

From: Katie Carroll <squidrow@vineyard.net>
Sent: Wednesday, July 1, 2020 10:18 PM
Subject: Synthetic field

Dear MVC and Oak Bluffs Planning Board leaders,

How do you feel when you read this?

- Avoid use on very hot days
- Avoid use for passive activities (i.e. sitting, lounging, picnicking)
- Monitor young children to prevent accidental ingestion
- Always wear shoes on artificial turf
- Wash hands before eating, drinking, or adjusting mouth guard
- Clean cuts and abrasions immediately
- Brush hair thoroughly after play
- Remove and clean shoes and gear outside before getting in car
- At home, take off shoes and shake out children's equipment & clothes outside or over the garbage
- Shower immediately after playing on artificial turf
- Vacuum any infill that comes into your home

I'll be honest, I don't find this list very reassuring yet these are all tips for safer play on artificial turf as recommended by Mount Sinai's Children's Environmental Health Center, dated May, 2017. This list, among other noteworthy items, would need to be circulated among every community member who comes in contact with a synthetic turf field if you were to recommend moving forward with its installation. Did any of us grow up with tips on HOW to play on grass?

After reading numerous articles about the pros and cons of grass vs. turf I cannot fathom why the idea of installing turf "fields" (quotes are used because I cannot see how something synthetic could ever embody the qualities of a naturally grown sea of healthy green blades of grass) is even still on the table. Our kids should play on REAL GRASS fields. Fields that are designed and maintained by trained groundskeepers for safe, healthy and long term play.

We have a moral obligation to our children, aside from the numerous health related, environmental reasons and more, to act in their best interest and ensure the safety of their health and well-being and that of our community as a whole. When products with known risks of injuries from infection, high temperature and hardness are considered for installation we, as parents, community members, administrators and more, have an obligation to provide a safer alternative- GRASS.

I understand that using words like "organic" and "recyclable" are meant to make us believe that this is all somehow ok. Many have commented that the potential harm is minimal. The question we should be asking ourselves is how much harm is acceptable? With grass, most of this harm is avoidable.

In addition, where is the wisdom in installing a massive synthetic surface (where athletes sweat, bleed, spit, etc) that requires sanitizing — particularly during the age of COVID?

As a parent of a current high school student, I urge you to support the installation of natural grass fields.

Thank you,
Katie Carroll