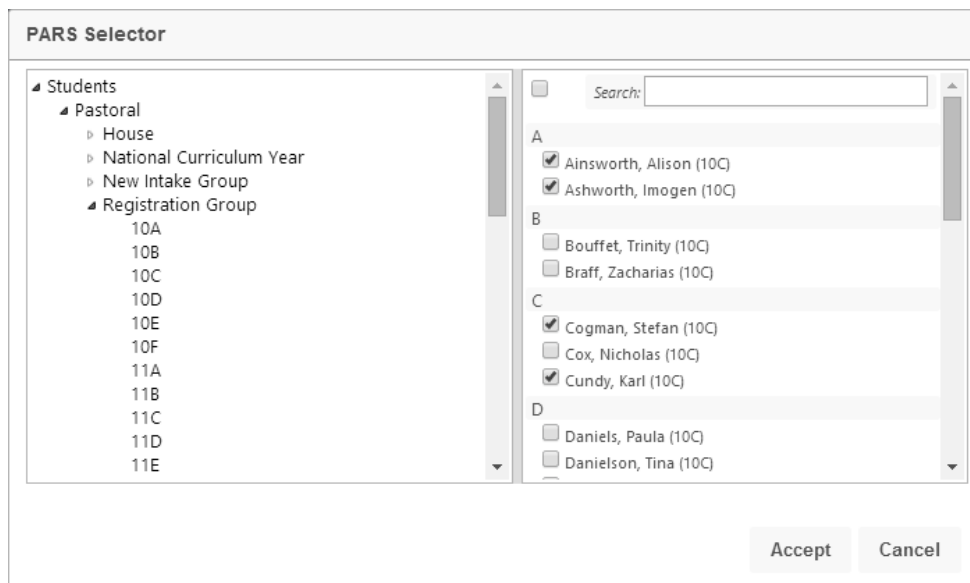
Sending the Message

Now go to:

Main Menu > Contact Management > External Contact

When you click on External Contact, a window will open. You need to choose the pupils whose parents you are going to contact.

There are various groupings on the left of the window and pupils are shown on the right. Click on a grouping on the left to narrow down the list of pupils on the right.



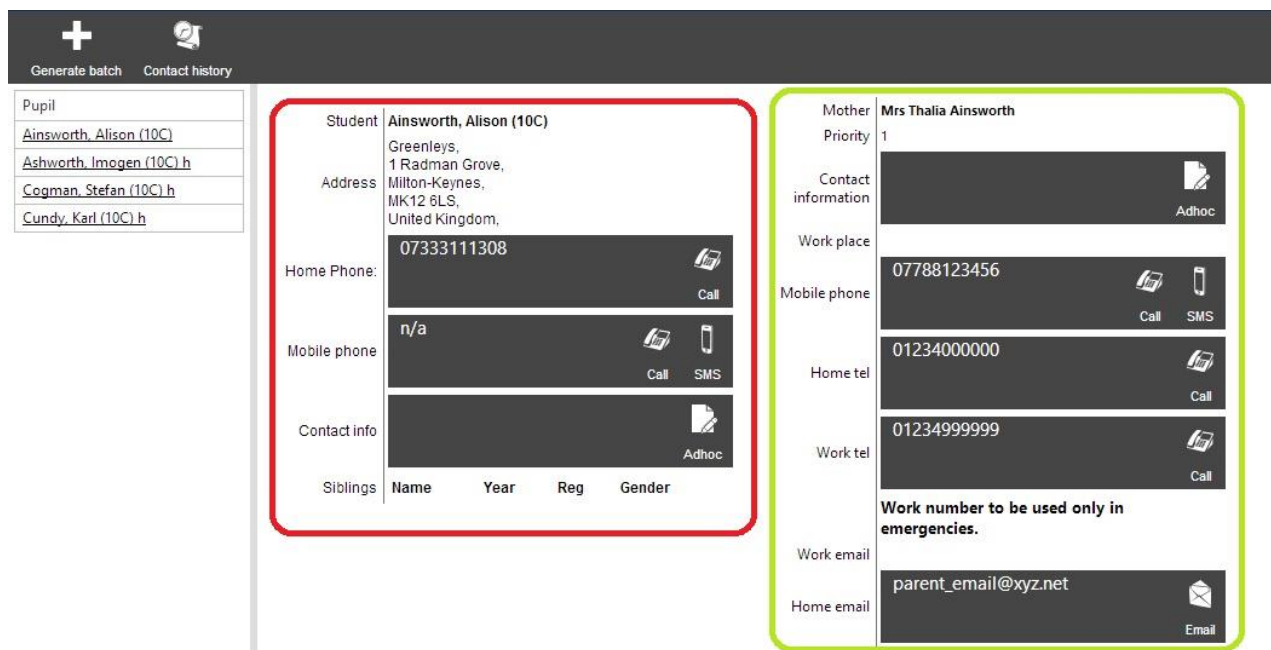
Once you have chosen the pupils, click “Accept”.

