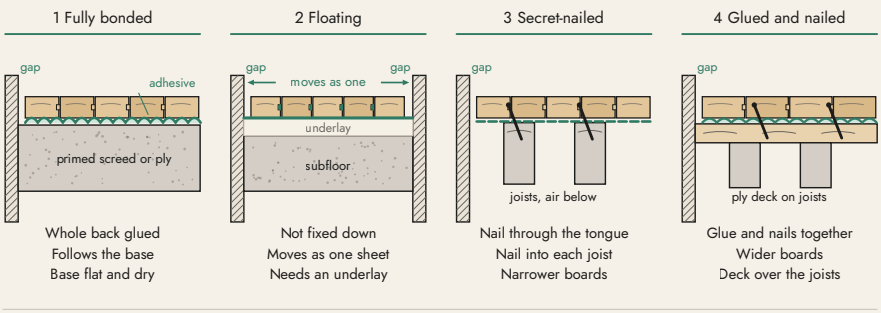
Fixing methods for *wood floors*: which is allowed where

A wood floor is bonded, floated, secret-nailed or glued and nailed, and the maker's instructions for the exact product decide which. The matrix shows what the guides we read say, floor by floor and over underfloor heating. They disagree in places, so ask the partner in writing.

AT A GLANCE

Floor	Fully bonded	Floating	Nailed	Over underfloor heating
Engineered plank, tongue and groove	Yes: flexible adhesive over the whole back. *D*	Yes, with glued joints on an underlay. *M1*	Yes: 140 mm or under nailed alone; wider glued and nailed. *D* Up to 180 mm suggested. *M2*	Bonded only. *M1* NWFA lists floating and nailing as workable. *N* Ask.
Engineered plank, click	Yes. *M1*	Yes, no glue in the joints. *M1*	Not covered in the sources read.	Floated or bonded. *M1*
Solid plank or strip	On timber or solid bases. *M2* Some makers allow direct glue. *N*	Not covered: NWFA floats engineered only.	Yes, the traditional method, to joists, battens or ply. *M2, N*	One maker: not suitable. *M1* NWFA: nailing to a wood base is workable. *N* A batten system with heat plates exists. *M3* Ask.
Parquet: herringbone, chevron, Versailles	Yes; solid battens bonded and pinned to ply. *D*	Click herringbone may float; chevron, Versailles and other patterns must be bonded. *M1*	Some ¾ in parquet with an exposed tongue. *N*	Bonded. *M1, D, N*
End-grain blocks	Yes, half-bond, to screed, ply or a bonded underlay. *D*	No: must be fully bonded. *D*	No: must be fully bonded. *D*	Some systems; gaps round each block are acceptable. *D*

Each cell is what a document says, not permission: the maker's instructions for the exact product decide. D: UK distributor (2022 to 2024). M1, M2: one UK timber floor maker (2024, 2017). M3: a solid hardwood maker (2022). N: NWFA, US (2016).



Schematic sections, not to scale. The maker's instructions for the exact product decide which of these it may use.
Green discs: joint glue. Dashed green line: building paper. Wavy green layer: adhesive.

Four fixing methods in section. Original drawing by Make Bespoke Studio, schematic and not to scale.

THE BASE, AND GAPS AT THE WALLS

Base or layer	What the documents say
Screed	Dry by hygrometer: below 65% RH for bonded (75% with a surface DPM); below 75% for floated.
Flatness	Under 3 mm gap beneath a 2 m straight edge.
Timber base	Below 14% moisture; ply overlay of at least 6 mm; 19 mm to nail over a solid base.
Insulation	Over-board it with a denser layer before a floated floor.
Gap at walls	Documents differ: 10 mm or 1.5 mm per metre; 12 or 15 mm; ½ or ¾ in. State one.

SPECIFICATION WORDING

FIXING METHOD

Floor: [product, width, thickness], fixed [fully bonded] to [primed cement screed / ply overlay of [ ] mm] using the flexible adhesive and notched trowel stated in the floor maker's installation instructions [ref, date]. The partner shall confirm in writing, before order, that this method is covered by the product warranty [over underfloor heating: yes / no]. Perimeter gap [ ] mm, covered by skirting or scotia.

FLOATING FLOOR

Floating installation only where the maker's instructions for [product] allow it: [click / glued tongue-and-groove] joints, underlay [ref] with a sealed vapour layer, perimeter gap [12 / 15] mm, no joinery fixed through the floor. Any fixing through the floor to be over-drilled by [20] mm on all sides with the load taken by the base.

SECRET-NAILED FLOOR

Boards [secret-nailed] through the tongue to [joists at [ ] mm centres / [18] mm ply deck], nails [ ] mm at [ ] mm centres, building paper lapped [100] mm over joists. Board width not to exceed [140] mm unless glued and nailed. Moisture content of the base [ ]% and of the boards [ ]% recorded before fixing.

TERMS USED

Fully bonded

A floor adhered over its whole back to the base with a flexible adhesive, so that it follows the base. Parquet and end-grain floors are bonded.

Floating floor

A floor fixed to itself, by glued or click joints, and not to the base, laid on an underlay with a gap at the walls. The whole floor moves as one sheet.

Secret nailing

Nailing at an angle through the tongue of a board so that the nail is hidden by the next board. Also called blind nailing.

SR1

The flatness limit the documents read call 'British Standard SR1 tolerance': no more than a 3 mm gap under a 2 m straight edge. Which part of BS 8204 defines the SR classes was not confirmed.

STANDARDS AND SOURCES

- BS 8201:2011 Code of practice for installation of flooring of wood and wood-based panels: Current, published 31 Oct 2011, per BSI listing; descriptors include floating floors, underfloor heating and fixing. Text not read.
- BS EN 314-1:2004 plywood bonding quality; BS 8204-1:2003+A1:2009 screeds: cited by the distributor and the maker; Current on BSI Knowledge, 6 Nov 2026. Named, not read.
- Installation guides: a UK flooring distributor (parquet, plank glue down, plank secret nailed, end grain, 2022 to 2024); a UK timber floor maker (floating 2024, nail down 2017); a solid hardwood maker (battens with underfloor heating, 2022); NWFA Installation Guidelines (US, revised 2016): read in full, 6 Nov 2026.

Full guide: https://makebespoke.com/trade/technical/fixing-methods-for-wood-floors. Make Bespoke Studio coordinates manufacture through its partner workshops. Figures are guidance only and your specification governs; some may be superseded, so contact the studio to verify.