Safety of Children’s Clothing

Relevant Legislation:
The General Product Safety Regulations 2005
The Nightwear (Safety) Regulations 1985

Apart from the product specific Regulation mentioned above, there are no other regulations covering the safety of children’s clothing. All other aspects of the safety of children’s clothing are covered by the General Product Safety Regulations 2005. These Regulations place a responsibility on businesses to supply safe goods. In assessing the safety of a product the courts would have regard to any relevant published standards and codes of practice.

There is a Code of Practice on the design and manufacture of children’s clothing to promote mechanical safety and a Standard covering cords and drawstrings in children's clothing. They are as follows:

**BS 7907**: is a Code of Practice which gives recommendations for the materials, design and manufacture of children’s clothing. It also gives recommendations on safety aspects of the packaging and display of children’s clothing, including guidance for retailers. It is intended for use at all stages of the clothing supply chain, including use by designers, specifiers and manufacturers of children’s clothing. It is also intended to be used by importers, distributors and retailers to assist them in the selection of clothing that does not present a mechanical hazard.

**BS EN 14682**: is a Standard which sets out the specification for cords and drawstrings in children’s clothing. The aim of the standard is to minimise the risk of accidental entrapment by cords or drawstrings on children’s clothing taking into account:

- The child’s age.
- Normal behaviour and activities of children for their age and stage of development, for example playing in playgrounds, climbing trees, travelling by ‘bus or train, ability to look after themselves, and where relevant, level of supervision.
- National accident statistics indicate that serious accidents involving cords and drawstrings on children’s clothing fall into two main groups by age of child:
  - Younger children: entrapment of hood cords in playground equipment such as slides, resulting in fatalities
  - Older children and young persons: entrapment of cords and strings from the waist and lower hems of garments in moving vehicles such as bus doors, ski lifts and bicycles resulting in severe injuries or death from being dragged along or run over by the vehicle.

The Nightwear (Safety) Regulations 1985, prohibit the supply of children’s nightwear (other than pyjamas, babies’ garments and cotton terry towelling bath robes) that do not meet flammability performance requirements. The Regulations also specify labelling requirements.

The European Standard for nightwear **BS EN 14878** sets out the requirements of which can be used for enforcement purposes under the General Product Safety Regulations. Although in general the requirements of the UK Regulations are more stringent than for BS EN 14878, there are some requirements of the European standard that are more onerous than, or different to, them. The aforementioned standard contains a flammability requirement for pyjamas, while under the Nightwear (Safety) Regulations the flammability
requirement is optional. In other words, pyjamas that are not treated for flammability may pass the requirements of the Nightwear (Safety) Regulations 1985 but fail under the General Product Safety Regulations 2005.

When designing children's clothing, it is essential to take into consideration the behaviour of children, whose need for exploration and challenge drives them to use items in new and different ways. One common factor children share is that they are unaware of cause and effect and are therefore substantially less cautious than adults in relation to hazards.

Further guidance on The General product Safety Regulations is available here.

The above Standards are available from the British Standards Institute www.bsigroup.com