Checking that your Data is Correct

SIMS vs PARS





The data in PARS is pulled directly from SIMS, so if there is a mistake in SIMS that mistake will also appear in PARS. It is important for the data in SIMS to be correct for PARS to work properly.







PARS will display contact information when you are using the external contact feature. The page will look like this (getting to and using this page is explained later in this guide):



The screenshot shows the PARS interface with a list of pupils on the left and detailed contact information for a selected student and their mother on the right.

Pupil	
Ainsworth, Alison (10C)	
Ashworth, Imogen (10C) h	
Cogman, Stefan (10C) h	
Cundy, Karl (10C) h	

Student	Ainsworth, Alison (10C)								
Address	Greenleys, 1 Radman Grove, Milton-Keynes, MK12 6LS, United Kingdom,								
Home Phone:	07333111308 								
Mobile phone	n/a  								
Contact info									
Siblings	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Name</th> <th>Year</th> <th>Reg</th> <th>Gender</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Name	Year	Reg	Gender				
Name	Year	Reg	Gender						

Mother	Mrs Thalia Ainsworth
Priority	1
Contact information	
Work place	
Mobile phone	07788123456  
Home tel	01234000000 
Work tel	01234999999 
Work email	
Home email	parent_email@xyz.net 

Work number to be used only in emergencies.

PARS view

The section highlighted in red is a student's own personal details. This should show their own home address, phone numbers and email addresses.

The section in green shows the contacts for that student (parents, doctors, or carers for example)

3 Addresses

Current Home Address Details (Not validated) History

Address: Greenleys
1 Radman Grove
Milton-Keynes
MK12 6LS
United Kingdom

Note:

Start date: 01/09/2010 End date:

Enter additional address:
Post Code: Country: United Kingdom Continue

House Number/Name: Advanced

Search Validation Service Search Existing Addresses

4 Telephones and Email Addresses

Telephones/Fax Numbers

Device	Location	Number	Main	Primary	Notes
Telephone	Home	0123400000	Yes	Yes	

Email Addresses

Address	Location	Main	Primary	Notes
alison.ainsworth@greenabbeyschool.net	Home	Yes	Yes	

5 Family/Home

Contacts

Priority	Name	Relationship	Court Order	In Touch	Telephone
1	Mrs Thalia Ainsworth	Mother		Yes	012340000
2	Mr Neville Ainsworth	Father		Yes	

Parental Salutation: Mr and Mrs Ainsworth Parental Addressee: Mr and Mrs N Ainsworth

Mailing Point:

Family Links

Name	Date of Birth	Year	Reg	Gender	Date of Adm...	Date of Lea...

SIMS view

The data in PARS is taken from the student information screen in SIMS.

A student's own personal details are found in section 3 and 4 (red). These details should pertain to the student only. It should include where the student lives, which phone number to use to contact the student (not their parents, though their parents may use the same number) and the student's email address.

Section 5 in SIMS (green) must contain all external contacts for the student, such as parents/guardians, social workers or doctors.

