

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – The Graduated Response File

1/ Are there timescales being placed on the processes around the Graduated Response File?

No but SENCOs are advised to review the guidance notes regarding when and how to use the file.

2/ Why are target planning sheets not included in the Graduated Response File?

The Derby City Council Target Setting template can be found on the Schools Information Portal and if/ when it is changed SENCOs need to use the latest version so providing it separately as part of the GRF would not be helpful and may lead to SENCOs using an out of date version.

3/ Can the child's parents view the contents of the Graduated Response File?

Yes - The school/ setting should provide a copy of the file for the child's parents to view if they request it. The graduated response file is a school record and should be kept and maintained by the child's current school.

4/ Should we include private professional reports?

Yes - If the parents have paid for a professional assessment and they have letters/ reports that are relevant in regard to the child's special educational needs this information can be included in the GRF.

5/ What about data protection and the new general data protection regulations?

The school must ensure the all documentation relating to children with SEND is considered as part of the school's compliance procedures under GDPR.

6/ Will the child/ student themselves be given a copy of the Graduated Response File when they leave school?

Not automatically but all school records are subject to GDPR and the school must demonstrate they are compliant.

7/ Can Children's Centre staff start a Graduated Response File?

No – the tool is an education led tool for use by schools and early year's settings as part of the graduated response.

8/ Do I need to include parent views and involve parents in the support we provide as part of our graduated response to meeting a child's SEND needs?

Yes -

9/ Is there joined up thinking between the Graduated Response File and EHC needs assessments?

Yes – the file and contents has been produced to support the graduated response and education, health and care needs assessment process.

10/ Is this intended to be a barrier to children who need an EHCP getting one?

No – there are lots of children who have SEND but only a few who have/ need a plan. This file can be used to support all children with SEND whether they have an EHC Plan or not. It is intended to support SENCOs and provide greater transparency and consistency in practice in Derby City.

11/ Do parents and school/ setting staff need to agree before the Graduated Response File is started?

The SENCO must refer to the definition of SEND as described in the Code of Practice and talk to parents about their concerns. The GRF is a structured way of storing information about a named child and the school/ setting staff must comply with the SEND Code of Practice.

12/ What if the child is absent from school/ setting for a while or has a period of stability?

The SENCO should record this in the GRF. Eventually it might be appropriate to cease the GRF if the child continues to make good progress and/ or does not return to Derby.

If the student has transferred to another school or setting the SENCO should pass on all the information to the new school/ setting ensuring compliance with GDPR.

13/ Will there be training provided to SENCOs to know how to use the Graduated Response File?

Training is planned for academic year Sept 2018 – July 2019. In addition to training all schools will have access to guidance and FAQs. The GRF and supporting documents will be distributed in Sept 2018 and made available on the Schools Information Portal.

14/ Will every person (including supply/ cover staff) involved with the child/ student be required to read the file from start to finish?

The SENCO, class teacher/ form tutor/ manager/ key worker or designated TA must be familiar with the contents of the file and key documents. It is advised that the SENCO/ class teacher highlights key documents using a 'Read Me' tab or by renaming e-files with 'Read Me'. The most recent one page profile will be most relevant to supply/ cover staff as long as it is current/ up to date.

15/ Is the Graduated Response File to be used by Early Years settings (including private day nurseries, pre-schools and playgroups)?

Yes – it has been designed to be used by schools and early year's settings and supporting documentation has been produced to enable all settings to start using the GRF. There is advice and guidance on the schools information portal.

16/ Where can I find the latest version of the Graduated Response File?

On the Schools Information Portal.

17/ What if the file is getting too full?

If you are using a paper file start a new file and securely store the old file. If you have an electronic version (e-GRF) – within each of the contents sections create a folder called 'Old'. Place old/out of date information on the 'Old' folder and only keep the most current/ active information loose in the folder.

18/ Why are there not separate sections for education, health and care?

There is an expectation that the Graduated Response File includes relevant information about health and care needs as they relate to a child's special educational needs and that this information is in the appropriate sections of the file.

19/ Who will want to see the contents of a child's graduated response file?

The Derby City Vulnerable Learners Service may request to see specific information from the GRF. An Educational Psychologist or member of the specialist teaching service employed by the LA may also request to see information in the child's GRF. The parent/ carer or the child/ young person themselves may request to see it. Information recorded and kept in the file must be stored with this in mind. Schools must ensure they are compliant with GDPR and this is considered as part of their schools' policies and procedures.

20/ Is there an electronic version of the Graduated Response File?

Yes – the GRF structure is available to download from the SIP and was circulated to all schools in September 2018 through the school circular. It is also available on request from stepsadmin@derby.gov.uk

21/ Can I create a paper version of the Graduated Response File?

Yes there is a printable version of the GRF available to download from the SIP. It is also available on request from stepsadmin@derby.gov.uk