

Are your school notice boards fire safe?

Classified for use in
**FIRE RATED
AREAS**

BS EN 13501-1, Class B, s1, d0



 FOR FURTHER
TECHNICAL
INFORMATION



sundeala.co.uk

Why are we issuing this update?

Teachers and OFSTED both recognise the positive contribution of displays to learning outcomes, so notice boards are used extensively in schools. However, it is important that boards and displays do not compromise fire safety.



Tests performed at fire research establishments have shown that notice boards will significantly accelerate the spread of fire if they are incorrectly fire rated^[1]. It is therefore important for you to know what products you have installed in your school, especially if you are updating your Fire Safety Risk Assessment.

Sundeala has been the UK's leading manufacturer of school notice boards since the 1940's. As a result, almost all schools today have our products installed. As Sundeala boards often last 25 years or more, schools, particularly those with older buildings, may well not know if the notice boards they have meet current fire regulations and guidelines.

This update summarises the legal requirements and provides simple guidelines for checking the fire ratings of notice boards.

Please note, this advice applies to all products. You are welcome to contact us for further help, regardless of your manufacturer or supplier.

Fire spread by convection



Stage 1

An item such as a wastepaper basket catches fire



Stage 2

Hot air rises from the original fire source, heating up wall linings to the point of ignition



Stage 3

Fire spreads along wall linings. Hot air and gases reach the ceiling and spread horizontally along walls



Stage 4

Hot air and gases heat other wall coverings which ignite, spreading the fire throughout the room

What are the key issues?

Building Regulations specify the use of fire resistant materials in public buildings.

These mandatory legal requirements extend to school notice boards¹.

Boards are prone to spreading fire by convection, which accounts for more fatalities than any other means, according to government guidance².

By installing notice boards that meet or exceed the correct fire rating, you will slow the spread of fire and potentially buy precious time for your pupils and staff to evacuate.

What are the legal requirements and best advice?

In 2014, the Education Funding Agency published BB100. This sets out mandatory fire safety guidelines for schools, based on document B volume 2 of the Building Regulations (section 6). The fire services use these guidelines in their school fire safety audits.

The minimum legal requirement is for schools to use certified, fire resistant notice boards in the following areas:

- *Rooms and classrooms that exceed 30 square metres;*
- *High risk areas, including science labs, kitchens and technology rooms;*
- *Lobbies, reception areas, corridors, social spaces and other 'circulation' areas.*

Further requirements of BB100 and advice from the Chief Fire Officers Association

- *Protected fire evacuation routes (boards should be covered, less than 3m wide and installed with at least 1m spacing).*
- *Displays should not block fire exits or be close to potential sources of ignition such as soft furnishings.*

Lower rated boards are permissible in certain conditions, but together with the Chief Fire Officers' Association and relevant Government Guidelines, we recommend using fire resistant displays throughout.

[1] Tests performed by Sundeala show that non-fire rated notice boards spread flames up to 500% faster than fire-rated boards as measured by the FIGRA_{0.2MJ}(W/s) value.

1 UK Building regulations document B volume 2 section 6

2 Fire safety risk assessment in educational premises: HM Government 2006 p18

What fire ratings should you look for?

There are only two legally recognised fire safety standards for notice boards in the UK:

- *European testing for Reaction to Fire (EN13501-1:2007+A1:2009) - fire resistance ratings from B (highest) to F (lowest)*
- *British Standard BS476 parts 6 and 7 - fire resistance ratings 0 (highest) to 3*

Your fire-rated boards must be certified compliant with one or other of these standards.

The table below outlines the minimum fire resistance rating for the different areas of the school. Call us on **01453 704679** for further details.

Classification of linings

Location	National Class ⁽¹⁾	European Class ^{(1), (3), (4)}
Small rooms ⁽²⁾ of area not more than 30m ²	3	D-s3, d2
Other rooms	1	D-s3, d2
Other circulation spaces	0	B-s3, d2

Source: BB100 Design for Fire Safety In Schools (EFA, 2014)



3 BB100 Section 5.2.2.1

4 CFOA circular 2016-14 p3

5 Fire Safety Risk Assessments in educational premises p46

How do you check the fire rating of your notice boards?

If you have Sundeala boards:

We have just introduced a new fire labelling system. Our new fire-rated boards bear compliance stickers on both the front and rear surfaces.

The table below explains how to identify our older products. You will need to check the reverse side of your Sundeala boards. If you find RED lettering, this denotes your board is EN 13051 Class B fire resistant.



Sundeala Board Colour	Colour of printing on Rear Face	Board Type	Fire rating
Brown	None	'A' quality (discontinued 2005)	None
Grey	Black or None	'K' quality	BS EN 13501 Class D
Coloured	Black or None	K colourboard	BS EN 13501 Class D
Grey	Red	FRB	BS EN 13501 Class B
Coloured	Red	FRB Colourboard	BS EN 13501 Class B

For other makes of board:

Check with your supplier or manufacturer that the core is rated to BS EN 13051 Class B.

Buying fire safe notice boards

Best advice is to buy BS EN 13051 Class B rated boards for all areas of your school. This rating should cover the core and also the core + fabric (i.e. both functioning as a single unit).

Beware of cheaper, often imported boards where only the cloth is fire resistant. These do not meet the Building Regulations' requirements for spaces where fire-rated boards are mandated.

Ask your supplier for a Reaction To Fire Test Certificate for BS EN 13501, which you can then include in your Fire Safety Risk Assessment.



About Sundeala

Sundeala has been supplying school notice boards since 1937 and is the UK market leader, with a constantly evolving product range.

We are the only European manufacturer of truly eco-friendly pinnable board. We use 100% recycled materials to produce attractive, durable, high performing products.

Sundeala boards are made from robust, school safe material which is able to hold staples without degrading, eliminating the need for pins and tacks.

All Sundeala products come with a 25-year warranty.

Further information

BB 100

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/276389/buildingbulletin100_onlineversion.pdf

Building regulations

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/441669/BR_PDF_AD_B2_2013.pdf

Fire safety Risk Assessment Educational Premises


www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-safety-risk-assessment-educational-premises

Chief Fire Officer's Association Circular: Fire Safety in Schools

www.esfrs.org/EasySiteWeb/GatewayLink.aspx?allId=5610

 01453 704679

 technical@sundeala.co.uk

 www.sundeala.co.uk