Double clicking on a contact or adding a new one will open a window with their details. Section 2 has details about their relationship with the pupil. Notice the Priority and Parental Responsibility settings (below) – these are important in PARS.

Both of these settings are explained on the next page.

2 Relationship Details

Student: Contact Type:

Correspondence: Parental Responsibility: Priority:

Pupil Report: Court Order: Contact Priority Source:

Bill Payer: Copy Bills: E-mail Bills:

InTouch Communication:

Parental Responsibility

Parental responsibility should be ticked if that contact is responsible for looking after the student. More than one contact can have parental responsibility for a student (e.g. in split parent families)

Priority

The priority given to a contact is very important. Priority 1 is the highest value and should be given to the student’s main guardians/carers. This is the person or people who are chiefly responsible to that student and who you would be most likely to contact regarding the student. Priority 2 should be given to the next most important contact(s) and so on.

3 Telephones and Email Addresses

Telephones\Fax Numbers:

Device	Location	Number	Main	Primary	Notes
Telephone	Home	01234000000	Yes	Yes	
Telephone	Mobile	07788123456			
Telephone	Work	01234999999			Work number to be use

Set Primary Set Main

Email Addresses:

Address	Location	Main	Primary	Notes	Use For...
parent_email@xyz.net	Home	Yes	Yes		False

Set Primary Set Main

New Open Delete Send

In section 3 you can see the contact’s details. Each contact can only have one ‘main’ email address and one ‘main’ phone number. This is their preferred email address or phone number. If a contact has a phone/email, you should nominate one as ‘main.’ PARS will use the ‘main’ email/phone (unless told to do otherwise) to contact that person.

Sending Emails

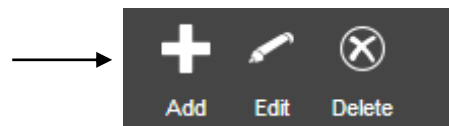
Configuring Your Message Bank (Optional)

If you are sending a common message to parents then you can create a message and store it in the message bank to make the process quicker in future.

To access this, go to:

PARS main menu > Contact management > Configure > SMS message bank

Click 'Add a message' button from the top toolbar to create and store a message in your message bank.



Add SMS Message
✕

Title:

File ▾ Edit ▾ Insert ▾ View ▾

↶ ↷

Hi {CONTACTSALUTATION}

Your {SONDAUGHTER}, {CHOSENNAME} has received subject awards in 3 or more different subjects this week! This is a fantastic achievement. Please log in to Insight to see further details about {CHOSENNAME}'s behaviour.

p
Words: 34

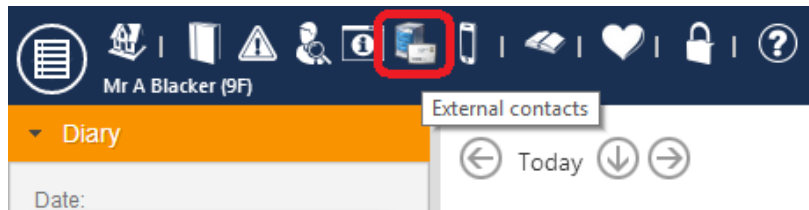
Accept
Cancel

You can type your message into the box using free text, or choose mail merge fields by clicking "Insert" and then "Field".

