1. **THOUGHTFULLY NOTATE THIS ARTICLE TO SHOW EVIDENCE OF YOUR THINKING THROUGHOUT YOUR READING (text-to-self, text-to-text, text-to-world, and vocab strategies).**
2. **RESPOND TO THE “Food for Thought” SECTION BELOW THE ARTICLE**

**Students rebel against schoolyard ban on balls**

**Matt Demers**

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Earl Beatty Public School’s decision to ban the use of hard balls on their playground because of safety concerns has prompted an outcry from the little people in the line of fire.

Students who wish to play games like soccer and football are having to make do with foam substitutes, and they don’t like it. Some in this elementary school near Coxwell and Danforth have gone as far as creating signs and petitions to express their frustration.

“I think it’s great. They absolutely see the ridiculousness of this situation – it’s straight from the heart,” said parent Diana Symonds, who has three children in grades 4 and 5.

“It’s like kicking around a sponge,” said Joey McDermott, a Grade 8 student. “They’re expecting all the little kids to get hurt. We got hurt when we were younger and we’re fine now.”

Earlier this month a parent suffered a concussion after being hit in the neck with a soccer ball. However, the final straw came on Friday, during the end-of-day shuffle home, when a group of students defied staff who had asked them to stop their soccer game so they could leave.

“It was total disregard for rules and total disrespect,” said Principal Alicia Fernandez, adding that parents, teachers and students have all been struck by rogue balls.

She said the schoolyard’s small size makes it difficult to stay out of harm’s way.

“We have very limited space in the playground, so it’s hard to monitor those balls as they’re flying around,” Ms. Fernandez said.

She sent the letter home on Monday placing a temporary ban on hard balls until parents and staff can find a better solution. Students are allowed to use basketballs on the basketball court, but elsewhere in the schoolyard they’ll have to make do with foam.

Reactions from parents has been mixed. Evelyn White’s children, in grades three and eight, have created their own complex games centred around tennis balls. Ms. White and others are concerned that the lack of play may push students into trouble.

“I think they need these balls because they have a small schoolyard and that if they’re not going be able to play [with them] they might be picking up rocks, or the pinecones,” said Ms. White. “They need some kind of bouncy ball. Every kid does.”

“The schoolyard’s small, so if they don’t have a ball they’re going to eventually leave the school ground, which is a concern to me,” said parent Greg Vowels “At least if they’re active and engaged, they’ll stick around.”

Ms. Fernandez said she will be consulting students and parents for a solution that will work for all.

“I was talking with the other parents, I think they should maybe have parameters around when the balls are used, like right when kids get out of school might not be the best time to start playing soccer,” said Ms. Symonds.

“On the other side of the line, parents shouldn’t stand right where kids are playing soccer. We have to take responsibility for that as well.”

**Food for thought :**

1. Pretend for a moment that you are Principal Alicia Fernandez. List the three most important concerns you had which led you to enforce this ban (remembering and understanding):

1.

2.

3.

1. Now that you understand the principal’s reasons for the ban, how do you think students can persuade her to lift it? Would the protest signs work, for example, or should they try another method?

Suggest four strategies the students of Earl Betty School could use to convince their principal to allow soccer and footballs on the playground, explaining quickly how each strategy might address her concerns (applying, analyzing, evaluating and/or creating).

1.

2.

3.

4.