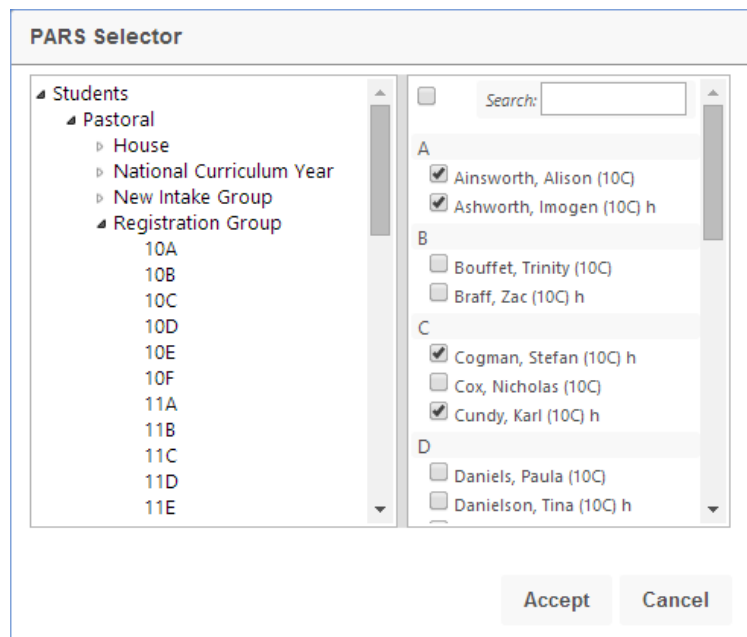
Sending an Email

Click on either the External contact icon from the top toolbar or go to:

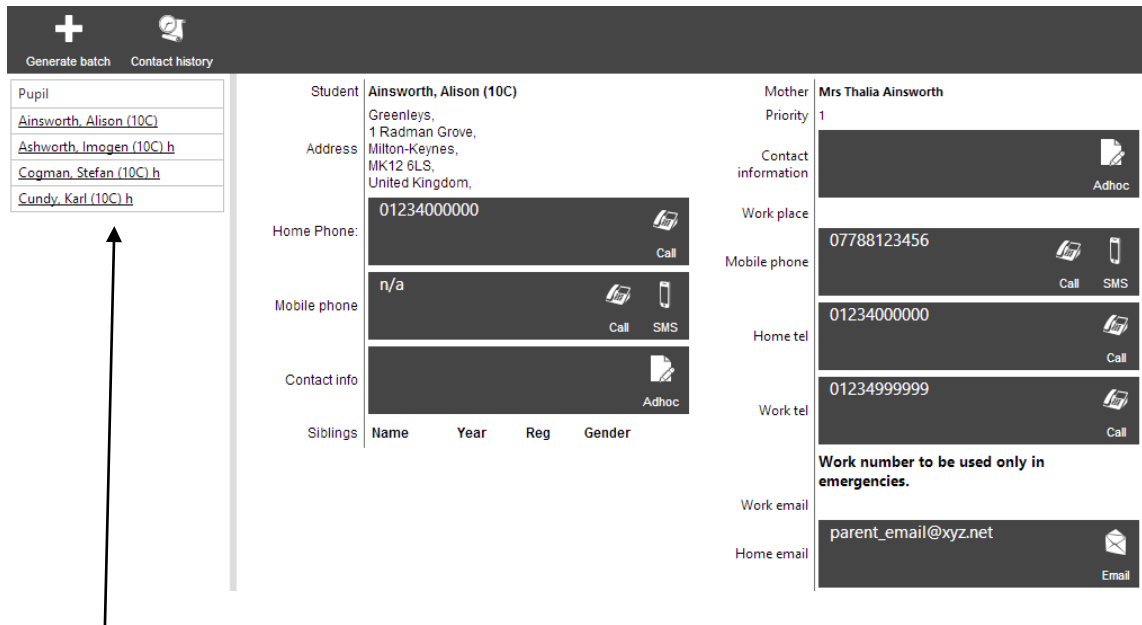
PARS main menu > Contact management > External contacts



Choose the pupil(s) whose parents/guardians require communication from the list and accept. You can add an individual pupil, random pupils or groups – academic, SIMS groups or your own user defined groups.



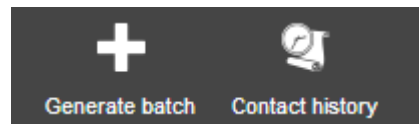
On external contact page, PARS will show all parental contacts mirrored from SIMS. The priority of each contact will be displayed along with all contact details. If the data is incorrect in SIMS, or possibly entered into an incorrect field (see page 4 & 5), it will be incorrect here also.



The screenshot shows the PARS software interface. At the top, there is a toolbar with a plus sign and a clock icon, labeled 'Generate batch' and 'Contact history'. Below this is a list of pupils under the heading 'Pupil'. The list includes: 'Ainsworth, Alison (10C)', 'Ashworth, Imogen (10C) h', 'Cogman, Stefan (10C) h', and 'Cundy, Karl (10C) h'. An arrow points from the 'Ainsworth, Alison (10C)' entry to the main contact details area. The main area is divided into sections for 'Student', 'Address', 'Home Phone', 'Mobile phone', 'Contact info', and 'Siblings'. The 'Student' section shows 'Ainsworth, Alison (10C)' with address 'Greenleys, 1 Radman Grove, Milton-Keynes, MK12 6LS, United Kingdom'. The 'Home Phone' is '01234000000'. The 'Mobile phone' is 'n/a'. The 'Contact info' section has an 'Adhoc' button. The 'Siblings' section has a table with columns 'Name', 'Year', 'Reg', and 'Gender'. To the right of the student details is the 'Mother' section for 'Mrs Thalia Ainsworth'. It shows 'Priority 1', 'Contact information' with an 'Adhoc' button, 'Work place', 'Mobile phone' '07788123456' with 'Call' and 'SMS' buttons, 'Home tel' '01234000000' with a 'Call' button, 'Work tel' '01234999999' with a 'Call' button, 'Work email' 'parent_email@xyz.net', and 'Home email' with an 'Email' button. A note below the work tel says 'Work number to be used only in emergencies.'

Click a student's name to see their contact data.

Next click "Generate batch" from the top toolbar



The generate batch button will allow you to choose how to contact the parents, and which parents to contact. The details and settings are explained on the next page.

You will now be presented with options for choosing who to send the email to. These options are found in the Email section, and at the bottom of the window.

SMS - mobile

- Send SMS to highest priority cont
- Send SMS to all contacts
- Do not send SMS to any mobile phone numbers

- Parental responsibility only
- Priority 1 only

- Fall back to land line when no mobile number is found

SMS - landline

- Send SMS to main home number
- Send SMS to highest priority contact
- Send SMS to home number of all contacts
- Do not contact any home numbers

- Parental responsibility only
- Priority 1 only

- Fall back to letter when no home number is found

Send SMS to highest priority contact

This will send a message to whichever contact has the highest priority out of those with mobile numbers. Use 'Parental responsibility only' and/or 'Priority 1 only' to make sure messages are only sent to the correct contacts.

Send SMS to all contacts

This will send a message to each contact, as long as they have a mobile number. Use 'Parental responsibility only' and/or 'Priority 1 only' to make sure messages are only sent to the correct contacts.

Do not add contacts with an email address

This will stop emails being sent – it is used when sending email messages or mail merges.

Fall back to land line when no mobile number is found

Only if PARS cannot find a mobile number to use for a pupil's contacts, an SMS message will be sent to the land line at the pupil's home.

Options

- Do not add contacts who have a court order
- Only contact once where contactee has multiple children in batch

Only contact once where contactee has multiple children in batch

This will ensure a contactee doesn't receive multiple emails. The message will only be send regarding one of their children – this is not appropriate if you are sending student-specific messages, such as absentee messages.

Do not add contacts who have a court order

This will stop messages being sent to contacts who have a court order set in SIMS. (see page 3)

Once you have selected your message settings, click the “Edit SMS” button from the top toolbar.

You will now see a window where you can type your email or use a pre-defined message from the message bank.

Add SMS Message
✕


Title:

File ▾ Edit ▾ Insert ▾ View ▾

↶
↷

Hi {CONTACTSALUTATION}

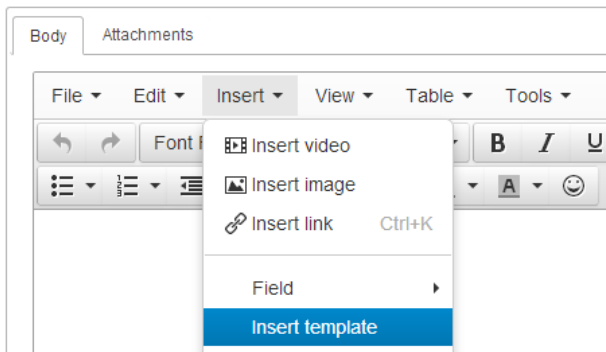
Your {SONDAUGHTER}, {CHOSENNAME} has received subject awards in 3 or more different subjects this week! This is a fantastic achievement. Please log in to Insight to see further details about {CHOSENNAME}'s behaviour.

p
Words: 34 

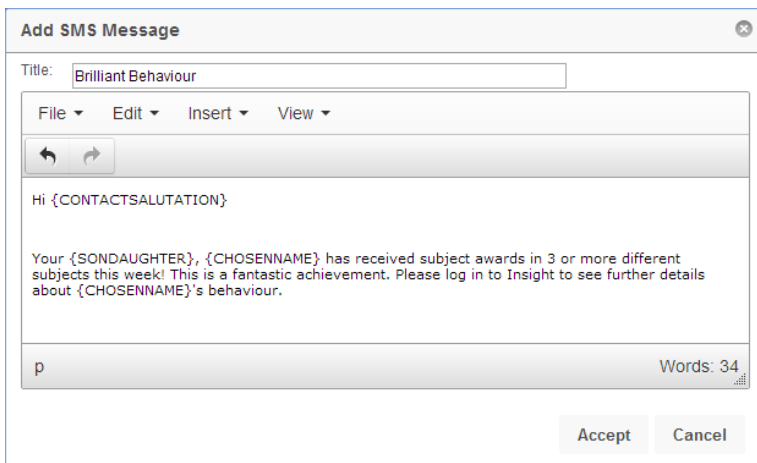
Accept
Cancel

Using a Pre-Defined Message

To use a pre-defined message from the message bank, click the Insert button from the top toolbar, then “Insert template” as shown below.

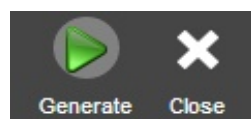


A window will appear where you can choose from your list of pre-defined messages. Click on the “Templates” dropdown to select the message that you want to use then click “OK”.



The predefined message will now appear in the email box. You can make any amendments to the pre-defined message now, if you wish.

When you are happy with the contents of your message and the recipients, click on ‘Generate’ in the toolbar.

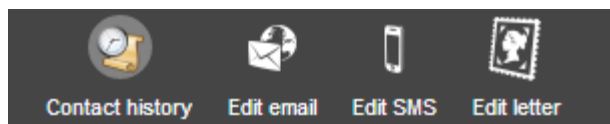


Viewing Contact History



There are reports within PARS to allow you to view a history of any correspondence between the school and any external party.

These reports can be accessed from the Main Menu > External Contact > Contact Reports.

Alternatively, you can click on one of the reports at the top of the external contact screen (the one used for sending emails). This will show you a contact report for all of the students that are selected.



The 'Contact history' button in the screenshot above will show the history of all correspondence regarding the highlighted student (click on a student's name to select them).

	From	To	Date	Type	Contact details
	A. Blacker	Louise Abbey	02/06/2014 12:56:16	Email home	
<p>Hi Mr and Mrs Abbey</p> <p>We have not yet received your consent form. Please sign it and hand it in to reception if you wish for Grenetta to go to the school trip.</p> <p>Regards, Green Abbey School</p>					
 	A. Blacker	Louise Abbey	25/01/2014 10:32:31	Other	
mom called wants to arrange meet with HOY					
 	A. Blacker	Steven Abbey	03/09/2013 12:04:02	Other	
Dad called to check if son in today					

This box will appear at the bottom of the screen. It will not only show email correspondence; phone calls, texts and letters also appear here – this view gives you a complete log of all communications (in and out) pertaining to the student.

You can delete items from the communication log if you need to. This is done by clicking the red cross button next to the entry you want to delete.